For over 60 years, Calgary Foundation has served the charitable sector in Calgary and area. Recently, in order to grow our understanding of community needs, and strengthen the impact of our work, five Vital Priorities were identified. These issues don’t exist in isolation—they overlap, which reinforces the interconnectedness of our work.

- **Living Standards**
  - Poverty reduction
  - Page 6

- **Community Connections**
  - Strengthening relations with the Indigenous community
  - Page 8

- **Arts**
  - Living a creative life
  - Page 10

- **Environment**
  - Pursuing a sustainable future
  - Page 12

- **Wellness**
  - Encouraging mental health
  - Page 14

- **Survey Findings**
  - Page 16
Putting Knowledge To Purpose

Calgary Foundation envisions a healthy, vibrant, giving and caring community that works for everyone. Building that future demands that we evolve and learn from innovators, experts and our community.

This year, we have aligned the report with our five Vital Priorities in order to ensure an intentional focus and greater connection to the Foundation’s overall strategy. We have also given more room to showcase the results of the Vital Signs survey – devoting a section in each priority area to citizen perceptions.

Vital Signs is a key resource we use at the Foundation to inform our Vital Priorities work. The combination of citizen perception and current research is the thrust behind this work. We value the contributions of so many Calgarians who took the time to add their voice to Vital Signs.

As a leader, the Foundation has been entrusted to listen to, and learn from, our community. Our role is to use the insights gained from the Vital Signs report to help inspire, and direct resources to, those who will build that vibrant and caring community. For everyone, forever.
This year, 1,667 citizens accepted Calgary Foundation's invitation to take the Vital Signs online survey and grade their quality of life. When the results of this self-selected group were compared to the results of the randomly-selected phone and panel survey graders, there was no statistically significant difference between the three survey methodologies.

The online and panel survey results have been combined and form the basis of the 2017 Vital Signs report. For comparative purposes, a probability sample of 2,067 results in a margin of error of ± 2.15%, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error associated with the telephone survey is ± 4.8%, 19 times out of 20.

With support from a Soul of the City Neighbour Grant, grade six students paint the underpass beneath the 4th Avenue Flyover to transform the previously unused area into a vibrant community space.
Making Changes

Making Changes Association has been helping women enter Calgary’s workforce for more than 30 years – offering resources, resume training, and a professional wardrobe. At the Walk-In Closet, women facing financial and other barriers are given a private consultation on business attire to help them break through those barriers, and pursue job opportunities with confidence.

With a roster of 250 volunteers, and clothing donated by the community, each participant receives four complete outfits, a seasonal coat, shoes, a handbag, and accessories tailored to their needs, free of charge.
This vital priority issue area includes housing, poverty, economy, recreation, education, transportation, and food.

78% are concerned about the level of poverty in our city.

76% agree that all Calgarians should be entitled to a living wage.

39% rate the availability of affordable rental housing as below average or poor.

61% rate housing affordability as below average/poor. Rating for housing is weakest among those who are going through a long-term illness or looking for work.

14% cannot afford food, shelter or clothing.

68% rate access to education for their families as excellent/good.

24% rate the affordability of post-secondary education as below average/poor.

26% rate the affordability of nutritious food as below average/poor—a rating that is more prevalent among younger age groups.

33% rate the availability of public transportation to meet their needs as below average/poor. Seniors (65+) are more likely to rate public transportation as excellent/good.

63% rate availability of bicycle pathways and bike lanes as excellent/good.

24% rate affordability of leisure and recreational activities as below average to poor.

1 in 4 Calgarians rate their ability to find suitable employment as below average or poor.

Self-identified Indigenous students made up 4% of all students enrolled in post-secondary education in 2016 (which includes apprentices enrolled in technical training*). NOTE: Since Indigenous students self-identify on application forms, data may understate overall enrolment.

*does not include Banff Centre

Perceptions of Calgarians
Based on Vital Signs Survey

Research Indicators
Based on current data

2016
Calgarians Bicycling to Work
6,798 On-Street Bikeways in Calgary
290 km More than doubled in the last five years.

Average Two-bedroom Apartment Rent Vacancy Rate
VANCOUVER $1,450 7.7%
TORONTO $1,327 1.3%
CALGARY $1,258 7.0%

Homeless Calgarians
GENDER

2016

Business Bankruptcy Rates (per 1,000 businesses)

Business Bankruptcies

Alberta High School Completion Rate

High school completion rate of students within five years of entering grade 10

High school completion rate of self-identified First Nations, Metis and Inuit students within five years of entering grade 10

Canada High School Completion Rate

Self-identified Indigenous students made up 4% of all students enrolled in post-secondary education in 2016 (which includes apprentices enrolled in technical training*). NOTE: Since Indigenous students self-identify on application forms, data may understate overall enrolment.

*does not include Banff Centre
The People’s Gathering

What started as a small celebration in the parking lot of The Alex, became a full-fledged event this year, in honour of Aboriginal Awareness Week. In June, the 6th Annual People’s Gathering took over Olympic Plaza with traditional dances, drumming, and an arts market. In addition to celebrating Indigenous culture, Johanna Schwartz of The Alex said the organization hoped to raise awareness about how they help vulnerable Calgarians with health, wellness, and housing needs.

Approximately 700 people attended the event – a big step up from the first year’s 100. Schwartz said the added visibility of hosting it at Olympic Plaza made the resulting conversations about culture and community much more meaningful. The location is already booked for next year’s celebration.
There is limited data on the health and well-being of the Indigenous community in Calgary. What we do know is this group is substantially over-represented in terms of poverty and serious health issues.

This vital priority issue area includes the Indigenous community, youth, seniors, and immigrant newcomers.

82% of women rate their opportunities to participate in democratic processes as excellent/good.

79% of women rate their ability to exercise their right and freedoms as excellent/good (vs. 68% males).

25% say seniors have access to affordable housing.

57% say there should be more opportunities to support cross-cultural education and awareness based on recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

56% agree that more should be done to create opportunities for Indigenous peoples (employment, education and housing). Females, people under 45 and residents of Calgary for up to five years are more likely to agree.

66% agree that youth in Calgary have opportunities to be involved in their communities but only 38% agree there are opportunities available for youth employment.

Calgarians who rate safety in their neighbourhood as excellent:

- NW: 36%
- SW: 31%
- SE: 21%
- NE: 20%

Calgary youth unemployment has gone down 5.3 percentage points since October 2016, on par with Toronto and almost 6 percentage points higher than Vancouver.

There is limited data on the health and well-being of the Indigenous community in Calgary. What we do know is this group is substantially over-represented in terms of poverty and serious health issues.
Col Cseke, Artistic Director of Inside Out Theatre, took the actors and creators from the Most Imaginary Worlds project out to Mapworld in downtown Calgary in search of inspiration for their upcoming production.

For Calgarians, the issue with arts is affordability rather than availability.

Perceptions of Calgarians
Based on Vital Signs Survey

This vital priority issue area includes arts funding, attendance, availability and engagement.

85% agree that arts and culture enrich communities.
81% agree that a strong arts and culture scene is key to creating a vibrant city.
58% agree that investing in the arts should be a priority for the local government.
44% believe that too much is spent on the arts (up from 34% over past two years.)
11% say that the arts do not offer communities any benefits.
63% rate availability of arts programs and events as good/excellent.
39% rate affordability of arts programs and events as good/excellent.
64% of females say that the arts contribute to a sense of community (vs. 52% among males).
49% of students say that arts engage young people.
37% of students think arts support local businesses.

Calgarians with a strong sense of belonging and quality of life are more likely to see Arts as playing a role in community connectedness.
Most Imaginary Worlds

Artistic expression has been used to tell human stories for millennia, and the creators at Inside Out Theatre want to ensure everybody has access to performance art.

The drama programs allow artists with developmental disabilities the opportunity to create an artistic collective and then produce and star in plays of their own. Artistic Director Col Cseke developed the company’s latest project, Most Imaginary Worlds, with that view in mind. Over three years participants will be paid a professional wage to develop a production. Cseke said he hopes to inspire children with disabilities to explore their own stories by seeing actors who look like them on a professional stage.

Research Indicators
Based on current data

Municipal Arts Grants per Capita

The supply of arts seating (venues) has not matched population growth

Since 2010, the number of arts seating has remained around 12,000

Approximate population increase since 2010: 150,000

Percentage of Calgarians attending each type of arts event in the past year (2016):

- Live Music Concert or Performance: 58%
- Museum or Heritage Site: 56%
- Live Theatre: 46%
- Art Gallery: 37%
- Local Festival: 36%
- Art Show: 33%
- Dance Performance: 27%
- Public Speaking Event or Debate: 25%
- Opera: 16%

The text continues with additional information and statistics.
Sustainable Action Canmore

Being so close to one of the world’s most revered mountain ranges, Albertans often flock westward on weekends. But, after the Bow Valley saw a rapid increase in human settlement in the 1980s and 90s, a group in Canmore saw a need to preserve the area’s ecological integrity. The Biosphere Institute of the Bow Valley was formed 20 years ago in an effort to research the area, and educate visitors and residents on sustainability.

Executive director Melanie Watt helped launch Sustainable Action Canmore to encourage people to take one action at a time to make sustainability a regular part of everyday life: from composting, to solar panels, to awareness on how to co-exist with wildlife.

Children from Canmore’s Big Fun summer day camp learn how to build indoor composts with “red wriggler” composting worms.
Perceptions of Calgarians
Based on Vital Signs Survey

Calgary’s environmental performance is among the best of all Canadian cities due to City programs that have significantly reduced our environmental footprint.

90% are committed to recycling as often as they can.

88% rate environmental sustainability as important to them.

89% dispose of items with corrosive, toxic or flammable materials in an environmentally conscious manner.

79% rate water quality as excellent/good.

77% rate recycling and waste reduction opportunities as excellent/good.

74% rate green space and parks as excellent/good.

17% of residents in the NE rate green space and parks as below average or poor vs. 5% elsewhere in the city.

75% rate air quality as excellent/good.

Research Indicators
Based on current data

Greenspace and Parks
8,000+ hectares of parkland/natural areas
8,400+ park benches
1,100+ playgrounds
700+ sport fields
600+ baseball diamonds

Waste Per Capita
Over the past 10 years, total waste thrown out has gone down from 750 kg/person to approximately 420 kg/person

Water Withdrawals

Greenhouse Gas Emissions
(ktCO₂e = kilotonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent)

2020 Goal: 20% Reduction from 2005 Levels

2050 Goal: 90% Reduction from 2005 Levels
Approximately six million Canadians have experienced a substance abuse problem in their lifetime, with men being two-and-a-half times more likely than women to face the struggle. Through their 12-step treatment program that offers shelter, comradery, and mental health services, Simon House Recovery Centre has helped more than 4,500 men over the last 35 years.

With 66 beds available, the organization suggests that everyone stays with them for a full year on their road to recovery. Graduates will return to Simon House to run classes and share their own story as proof of what can be accomplished.
This vital priority area includes mental and physical health, well-being and safety.

**Perceptions of Calgarians**

**Based on Vital Signs Survey**

- **47%** are affected by loneliness.
- **19%** of those under 35 years of age report feeling lonely often or always.
- **62%** are satisfied with work/home life balance.
- **20%** are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with work/home life balance.
- **67%** of government employees are satisfied with their work/home life balance, more so than those in the business sector (60%).
- **72%** are happy with their social networks.
- **20%** of relatively new Calgarians (less than five years living here) aren’t happy with their social networks.
- **11%** are unable to cope with daily stress.
- **90%** of seniors are coping with daily stress vs. **69%** of millennials.

**Stress about personal finance is affecting 2 out of 3 Calgarians.**

**Research Indicators**

**Based on current data**

- **Fentanyl Deaths in Alberta**
  - (As a percentage of overall drug overdose deaths)
  - **2014:** 20%
  - **2016:** 42%

- **Medically Assisted Dying**
  - Number of medically assisted deaths in Calgary - second behind Edmonton at 66
  - Average age of those receiving a medically assisted death in Calgary - highest is Central Alberta at 88

- **Children’s Physical Activity**
  - Percentage of children in Alberta who participate in physical activities less than 7 hours per week.
  - **19%**
  - Approx. 110,000 children

- **Adults’ Physical Activity**
  - Only 25% of adults in Calgary own and use an activity tracker.

- **Daily Activities in Calgary**
  - Aggregated statistics from five Calgary shelters
  - **Women’s Shelters**
    - Admitted by two emergency and three second-stage women’s shelters
  - **497 women**
  - **673 children**
  - 5,408 women and children requesting shelter were turned away due to lack of shelter capacity
  - As of June 2017

- **Domestic Crimes**
  - **2012**
  - **2013**
  - **2014**
  - **2015**
  - **2016**

- **Average patient wait times** to be seen by a physician in the ER at Calgary hospitals range from **66 minutes** at the Alberta Children’s Hospital to **96 minutes** at the Peter Lougheed Centre.

- **Average patient wait times** to be seen by a physician in the ER at Calgary hospitals range from **66 minutes** at the Alberta Children’s Hospital to **96 minutes** at the Peter Lougheed Centre.
Quality of Life

Top five things that would improve overall quality of life in Calgary:

- Improve transit/public transportation: 18%
- More affordable housing: 12%
- Improvements to gov. spending/taxpayer money: 9%
- Better planned neighbourhoods: 9%
- More diverse economy/better economy: 8%

Belonging

Strength of belonging increases with age and, conversely, feelings of being out of place diminish with age.

- Sense of Belonging
  - Very Strong: 16%
  - Somewhat Strong: 49%
  - Somewhat Weak: 29%
  - Very Weak: 5%

Frequency of Feeling Uncomfortable/Out of Place

- Very rarely/never: 47% rarely/never: 26%
- Sometimes: 20%
- Often: 7%
- Very often/always: 2%

Giving Back

Those with a strong sense of purpose in life are also more likely to be active volunteers, regular donors to charity, and have a strong quality of life and strong sense of belonging to their community.

Volunteering increases with age

- <35: 30% volunteer regularly
- 65+: 52% volunteer regularly

86% of those who are regular charitable donors also volunteer on a regular or semi-regular basis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donations</th>
<th>Volunteering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a year</td>
<td>Once a year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once every 6 months</td>
<td>Once every 6 months</td>
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<td>Once every 3 months</td>
<td>Once every 3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Volunteering activities

- Local/Community: 36%
- Education: 27%
- Arts/Heritage: 23%
- Social Justice: 19%
- Seniors: 13%
- Hospitals/Health: 12%
- Event/Fundraising: 31%
- Sports/Recreation: 23%
- Children/Youth: 22%
- Religion: 17%
- Environment: 13%
- Animal Welfare: 9%
What do Calgarians value? Respondents were asked to pick their top three values.

**Most Important Value:**

- **79%**
  - Relationships

**Other Main Values:**

- **48%**
  - Health
- **30%**
  - Spare-time/Holidays
- **29%**
  - Work

**Less Common Values:**

- **18%**
  - Sports/Fitness
- **17%**
  - Education
- **17%**
  - Arts/Culture
- **15%**
  - Philanthropy
- **13%**
  - Money
- **12%**
  - Religion/Spirituality

**Discover More**

The incredible response from community to this year’s Vital Signs survey has given us much more information than we could fit in this report.

To learn more about the survey findings and links to our research sources, visit our new website: calgaryvitalsigns.ca

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facebook.com/calgaryfoundation

While visiting a local wetland with the Miskwabi Institute, four-year-old Taylor watches the ducks with her mom.
Research
Local experts representing a range of Calgary organizations provided research support to ensure that the indicators used for Calgary’s Vital Signs are relevant, accurate and comprehensive. This year’s survey also included questions gathered at a national level by Statistics Canada’s Community Health Survey which allowed Calgary Foundation to validate and compare responses to this large national survey.

2017 Community Research Partners & Sources
Alberta Centre for Active Living
Alberta Council of Women’s Shelters
Alberta Education
Alberta Health Services
Alberta Human Services
Alberta Indigenous Relations
Alberta Office of Statistics and Information
Arts Commons
Bankruptcy Canada
Calgary Arts Development
Calgary Economic Development
Calgary EATS
Calgary Herald
Calgary Homeless Foundation
Calgary Police Service
Calgary Real Estate Board
Calgary Seniors Resource Society
Calgary Sun
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
Canada Without Poverty
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
Canadian Institute for Health Information
Centre for Suicide Prevention
City of Calgary
Community Foundations of Canada
Conference Board of Canada
Employment and Social Development Canada
Environment Canada
Food Banks Canada
Public Health Agency of Canada
RBC Economics
Statistics Canada
Vibrant Communities Calgary

Community Knowledge Centre (CKC) is a website that brings to life the work of registered charities in Calgary and area. Through individual profiles, organizations showcase their innovative and impactful solutions to community issues. CKC is a powerful resource to share the Foundation’s knowledge of community, with community. ckc.calgaryfoundation.org

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Vital Signs® is a national program led by community foundations and coordinated by Community Foundations of Canada that leverages local knowledge to measure the vitality of our communities and supports action towards improving our quality of life.

communityfoundations.ca/vitalsigns

2017 Calgary’s Vital Signs
Project management: Calgary Foundation Communications Team
Research and survey: NRG Research Group
Design: juice
Photography: Jennifer Friesen

2016 – 2017
Calgary Foundation
Fast Facts
Assets
$925.6 million
New gifts
$26 million
New funds
$40.2 million
granted to
896 organizations

CALGARY’S
Vital Signs
Since 1955, the Calgary Foundation has nurtured a vibrant community that values diversity and supports all people. We build a community where citizens are engaged and where a strong and sustainable charitable sector serves the current and emerging needs of Calgary and area.

calgaryfoundation.org

Vital Signs
Calgary’s Vital Signs is an annual check-up that measures the vitality of our community and identifies significant trends. The Vital Signs report combines expert research with the results of a survey, where citizens assign grades and provide comments in issue areas that are critical to quality of life in Calgary.

calgaryvitalsigns.ca

calgaryfoundation.org
Athena Saloy pokes her head into a tipi during The Alex’s annual People’s Gathering celebration.
Further details on indicators and sources can be found at calgaryvitalsigns.ca
calgaryfoundation.org
403-802-7700

Cover photo:
One of the artists from A Warrior’s Journey, presented by the Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth, performs in a series of vignettes on the healing journey of Indian residential school survivors.