



**Homelessness Society**  
*of the* **Bow Valley**

**Addressing Rural Homelessness in One of Canada's Tourism Hot-Spots**

# Who is the Homelessness Society of the Bow Valley (HSBV)?

Incorporated, local &  
community-based  
non-profit society

Team of 29 volunteers  
& staff



Two Core Programs:  
Outreach &  
Emergency Shelter

Focused on  
supporting those who  
are unhoused and/or  
housing insecure  
within the Bow Valley



## FACES OF HSBV



# MISSION

HSBV is a community-based organization with the mission to:

- Support and advocate for individuals who are without shelter
- Provide low barrier emergency shelter that has few requirements for entry
- Provide shelter and programs, especially during coldest months of the year
- Build trust to facilitate individuals' access to the local system of care

# VISION

We believe that...

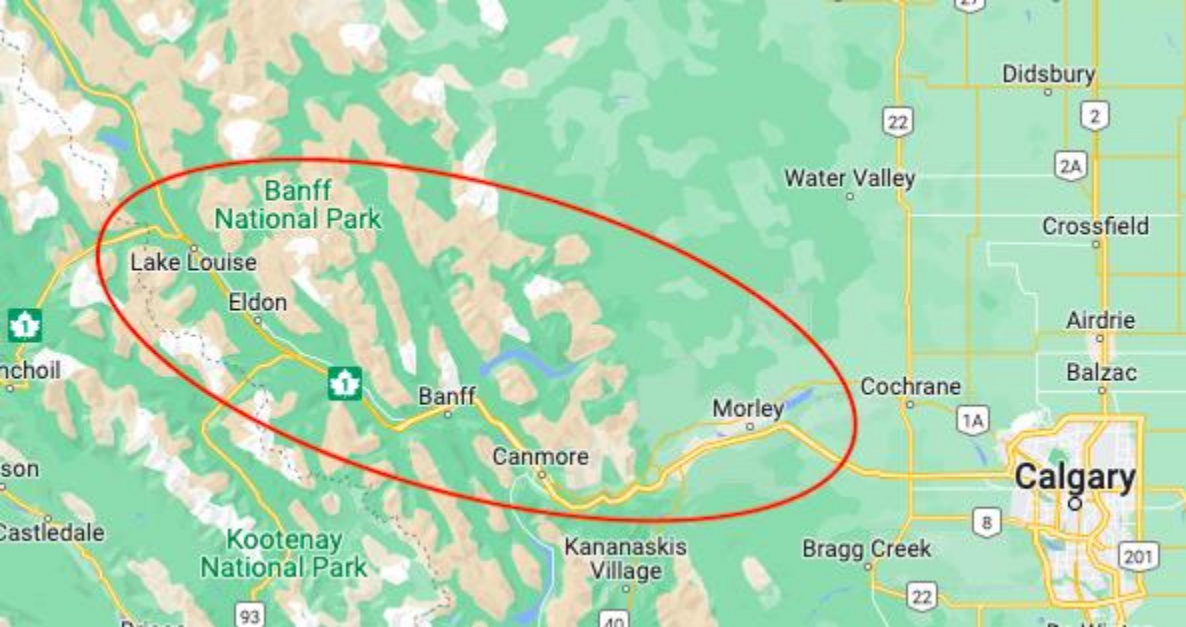
**1** Housing is a basic right.

**2** Anyone who is unhoused or housing insecure in the Bow Valley should have access to safe accommodation and supports.

**3** In the importance of having community-based, wrap-around supports and services.

**4** In diversity, equity, and inclusion.

# Where is the Bow Valley?



# TOURISM

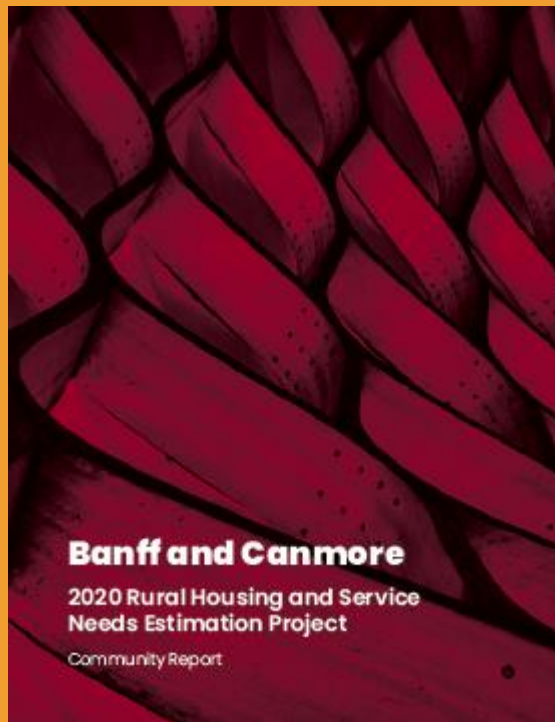


## Economic Landscape



## COST OF LIVING

# Rural Development Network: *2020 Rural Housing & Service Needs Estimation Project*



*Rural Development Network, 2020*





# Bow Valley (Banff & Canmore)

2023 Alberta Provincial Housing And Service Needs Estimation

**3,999**

**Total Community Members Experiencing Housing Insecurity**

**30%** of respondents stayed in foster care, a youth group home, or under a youth agreement in the past.

Out of the 1,092 survey submissions, there were 61 respondents who were found to be housing secure, and 1,091 were found to be housing insecure.



**100%** of those are housing insecure.  
**92%** of those are Indigenous

**100%** of youth (age 14-19) respondents are housing insecure.

**98%** of queer respondents are housing insecure.

There were 1,061 dependents and 1,847 adults who shared housing insecure conditions with the 1,091 housing insecure respondents.

**38%** accessed an emergency shelter in the last 12 months.

**significant barriers to shelter access:**

- shelter was full
- didn't feel safe at the shelter
- right kind of shelter was not available

**Community Need: Housing** 47% no, there is not enough accessible & affordable housing

## Employment Status and Type



90% of housing insecure respondents are employed.

71% of those are full-time, and 20% are part-time, with 7% working casual.

## Top Reasons For Housing Instability



low wages



can't afford rent/mortgage payments



increasing rent costs

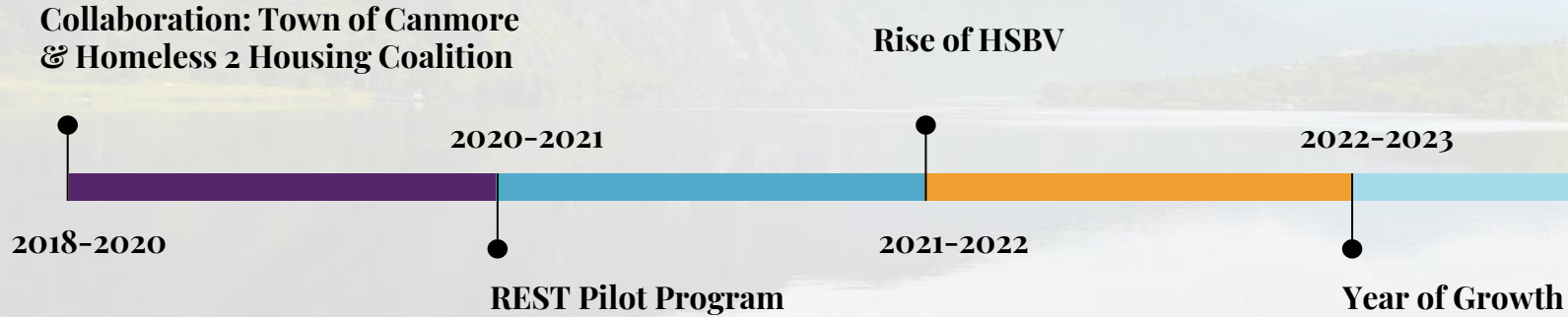


# Rural Development Network: 2023 Service Needs Estimation Project

3,999 community members experiencing housing insecurity

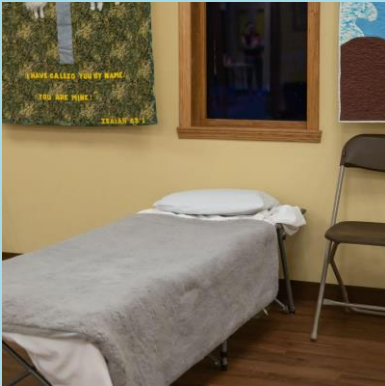
90% of whom are employed

# A Look Back at Where We Came From



# Emergency Winter Shelter

- Low-barrier, emergency winter shelter
- Harm reduction focused
- 5-6 guests/night can be accommodated
- 2 staff present during use



St. Michael's Anglican Church,  
Canmore, AB



Scout Hall, Canmore, AB

# Outreach Program

- 2023 Year Round Outreach (first time ever!)
- Phone, email & Facebook monitored daily
- Team of 3 Staff
- Outreach supports:

System  
Navigation

Questions &  
Inquiries

Emergency  
Supports

30

unique individuals

263

bed nights

2022-2023

## Emergency Shelter Operating Season

2.3

guests/night

16

partner referrals

# Who is accessing the emergency winter shelter?

A total of 7 voluntary demographic surveys were completed across the operating period and revealed that of all participants:

**71%**

**Identified as  
Caucasian**

**29%**

**Identified as  
First Nations**

**86%**

**Between the  
ages of 36-55**

**14%**

**Between the  
ages of 56-64**

# Through the Years: Comparison of Operations

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Total Guests Served	17	26	30
Total Bed Nights	104	296	263

# Feedback Sessions

**Guests**

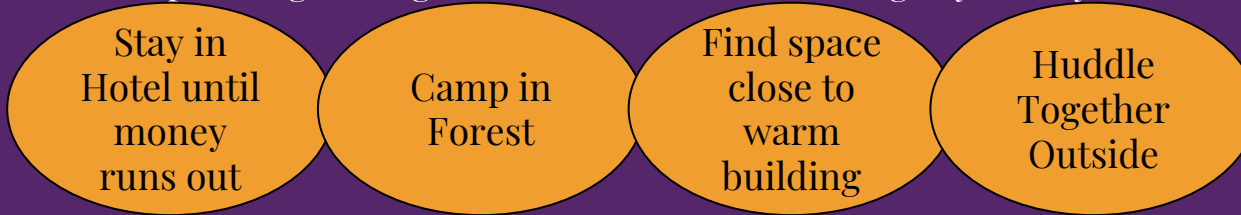
**Staff**

**Volunteers**

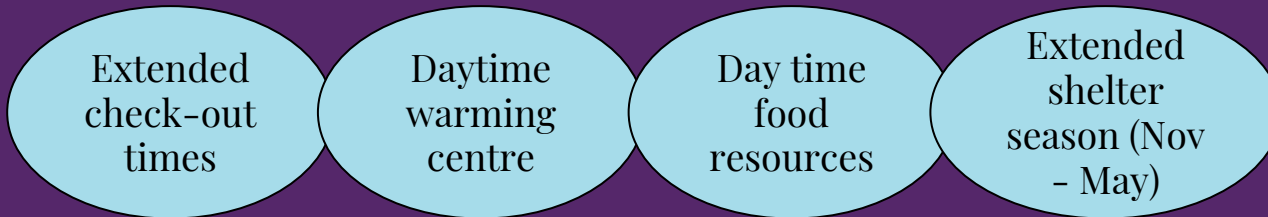
**Community  
Partners**

# Guest Feedback

If the shelter wasn't operating through the winter, where else might you stay?



What, if anything, would you change about the Shelter Program?





# Community Partner Feedback

Online Community Partner survey distributed to gather suggestions and feedback about our programs, 5 responses:

**Alberta Health  
Services**

**Bow Valley  
Food Alliance**

**FCSS  
Canmore**

**Primary Care  
Network**

**Job Resource  
Centre**

Somewhat Clear  
20%

Clear  
20%

In your  
opinion, how  
clearly do you  
and your team  
members  
understand  
our programs  
and services?

Very Clear  
60%

No  
20%

Have you ever referred an  
individual to our programs?

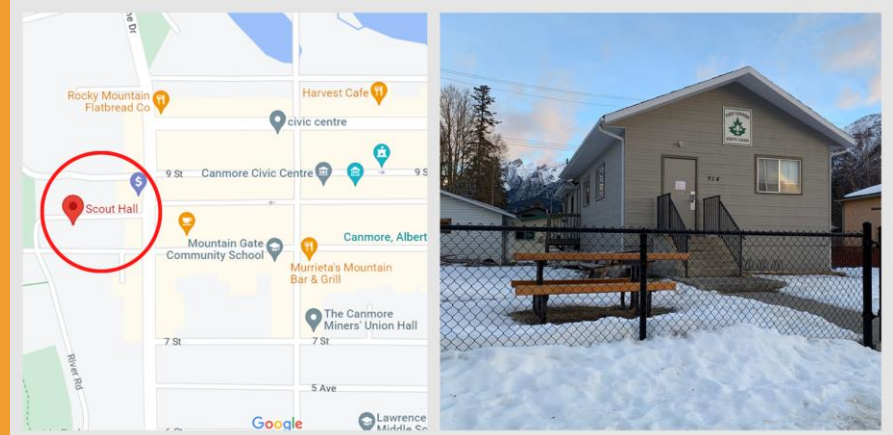
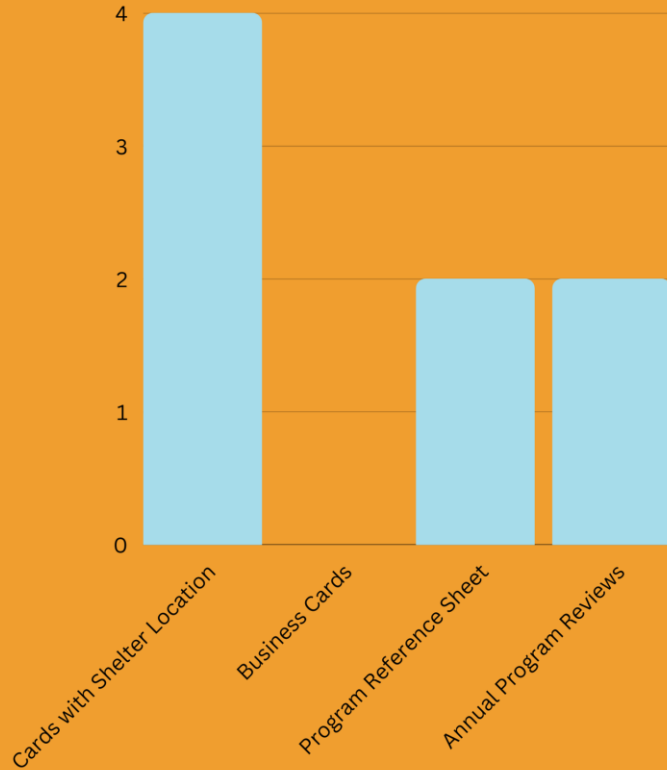
Yes  
80%

Neither Easy Nor Difficult  
25%

If yes, how easy was it for you to  
refer clients to our service?

Very Easy  
75%

# Community Partner Feedback



## NEED SHELTER FROM THE COLD?

Our Shelter, located at Scout Hall, is open nightly to anyone without alternative safe, warm accommodation. For directions, please turn over this card or, visit our website. This is a low barrier shelter therefore identification and proof of vaccination are not required.

**Check In - 9:30 PM to 11:00 PM**

 403-493-3771

 Scout Hall, 914 8 St, Canmore, AB

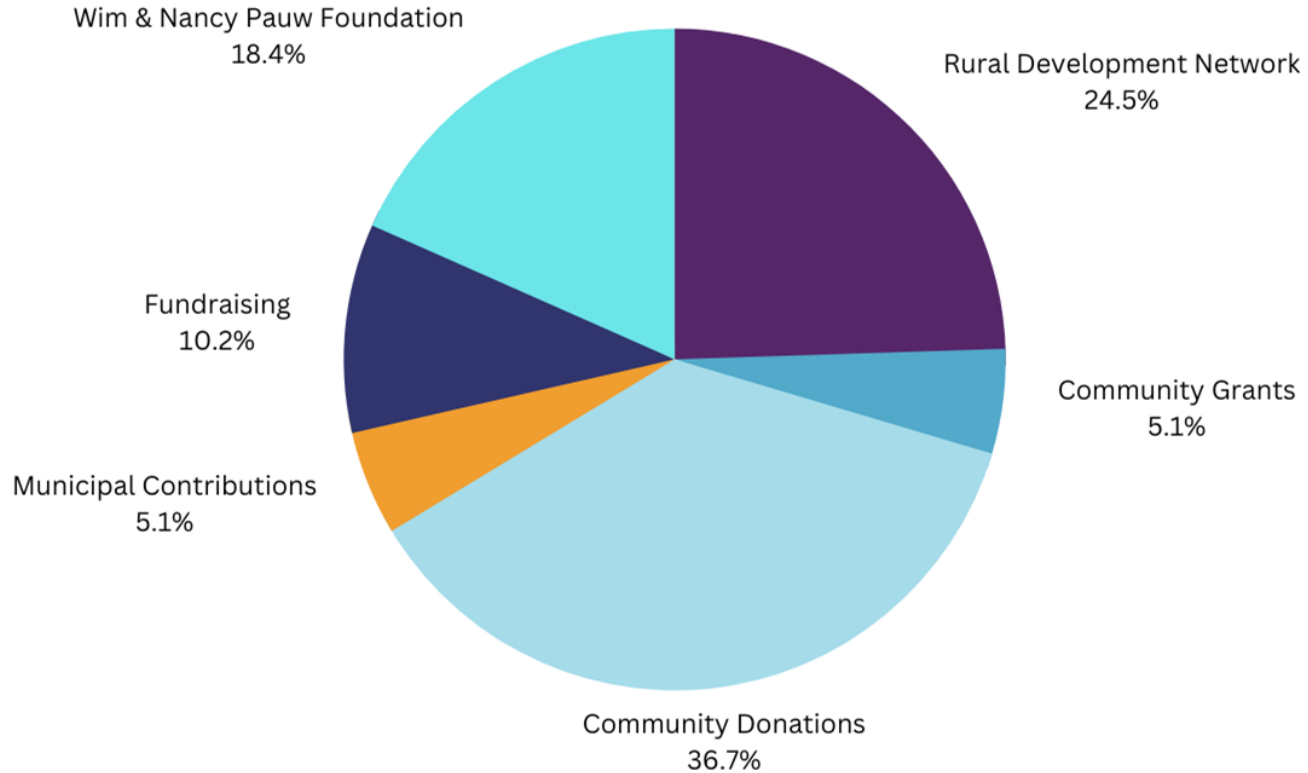
 [bowvalleyshelter.ca](http://bowvalleyshelter.ca)

# What's to come for HSBV?

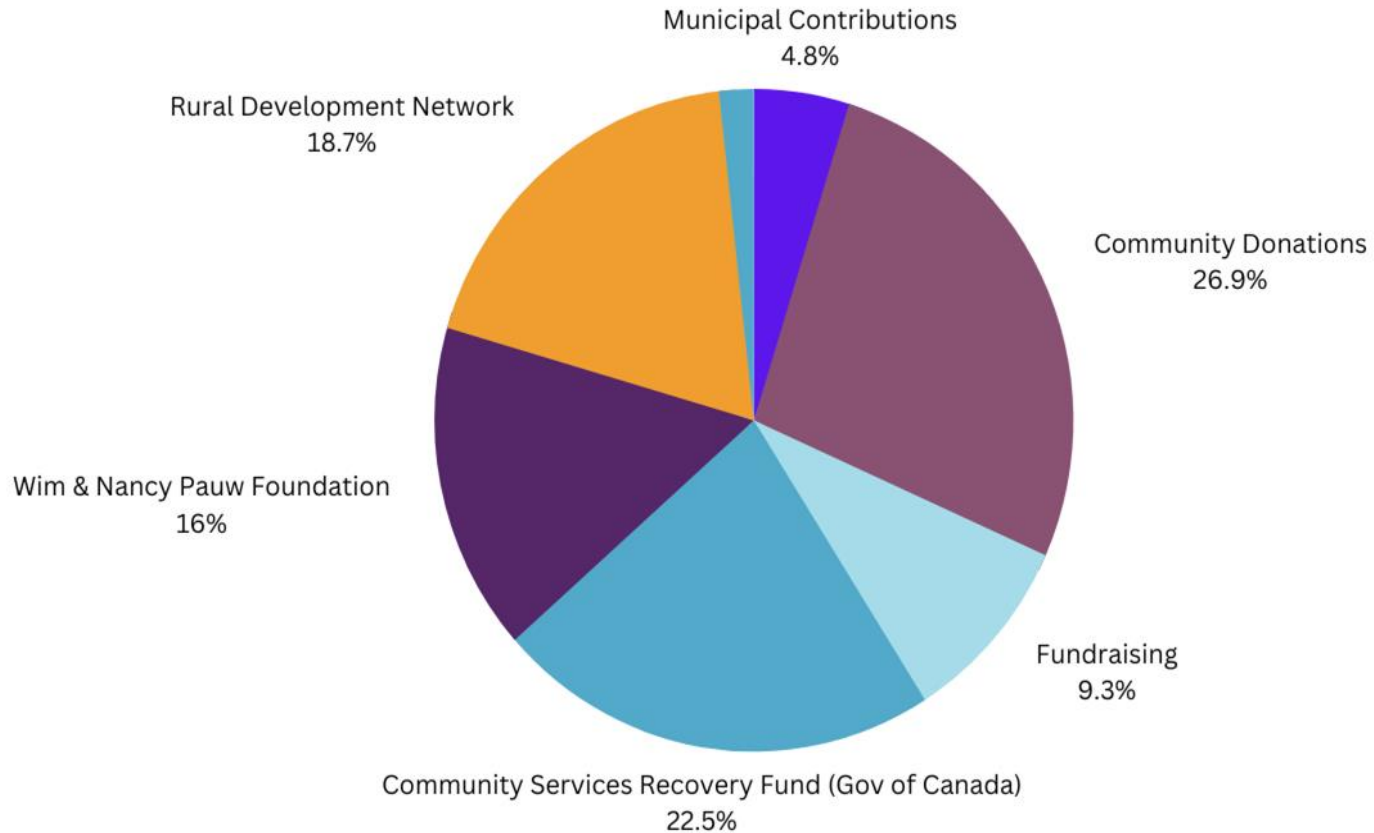
**Charitable Status**

**Long-Term  
Sustainable  
Funding**

# 2022/2023 Funding Breakdown



# 2023/2024 Funding Breakdown



# What's to come for HSBV?

**Charitable Status**

**Long-Term  
Sustainable  
Funding**

**Permanent  
Shelter Space**

# Exploring Long-Term Solutions: Shelter Pods



Drayton Valley, AB Shelter Pods  
Ref.: CTV News, 2022

- Modular Pod Units
- Benefits:
  - Permanency
  - Guest Privacy
  - Reduced Staffing Costs
  - Mobility of Units
- Challenges
  - Funding
  - Location
- Reference Articles Available

# What's to come for HSBV?

**Charitable Status**

**Long-Term  
Sustainable  
Funding**

**Permanent  
Shelter Space**

**Enhanced  
Advocacy &  
Collaboration**





# KEY LEARNINGS

# Power of Community & Connection

**Over 50%** of our emergency shelter guests were directly referred to our program by community partners including:

**7**  
RCMP

**6**  
Hospital

**2**  
YWCA Banff

**1**  
Elevation  
Place

# Awareness & Compassion

**Be aware of hidden homelessness**

**Advocacy**

**Build community awareness (events, presentations)**

**Physical Community Cards**



# **Continued Growth & Development**

**Understand Local Context**

**Build Connections & Relationships**

**Seek Feedback from Clients, Partners & Internal Team**

**Expand Team**



**Thank you for your time!**



# Homelessness Society *of the* **Bow Valley**



[bowvalleyshelter.ca](http://bowvalleyshelter.ca)

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OUTREACH PROGRAM:

 (403) 493-3771

# References

Ekelund, B. (2022, July 6). *Drayton Valley Opens New Shelter Pods for Residents Needing a Place to Rest*. Retrieved from <https://edmonton.ctvnews.ca/drayton-valley-opens-new-shelter-pods-for-residents-needing-a-place-to-rest-1.5977052>.

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Rural Development Network. (2021). (rep.). *Banff and Canmore: 2020 Rural Housing and Service Needs Estimation Project Community Report*. Rural Development Network. Retrieved from <https://www.dropbox.com/s/yorqs1unzkl2vdx/Bow%20Valley%20Report%20VFinal%20-%20May%2031%2C%202021.pdf?dl=0>.