

Community Outreach

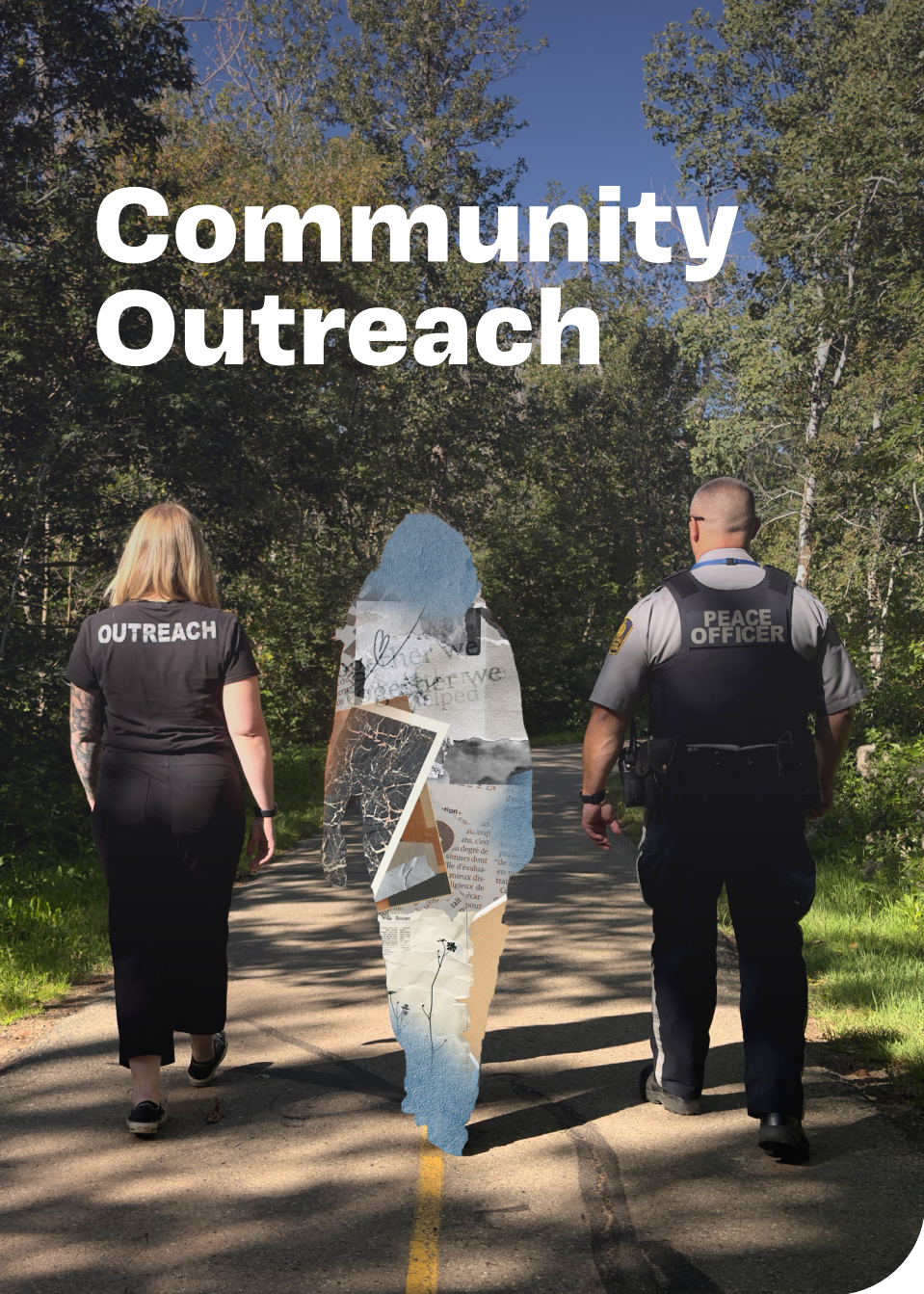


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The City of Spruce Grove is honoured to acknowledge the land we work, play, and make our homes on as Treaty 6 territory, and the Métis Homeland.

This is sacred land that holds the hearts, footsteps and spirits of many First Nation, Métis and Inuit Peoples, and in particular, Paul First Nation, Enoch Cree Nation, Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation, Michel First Nation, Alexander First Nation, the Lac Ste. Anne Métis, and Métis Nation of Alberta District 8.

We recognize and acknowledge Indigenous values, traditional teachings, ways of being, contributions, and historical inequities. The City is dedicated to Truth and Reconciliation to help in healing, and learning to build reciprocal and trusted relationships.

We commit towards strengthening relations and building bridges with the Indigenous Nations whose traditional territories the City is located within.

As part of our ongoing commitment, we acknowledge Indigenous homelessness is more than the absence of housing; it reflects ongoing disconnection from land, culture, identity, and community rooted in the ongoing impacts of colonialism.

This handbook aims to help support understanding of individuals experiencing vulnerability in Spruce Grove, including providing an overview of our City's and community's role in supporting individuals. By understanding key definitions, local challenges, and available resources, individuals, businesses, and organizations can work together to support those in need.



Key Definitions

Unsheltered: Individuals experiencing absolute homelessness such as living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation (*e.g., living in tents, parks, vehicles, garages, etc.*).

Emergency sheltered: People who are staying in shelters or temporary accommodations due to homelessness, family violence or fleeing a natural disaster.

Provisionally accommodated: People who have a place to stay, but it's not permanent or they aren't guaranteed to stay there for long (*e.g., couch surfing or living in transitional housing*).

At risk of homelessness: People who are not yet homeless but whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards (*e.g., those experiencing job instability or sudden unemployment, households facing evictions, housing with transitional supports about to be discontinued, breakdown in family relationships, people facing or living in direct fear of violence/abuse, people with chronically unmet needs*).

(Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2017).

Vulnerability: The increased risk that some individuals face due to factors such as unstable housing, lack of essential resources, and social isolation.

Social disorder: Disruptions in public spaces that can be caused by individuals struggling to have their basic needs met such as food, shelter, healthcare or safety. When individuals lack access to essential resources, they may engage in behaviours such as sleeping in unsafe locations, seeking refuge in business areas, or acting out due to stress or survival needs. Addressing social disorder effectively means recognizing the root causes that contribute to this behaviour, and connecting people with the right supports, rather than just managing the symptoms.

Supported by the *Building Safer Communities Fund*, the Community Outreach Program uses evidence-based strategies to address the underlying causes of gang and gun violence—helping Spruce Grove remain a safe and welcoming community.

Community Context

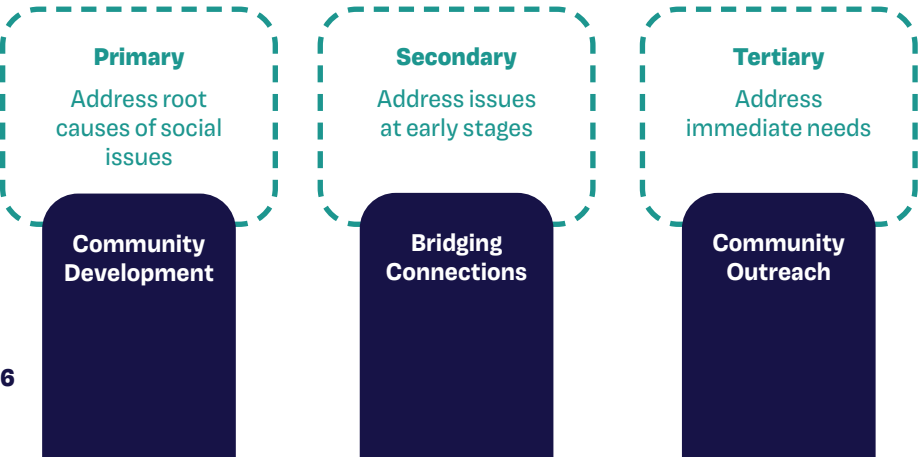
Communities of all sizes across North America are seeing a significant increase in individuals living without shelter.

Systemic factors like a lack of affordable housing, lack of access to coordinated supports and services, and economic conditions (e.g., employment rates and cost of living), and individual factors like chronic illness, past trauma, and domestic abuse have complex and compound effects that contribute to being unsheltered.

A multi-pronged approach that addresses both individual vulnerabilities and systemic failures is required to create the conditions where everyone can access the housing options that meet their needs.

-Spruce Grove’s Social Sustainability Plan Refresh 2023, p. 13

The Community Social Development (CSD) department is part of the Community and Protective Services division at the City of Spruce Grove. CSD is dedicated to helping build a strong, inclusive community that meets the diverse needs of residents—both now and in the future. In keeping with the City’s municipal role in social services, the department focuses on addressing social issues along the prevention spectrum in the following ways:

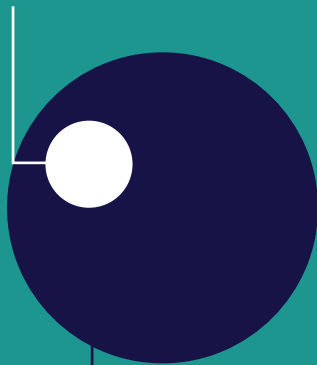


In 2024, the Community Outreach Team supported individuals facing complex barriers to well-being ranging in age from **17 to 90**.



In **2024**, the Community Outreach Team provided **5649** instances of support including:

1588 welfare checks



5649 instances of support

This proactive community work has positively impacted community safety. It is important to remember that homelessness itself does not create social disorder, but when residents face unmet needs like lack of shelter, food, or healthcare, survival-driven behaviours can sometimes lead to disruptions in public spaces.

After the Community Outreach Team was established, calls to Enforcement Services related to homelessness and social disorder decreased significantly.

Enforcement Services files related to homelessness/social disorder



Community Outreach

How we support individuals



Jack's Journey to Stability

At 28, long-time Spruce Grove resident, Jack* was living rough in the community. He dealt with chronic pain from an accident, mental health concerns, substance use, and frequent interactions with the justice system. At first, he wasn't interested in receiving support from the Community Outreach Team—but the team kept showing up.

- Over ten months, the Community Outreach Team connected with Jack 190 times—for medical care, legal support, basic needs like food and clothing, and wellness checks.
- Through collaboration with hospitals, psychologists, RCMP, and housing teams, Jack was able to secure Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) and find permanent supportive housing.

Helping Residents Find the Right Support

Jack's story reflects the reality for many—whether a youth experiencing homelessness or a senior living in their vehicle, barriers to stability are complex. The City's Community Outreach Team meets people where they are, offering guidance, resources, and support at the right time.

**name changed to ensure privacy*



A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a dark blue polo shirt and jeans, is walking towards the right. A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white lab coat over a blue patterned shirt and dark blue pants, is walking towards the left. They are walking on a paved path next to a light-colored stone wall. The image has a dark overlay at the bottom where the text is located.

Community Outreach

How we support businesses

Navigating Social Challenges

Running a business means more than daily operations—sometimes, businesses become frontline spaces for vulnerable individuals.

Social disorder is often linked to unmet needs, and the City of Spruce Grove's Community Outreach Team helps businesses respond effectively.

Business employees may encounter people using washrooms, frequenting alleys, or needing food. These situations can feel overwhelming. The Community Outreach Team listens, develops practical solutions, and offers guidance on how to handle concerns, such as:

- Training for business employees, building confidence in how to respond to social concerns.
- Engaging in regular area checks behind buildings, and supporting solution-focused planning by applying Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles as supported by the team's Community Peace Officer.
- Direct support when vulnerable individuals need resources, referrals, or assistance.

A Recent Success Story

One local business with public showers saw an increase in visitors needing a safe place to clean up. With Community Outreach Team support:

- Changes to the shower pass program ensured ongoing access for those in need.
- Clear expectations were set for facility use, leading to fewer concerns.
- Business staff reported greater confidence in assisting vulnerable residents.



Community Outreach

How we work
with community
partners

Collaboration for Lasting Support

Helping vulnerable residents is a team effort. The City of Spruce Grove's Community Outreach Team works alongside non-profits, government agencies, and police to ensure individuals receive the right support at the right time.

How Community Partners Make a Difference

Support varies based on individual needs, including, *but not limited to*:

- Emergency prescriptions for those unable to afford medication.
- Temporary hotel stays for families fleeing domestic violence.
- Follow-ups and connections during evenings and weekends.

Beyond Housing: Building Stability

Take Jack, for example. After securing permanent supportive housing, partners stepped up to help him settle in with the following supports:

- Social media drives provided household essentials.
- Guided walks helped Jack navigate his new neighbourhood.
- Regular check-ins ensured ongoing stability and well-being.

Finding housing is only the first step—maintaining stability requires community connection and long-term support.



MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

CITY OF SPRUCE GROVE



City Hall



Development and building permits and fees



Family and Community Support Services

(20% Municipal government / 80% Provincial government)



Municipal police force
(ie. Parkland RCMP)



Local road maintenance and improvement



Parks, trails and playgrounds



Property tax
(municipal portion)



Protective Services



Recreation facilities



Senior's supportive housing
(ie. Meridian Foundation)



Social services
(education and awareness of services available)



Transit



Utilities
(water, sewer, wastewater)



Waste collection



PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

ALBERTA



Employer and employee support



Family and Community Support Services

(80% Provincial government / 20% Municipal government)



Highways



Hospitals



Housing



Justice



Landlord and tenant support



Post-secondary education



Property tax
(provincial portion)



Safety enforcement



Schools



Social services
(treatment and specialized services, domestic violence shelters)



Student loans



FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

CANADA



Airports



Borders and passports



Broadcasting and telecommunications



Canada Child Benefit



Charter of Human Rights



Employment insurance



Fisheries, oceans and national parks



Income tax



International travel and support for Canadians abroad



Mortgages
(ie. Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation)



National RCMP



National defence and veteran's affairs



Postal service



Student loans

Contact Us

Community Outreach Team

Call for non-emergency social supports **780-962-7583**.

Enforcement Services non-emergency line

To report a non-emergency incident or make a bylaw, parking, or driving complaint, etc., call **780-962-7586**.

Emergencies or safety concerns

Always call **911**.

Together, we can make sure the right calls go to the right places.





sprucegrove.org/Outreach