Rocky View County

Social Needs Assessment

ROCKY VIEW COUNTY

Project Support Team

Rocky View County Family and Community Support Services

Consulting Support Team

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Executive Summary

In early 2022 Rocky View County Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) sought the support of a consulting team to conduct a Social Needs Assessment (SNA) for the County. The purpose of this project was to develop a clear understanding of the social needs of its residents. The information collected will be used in the County's decision making for Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) funding, which aims to enhance the lives of everyone in the community.

This assessment involved a comprehensive engagement process consisting of resident and youth surveys, working sessions with agency stakeholders, and in-depth interviews. Overall, 1,948 individuals participated in the engagement process.

Priorities

The information collected through the SNA was analyzed to identify priority social needs within the County. In total, five priority social needs were identified. These five priority social needs were:

1. Mental Health Supports
2. Seniors Supports
3. Children and Youth Supports
4. Community Connections
5. Collaborative Partnerships

The five priority social needs were consistent across all quadrants in the County.

Strengths

In addition to these priorities, the following three items were identified as key strengths in the County.

1. The strong sense of community across the County.
2. The fact that the County is a good place to raise a family.
3. The strong perception that quality of life in the County is high.

Recommendations

Two actions are recommended to move the results of the SNA forward.

First, it is recommended that the FCSS Board use the results of the SNA to identify funding priorities for the County. This will ensure the FCSS Board's funding decisions align with and help to address the priority social needs identified during the SNA.

Second, it is recommended that the SNA be reviewed in three to five years (i.e., between 2026 and 2028) to determine what aspects of the plan need to be updated and revised. This will ensure that the SNA continues to be relevant to the FCSS Board when they are making funding decisions.

Introduction

According to the FCSS Program Handbook[1], FCSS is a unique 80/20 funding partnership between the Government of Alberta and participating municipalities and Métis settlements. At a provincial level, the FCSS Program receives its mandate from the FCSS Act and Regulation. The Act describes what the municipalities or Metis Settlement can do to provide citizens access to preventive social services. The Regulation describes how services can be provided and details the service requirements a municipality or Métis Settlement must meet to be eligible for funding. At the local level, a municipality or Métis Settlement chooses whether to establish a program and enters into an agreement with the province to jointly fund FCSS activities.

A key principle of the FCSS Program is local responsibility for priority-setting and resource allocation. Using the parameters of the FCSS Act and Regulation, each municipality or Métis Settlement determines how much of the allocated grant funding it will access from the province and how this funding should be used to best meet the needs of their community. Part of this decision-making process involves ensuring that the required 20 per cent matching share is available and that its source is the operating budget of the municipality or Métis Settlement.

In Rocky View County, FCSS is a partnership between the Province of Alberta and the County. Through this partnership, the County operates as an external grant funder and provides funding to various non-profit organizations and agencies to enhance the social well-being of individuals and families through preventive programming, promotion, or intervention strategies provided at the earliest opportunity.

Each municipality needs to decide for itself what its principles and approach will be. Many FCSS Programs are a combination of community development and community-based services. Whether an FCSS Program wants to provide direct services or facilitate others to provide services through funding, the role of FCSS is to ensure community involvement and input make change happen.

Regardless of the principles and approach chosen, FCSS Programs must be:

- Future not past oriented
- Focused on a group in the community or section of the community, rather than the individuals
- Innovative and driven by local needs
- Delivered in collaboration with other community agencies
- Build to create capacity so people can help themselves

FCSS Programs often support community development by:

- Encouraging people to work together and solve issues together
- Shedding light on issues that impact people's quality of life
- Helping communities be nimble and adapt to change
- Setting goals and helping people work toward achieving these goals

[1] Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Program Handbook. (2010). Government of Alberta.

[2] Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Accountability Framework. (2022). Government of Alberta.

FCSS, Prevention, and Community Development

According to the FCSS Regulation, participating municipalities and Métis Settlements are obligated by legislation to "promote, encourage and facilitate the development of stronger communities." FCSS, by its legislated nature participates in community development. Communities can be strengthened through supporting individual and creating opportunities for community connection, which can result in preventing the broader impacts of social issues that appear during times of crisis.

The Prevention Continuum

According to the FCSS Accountability Framework[2], prevention in the context of FCSS focuses on enhancing protective factors to improve well-being and prevent problems before they occur or at an early stage before they require crisis supports. There are three levels of prevention: primary, secondary, and tertiary.

1. Primary prevention focuses on the general population or on broad subsets of the population who may be at higher risk, with the intent of promoting protective factors in the physical or social environment. Some examples include activities to support public education and awareness campaigns such as family violence prevention month, increasing community connectedness and partnerships, or promoting and supporting volunteerism.
2. Secondary prevention focuses on specific groups or at-risk populations to address issues at an early stage. This may include the groups identified above as having higher levels of vulnerability. Some examples are creating opportunities for social inclusion, skill development courses such as building healthy relationships, or connecting those in need with appropriate resources.
3. Tertiary prevention focuses on managing crisis and providing treatment and rehabilitative services. Efforts are typically intensive and strive to minimize the long-term impact of issues.

FCSS Programs focus on primary prevention and secondary prevention. These levels are described in the table below.

Table 1: FCSS Prevention Continuum[3]

FCSS Services	Primary Prevention	• Address root causes of social issues with focus on the general population or a specific population • Promote protective factors in the physical and social environment (including social relationships) • Can include awareness programs, enhacing connections among community organizations and promoting community volunteerism
	Secondary Prevention	• Address issues at an early stage for specific groups or at-risk groups • Strengthen the capacity of individuals and communities to prevent or reduce risk factors and build resiliance • Can include connectring those in need with appropriate resources and skill development
Additional services permitted only during a public health emergency or extenuating circumstances, as determined by Minister	Tertiary Prevention	• Address immediate needs with intent to prevent long-term impacts • Support individuals or groups already affected by social issues by providing direct services • Can include direct assistance such as food and shelter

[3] Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Accountability Framework. (2022). Government of Alberta.

Social Needs Assessment Project Description

In early 2022 Rocky View County FCSS sought the support of a consulting team to conduct a Social Needs Assessment (SNA). The purpose of this SNA was to develop a better understanding of the social needs of its residents. The information collected will be used to assist the FCSS Board in setting priorities that will support the decision-making funding process aimed at enhancing the lives of everyone within the County.

Values and Principles Guiding the Social Needs Assessment Process

The consulting team adopted a core set of guiding values and principles to lead its efforts in the completion of the SNA. These values and principles were rooted in the team's previous experience developing and implementing needs assessments and social policy reviews. At a fundamental level, the team believed the project success would be driven by the following:

- Adopting an approach that builds local strengths.
- Providing opportunities for engagement across a wide cross section of the community.
- Using multiple sources of information (i.e., surveys, interviews, etc.) to identify issues and their root causes.
- Creating results that can be used by the FCSS Board to identify a funding priority framework.

Further, the consulting team operated in accordance with the following principles:

- The definition of prevention was consistent with the *FCSS Act and FCSS Regulation*.
- Inclusion and diversity were supported by seeking to engage broadly with rural and urban residents, youth, and organizations.

Finally, it is hoped that the results of this project will assist the FCSS Board as it works to meet its desired outcomes. The energy and resources that all parties who contributed to this project will have been well invested if this goal is achieved.

Methodology

The consulting team utilized a mixed method approach that consisted of both quantitative and qualitative strategies to gather, analyze, and interpret data from multiple sources. The specific strategies utilized for each component of the project are outlined below.

Community Profile

Data from Statistics Canada was used to construct a comprehensive community profile that accurately describes salient characteristics of the population that resides within the boundaries of Rocky View County (e.g., size, age, family status, income level). This profile can be found in Appendix 1.

Document and Resource Review

Rocky View County provided several key documents and resources to review, including the final report from the last community needs assessment conducted in 2010. The text, figures, and charts within these documents and resources were reviewed, and pertinent information related to social needs was extracted. This information was then themed and summarized to generate a clear summary of learnings and to formulate priorities for action. A summary of the learnings that emerged from this review can be found in Appendix 2.

Engagement Process

An engagement process consisting of semi-structured stakeholder interviews, community engagement working sessions, and online surveys was carried out to identify the top social needs across the County.

Two types of interviews were carried out: introductory, scoping interviews and in-depth interviews with representatives from human service and non-profit agencies within Rocky View County and its surround jurisdictions. Scoping interviews with 14 individuals were carried out and 32 in-depth interviews with representatives from human service and non-profit agencies in Rocky View County and its surround jurisdictions were carried out. The majority of these interviews were carried out virtually and over the telephone, however, some were carried out in-person.

Three working sessions involving agency and community organization staff and volunteers and County residents were held in Langdon, Springbank, and at the Rocky View County Office. In total 23 individuals attended and actively participated in the working sessions.

Two online surveys were administered: a resident survey and a youth survey. To maximize response rates, postcards with URLs and QR codes directing residents and youth to the surveys were distributed to all homes within the County. Further, the survey was promoted heavily through the County website and social media accounts as well as through the local newspaper, the Rocky View Weekly. Agencies throughout the County also supported survey promotion by directing clients and other key stakeholders to the survey online.

A total of 1,286 responses to the resident surveys were received and 593 responses to the youth survey were received. Overall, 1,879 unique individuals shared their input through a survey. A summary of the information collected through these surveys can be found in Appendix 4.

Priorities Identified Through the Social Needs Assessment Process

The information collected through the SNA was carefully analyzed to identify priority social needs for Rocky View County overall and each geographic quadrant in the County. The communities in each geographic quadrant were as follows.

Northwest Quadrant	Northeast Quadrant
• Cochrane (rural area) • Cochrane Lake • Bottrel • Madden • Bearspaw	• Airdrie (rural area) • Delacour • Dalroy • Kathryn • Beiseker (rural area) • Irricana (rural area) • Balzac • Keoma • Janet • Crossfield (rural area)
Southwest Quadrant	**Southeast Quadrant**
• Springbank • Bragg Creek • Elbow Valley	• Langdon • Chestermere (rural area) • Conrich • Indus • Dalemead

In total, five priority social needs were identified. These five priority social needs were:

1. Mental Health Supports
2. Seniors Supports
3. Children and Youth Supports
4. Community Connections
5. Collaborative Partnerships

Each of these priority social needs or described and discussed in the sections that follow.

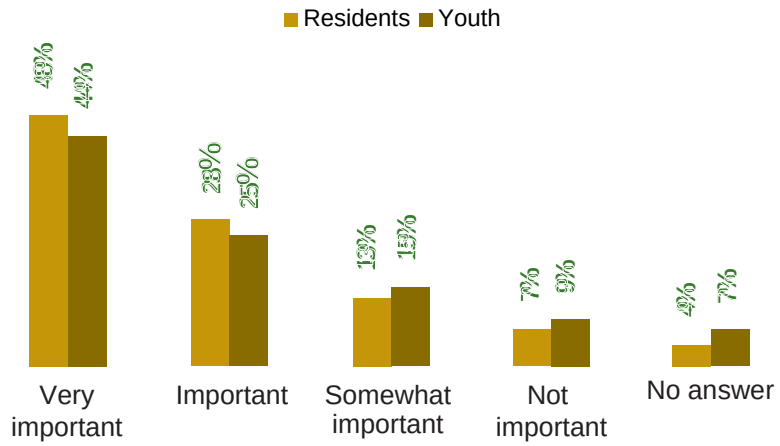
Mental Health Supports

Mental health supports were identified as a priority social need by residents and youth. At the overall County level, more than three quarters (76%) of residents and more than two thirds of youth (69%) indicated that it is either important or very important for them to have mental health supports available to County residents (please see Figure 1).

Residents and youth indicated that it is important for individuals of all ages to access to mental health supports.

The proportion of residents and youth who indicated that it is either important or very important for them to have mental health supports available to County residents is relatively consistent across all geographic quadrants in the County. The table below illustrates the percentage of residents and youth in each geographic quadrant who indicated that it is either important or very important for them to have mental health supports available.

Figure 1: Importance of Mental Health Supports



Quadrant	% of Residents	% of Youth
Northeast	86%	82%
Northwest	73%	68%
Southeast	80%	79%
Southwest	70%	59%

Representatives from agencies that support residents in the County also believed that mental health supports are a priority. These representatives indicated the need for mental health supports has been steadily on the rise for the past decade and that this need has further intensified as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mood and anxiety disorders, interpersonal conflict, and difficulties coping with stress and change were highlighted as mental health concerns requiring the greatest levels of support. Other mental health concerns identified were social isolation, emotional dysregulation, and bullying. Dissolution of positive, healthy relationships leading to different forms of interpersonal violence (e.g., domestic and family violence) was also discussed in relation to mental health concerns.

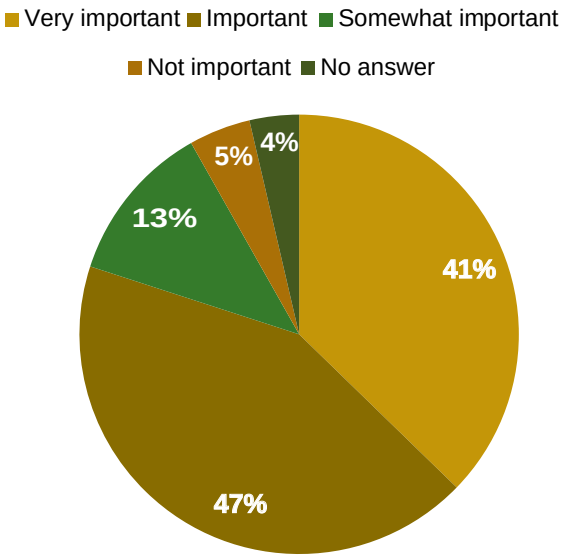
It is important to note that resident, youth, and agency partners emphasis on mental health supports represents a new development since the County's last assessment in 2010. While there were some indications that certain mental health concerns were qualitatively identified within the County in 2010 (e.g., depression, anxiety, coping with stress), it was not identified as a priority.

Seniors Supports

Seniors supports were another priority social need identified through the SNA. Specifically, there was a desire to see more supports designed to enable seniors to remain in their homes longer and to encourage their participation as active members of the community. The majority of residents (88%) indicated that it is either important or very important for them to have seniors supports available to County residents.

The proportion of residents who indicated that it is either important or very important for them to have seniors supports available to County residents is relatively consistent across all geographic quadrants in the County. The table below illustrates the percentage of residents in each geographic quadrant who indicated that it is either important or very important for them to have mental health supports available.

Figure 2: Importance of Seniors Supports



Quadrant	% of Residents
Northeast	86%
Northwest	88%
Southeast	85%
Southwest	89%

Examples of these supports include assistance with shopping, meal preparation, light housekeeping, and yard maintenance. Further, there was a desire to see more opportunities for seniors to connect with residents, youth, and each other in the County. Ensuring that seniors have adequate opportunities to engage in social activities will prevent social isolation and loneliness and help seniors build meaningful relationships and connections. By doing so seniors will have the ability to use their knowledge, skills, and experiences and contribute to the growth and development of the community.

The need to ensure that seniors are adequately supported was also identified in the County's 2010 assessment with, 75% of residents indicating they were somewhat or very concerned about seniors' care, housing for seniors, and coping with aging parents.

Child and Youth Supports

Child and youth supports were identified as a priority social need by residents and youth. The following four types of support for children and youth were identified:

1. Child and youth specific programming
2. Parenting / child rearing programming
3. After-school programming and care
4. Support for children and youth with special needs.

Key findings include the following.

- Three-quarters of residents (75%) and nearly three-quarters of youth (73%) indicated that it is either important or very important for them to have child and youth specific programming available to County residents.
- Half of residents (50%) and nearly half of youth (42%) indicated that it is either important or very important for them to have parenting / child-rearing programming available to County residents.
- More than half of residents (60%) and more than half of youth (57%) indicated that it is either important or very important for them to have after-school programming and care available to County residents.
- Nearly three quarters of residents (71%) and more than half of youth (63%) indicated that it is either important or very important for them to have support for children and youth with special needs available to County residents.

Figure 3: Importance of Child and Youth Supports to Residents

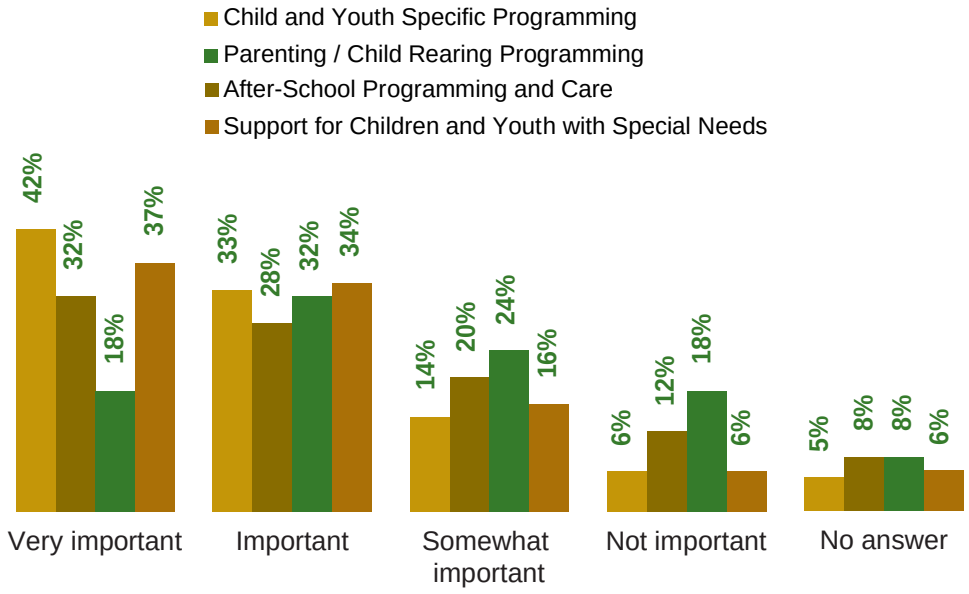
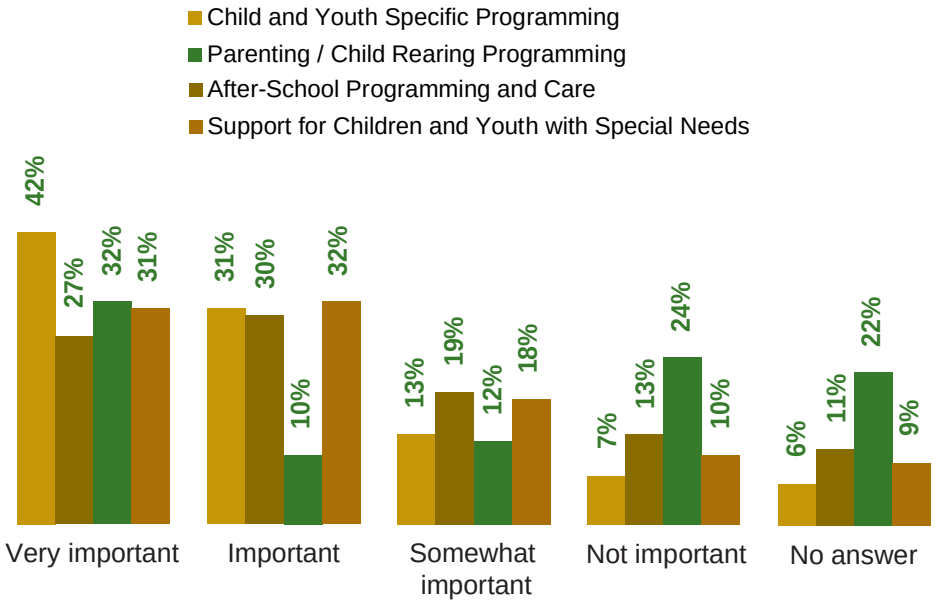


Figure 4: Importance of Child and Youth Supports to Youth



The proportion of residents and youth who indicated that it is either important or very important for them to have the four types of support for children and youth described above available to County residents is relatively consistent across all geographic quadrants in the County. The tables below illustrate the percentage of residents and youth in each geographic quadrant who indicated that it is either important or very important for them to have different types of support for children and youth available.

Child and Youth Specific Programming		
Quadrant	**% of Residents**	**% of Youth**
Northeast	83%	77%
Northwest	68%	67%
Southeast	85%	79%
Southwest	68%	69%

Parenting / Child Rearing Programming		
Quadrant	**% of Residents**	**% of Youth**
Northeast	86%	82%
Northwest	73%	68%
Southeast	80%	79%
Southwest	70%	59%

After-School Programming and Care		
Quadrant	**% of Residents**	**% of Youth**
Northeast	86%	82%
Northwest	73%	68%
Southeast	80%	79%
Southwest	70%	59%

Support for Children and Youth with Special Needs		
Quadrant	**% of Residents**	**% of Youth**
Northeast	86%	82%
Northwest	73%	68%
Southeast	80%	79%
Southwest	70%	59%

In addition to the types of issues described above, residents, youth, and agencies identified the need to build and offer a more diverse range of program options.

Specific information pertaining to the needs of children and youth was not collected during the County's 2010 assessment. Therefore, it is not possible to determine whether the four types of support for children and youth identified in the current SNA were priorities in 2010.

Community Connections

Fostering community connections was thought to be a priority by residents and youth. By fostering these connections members of the community are able to come together and develop strategies that prevent social issues and breakdown from occurring. Residents and youth also believed that an emphasis on community connections is important because it will allow the County to take advantage of its existing strengths. These strengths, which were identified through the resident and youth surveys, include the following:

- The small-town, welcoming feel of the community and high levels of community pride
- The fact that neighbours know each other and are willing to help each other
- The regularity of community-based events that bring people together

Representatives from agencies also spoke to the importance of fostering community connections. These connections are a strength in the County and can be used to improve residents' quality of life. Agency representatives stated that they would like to see greater collaboration amongst agencies across the County. One existing forum where these agency collaborations occur is through interagency meetings. Through these collaborations, collective approaches to prevention and support could be developed, leveraging collective expertise and resources to create sustainable solutions that meet all resident and youth social needs.

Specific information pertaining to community connections was not collected during the County's 2010 assessment. Therefore, it is not possible to determine whether community connections were a priority in 2010.

Collaborative Partnerships

Building collaborative partnerships were identified by representatives from agencies participating in the interviews and working sessions. The County has a strong track record of collaboration and promoting and facilitating collaboration opportunities. This is another strength that can be leveraged to facilitate community level efforts to address the social needs identified through this SNA. While FCSS cannot support direct service programming it can provide support by funding services that promote and increase information sharing and referral services. This support will allow County residents to access resources and support services in a holistic wraparound approach.

Specific information pertaining to collaborative partnerships was not collected during the County's 2010 assessment. Therefore, it is not possible to determine whether collaborative partnerships were a priority in 2010.

Implementation Plan

A fundamental premise of the assessment is that social wellness and improved quality of life result from meaningful and effective collaboration involving the municipalities, agencies and organizations, community, and other stakeholders. The responsibility for implementation requires the collaboration of a wide range of partners working effectively together on common priorities to achieve shared goals. It is critical to the successful implementation of the plan that all stakeholders and interested parties be engaged from the beginning in contributing to the actions, results, and successful outcomes. As the FCSS program in Rocky View County functions under the provincial model as an external grant funder, it is well positioned to collaboratively implement the most appropriate path to address the preventative social needs of residents.

Key Actions

Two key actions are recommended to move the results of the SNA forward.

First, it is recommended that the FCSS Board use the results of the SNA to identify funding priorities for the County. This will ensure the FCSS Board's funding decisions align with and help to address the priority social needs identified during the SNA.

Second, it is recommended that the SNA be reviewed in three to five years (i.e., between 2026 and 2028) to determine what aspects of the plan need to be updated and revised. This will ensure that the SNA continues to be relevant to the FCSS Board when they are making funding decisions.

Conclusion

Through the SNA process the key strengths in the Rocky View County were identified. Specifically, there is a strong sense of community in the County, a keen desire to partner and resolve issues together, and a strong perception that quality of life in the County is high. Further, through the SNA process residents and youth in the County identified what they believe the social needs in the County are. After analyzing the information provided by residents and youth five priority social needs in the County were identified. These five priority social needs are as follows:

1. Mental Health Supports
2. Seniors Supports
3. Children and Youth Supports
4. Community Connections
5. Collaborative Partnerships

Going forward, in alignment with identified provincial priorities and FCSS Act and Regulation, Rocky View County FCSS can confidently invest its funding resources into preventative community programs, services, projects, and initiatives that address these five priority social needs. By doing so, Rocky View County FCSS will enable agencies that deliver programs and services or carry out projects and initiatives in these five areas of social need to better support residents and youth living in communities throughout the County.

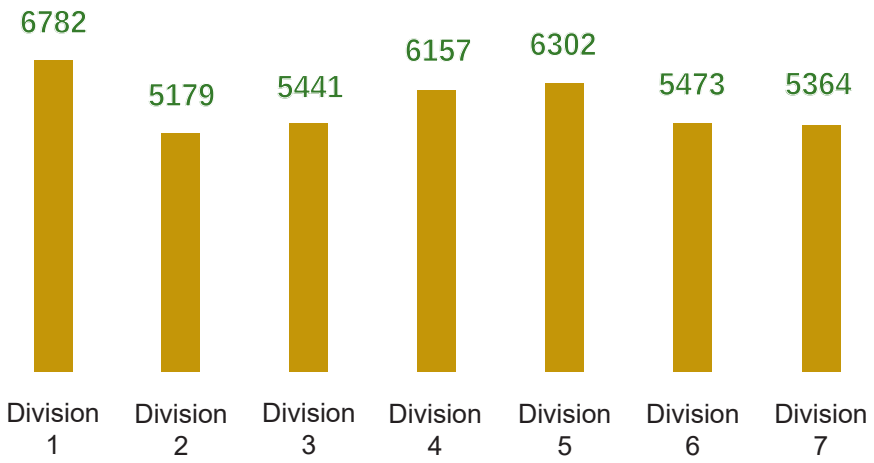
APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Rocky View County Community Profile

Rocky View County is a municipal district in southern Alberta and was named for its views of the Rocky Mountains to the west. The Country surrounds most of the city of Calgary, forming the city's northern and eastern boundaries and most of the western boundary.

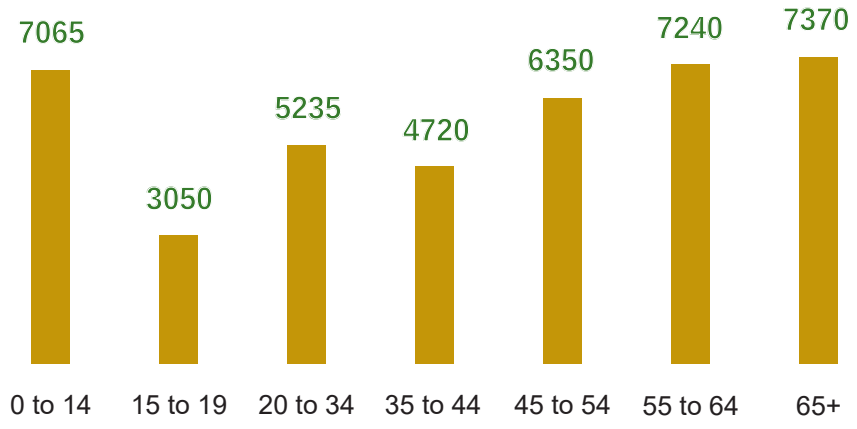
According to the 2021 Federal Census the County's population is 41,028. The proportion of males and females is nearly even with 51% identifying as male and 49% identifying as female. The population of the County has grown by 4.1 percent since the 2016 Federal Census when the population was 39,407.

Those who reside in the County live in one of seven divisions and each division consists of hamlets and surrounding rural areas. The table below illustrates the distribution of the population across these divisions.



Source: Rocky View County Census (2018)

The age distribution of the population across the County can be found in the table below. Significant proportion of the population are children and youth. Older adults and seniors also comprise another large proportion of the population.



Source: Statistics Canada (2021)

Identified in the following chart are selected population and demographic characteristics from the 2021 Federal Census comparing the County to Provincial figures and trends.

Characteristic	Rocky View County	Province of Alberta
Indigenous Population	3%	16%
Visible Minority	9%	11%
Average Age	42	38
Married or Living Common Law	57%	59%
Not Married or Living Common Law	43%	41%
Household Size	2.5	2.6
Couple Families	98%	84%
Lone Parent Families	2%	16%
Median After-Tax Income of Families	$137,000	$99,000
Education – No Certificate, Diploma, or Degree	16%	21%
Education – Secondary School Diploma or Equivalent	32%	30%
Education – Post-Secondary Certificate, Diploma, or Degree	52%	49%

Source: Statistics Canada (2021)

Appendix 2 – Document and Resource Review

Document & Resource Review

The following documents and resources were reviewed during the project:

- Community Needs Assessment (2010)
- Recreation and Parks Master Plan (2021)
- Recreation Needs Assessment Study (2020)
- Seniors Housing Needs Assessment (2015)
- Council's Strategic Plan (2019)

The relevant key themes that emerged from this document and resource review were as follows:

County Strengths

- There is a strong sense of community across the County
- The County is a good place to raise a family
- There is a strong perception that quality of life in the County is high

County Social Needs

- There is an increasing awareness of domestic violence issues in the County and the resources available
- There is a strong need to continue to develop transportation services that enable access to social programs and services
- There is a need for more social programs and services that help people build connections with each other
- There is a need for more affordable housing
- There are concerns about risk levels of homelessness in rural areas
- There is an increased need to create safe environments for youth to minimize the likelihood of self harm

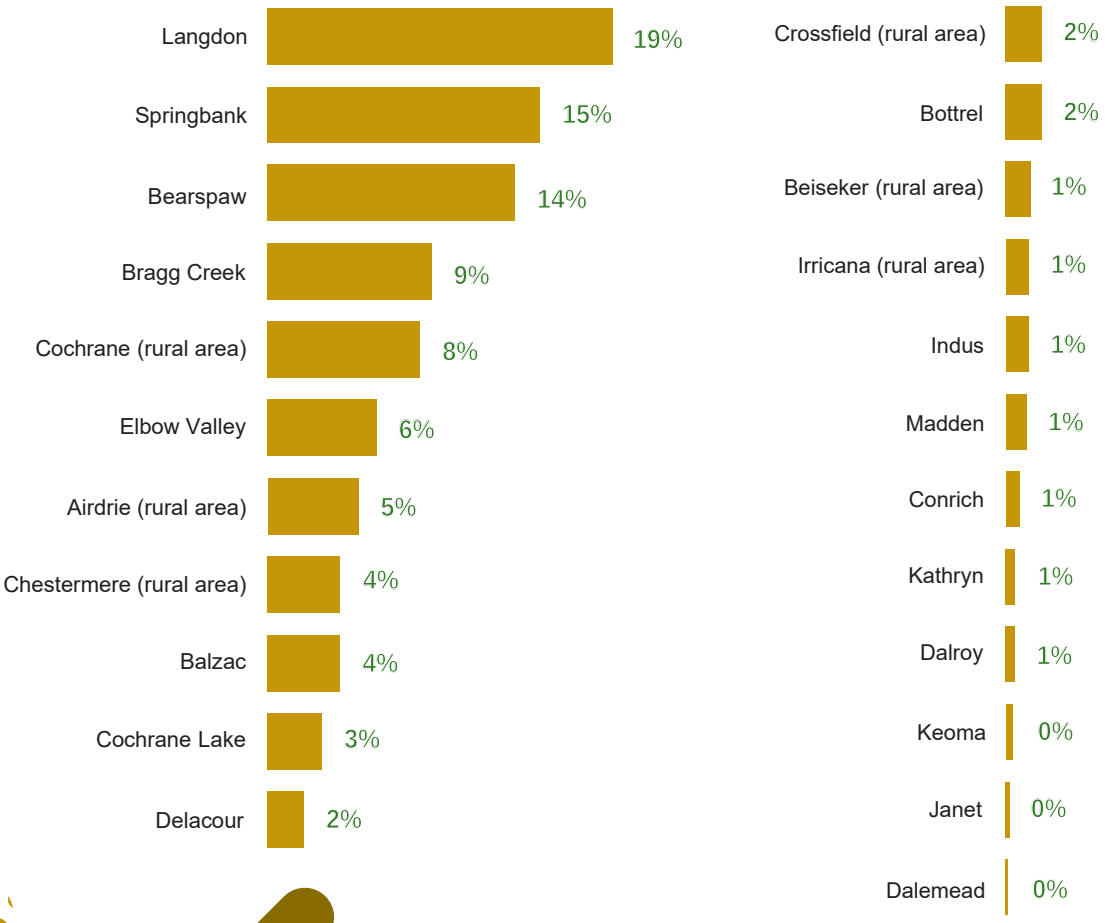
Appendix 3 – Resident and Youth Survey Results

Resident Survey

Respondent Profile

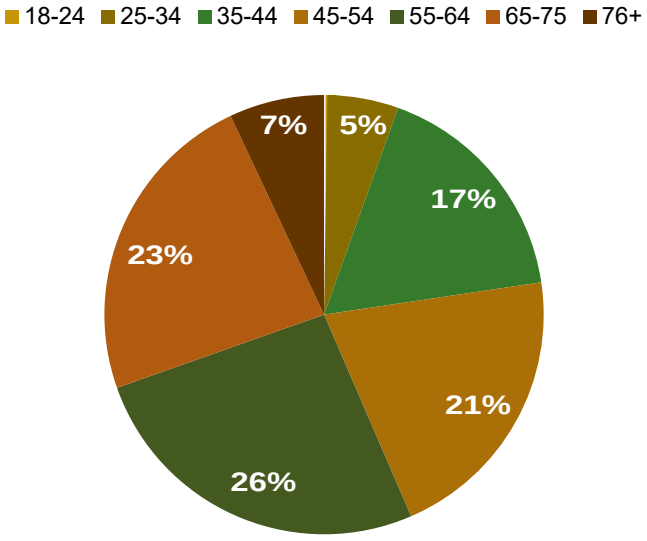
The demographic characteristics of the respondents who completed the resident survey are presented in the charts below.

Which Community in Rocky View County Respondents Live In



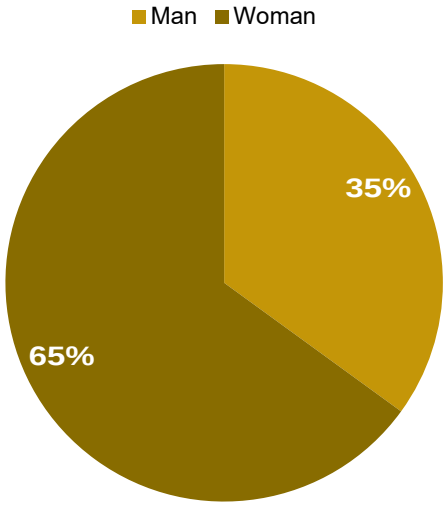
Nearly a fifth of respondents (19%) live in Langdon. Nearly a fifth of respondents live in either Springbank (15%) or Bearspaw (14%). Bragg Creek (9%) and rural Cochrane (8%) round out the top five locations that respondents live in. The remaining respondents living in various other communities within the County. The only communities without representation in the resident survey results are Keoma, Janet, and Dalemead.

Respondents' Age



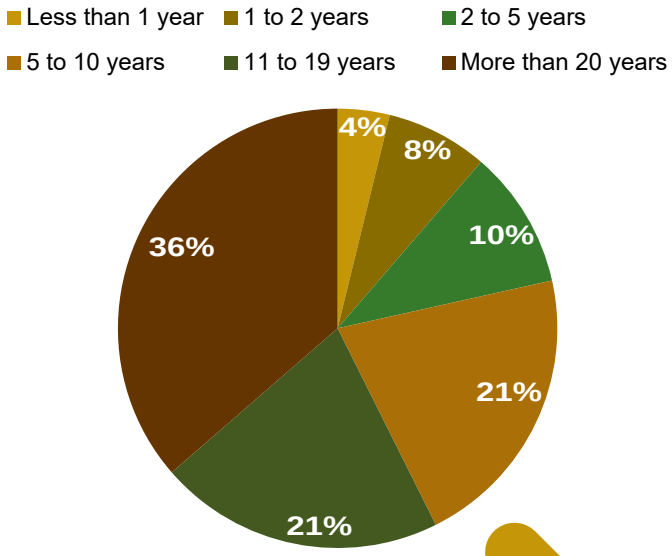
Nearly half of respondents (47%) were between 45 and 64 years of age. Nearly a quarter of respondents (23%) were between 65 and 75 years of age. Nearly a fifth of respondents (15%) were between 35 and 44 years of age.

Respondents' Gender



Nearly two thirds of respondents (65%) were female. The remaining respondents (35%) were male. No respondents identified as transgender, non-binary, or two-spirit.

How Long Respondents Have Lived in Rocky View County



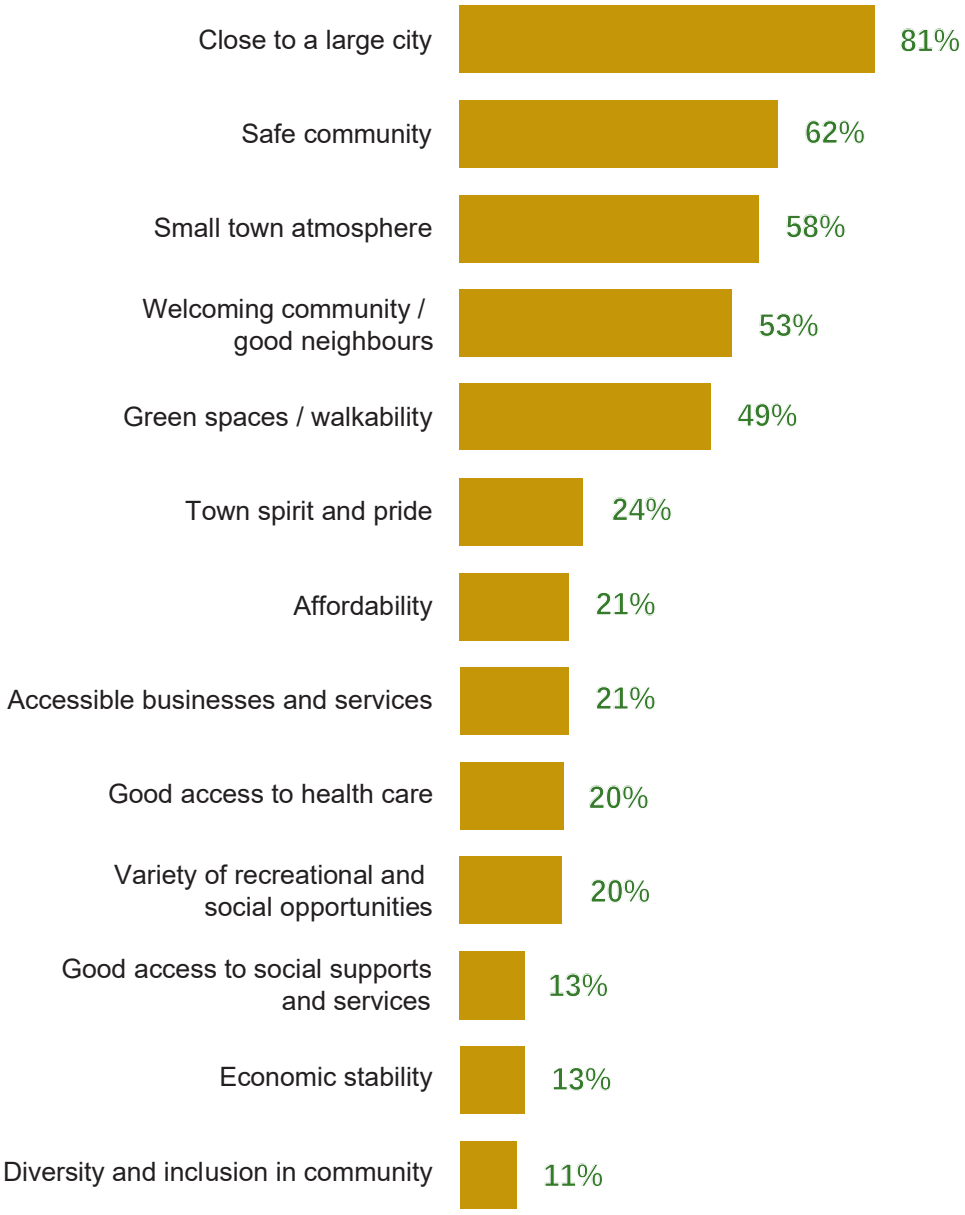
More than a third of respondents (36%) have lived in Rocky View County for more than 20 years. Nearly a quarter of respondents (21%) have lived in Rocky View County for either 5 to 10 years or 11 to 19 years.

Findings

Living in Rocky View County

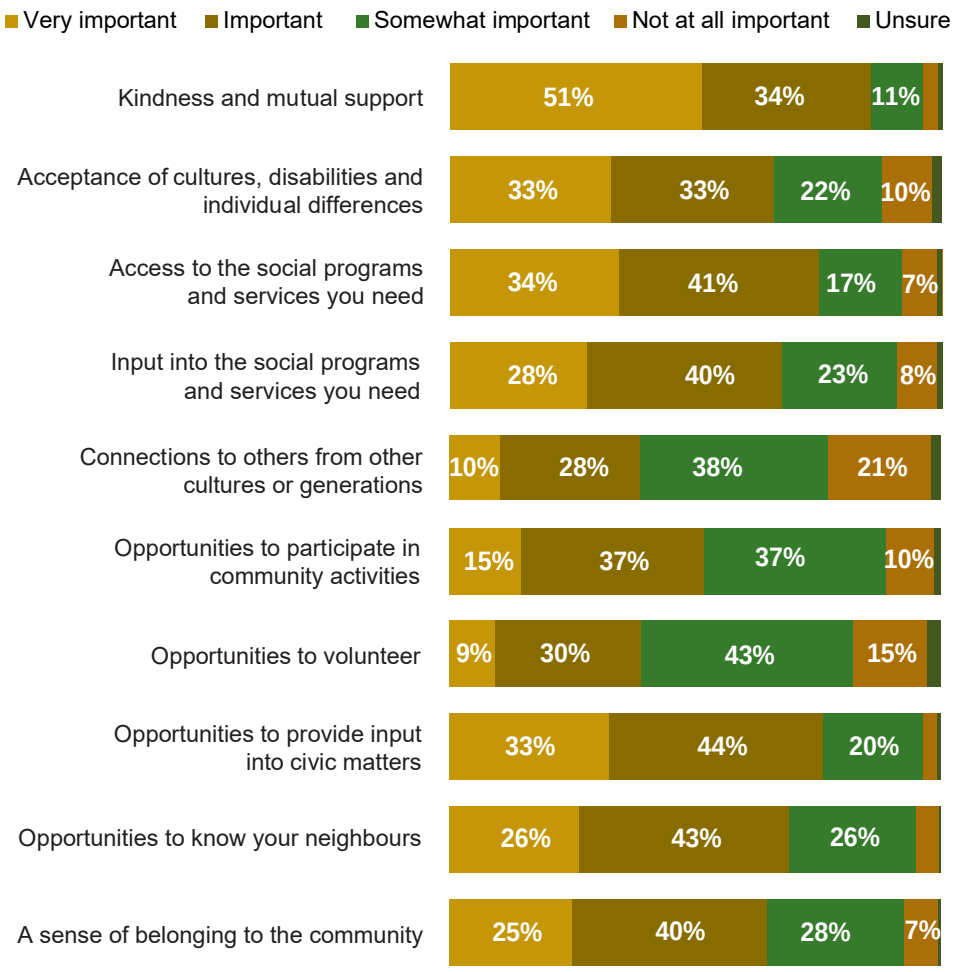
To begin, respondents were asked to identify the strengths of living in Rocky View County. As illustrated in the accompanying graph, more than three-quarters of respondents (81%) said that living close to a large city (i.e., Calgary) is a strength of life in Rocky View County. The safety of communities (62%), small-town atmosphere (58%), and the welcoming nature and good neighbours (53%) were the next most frequently identified strengths.

Strengths of Life in Rocky View County

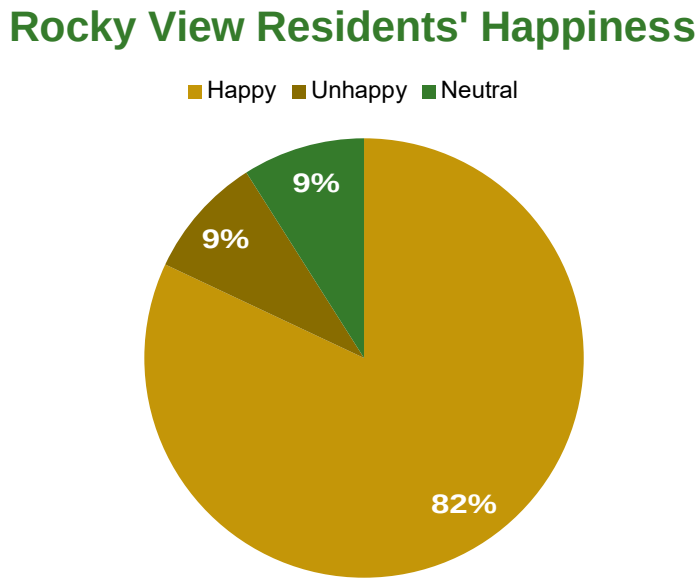


Nearly 90% of respondents indicated that kindness and mutual support are items of high importance to them when it comes to social life in Rocky View County. Opportunities to provide input into civic matters (77%), access to needed social programs and services (75%), and input into needed social programs and services (68%) were also items of high importance to them when it comes to social life in Rocky View County.

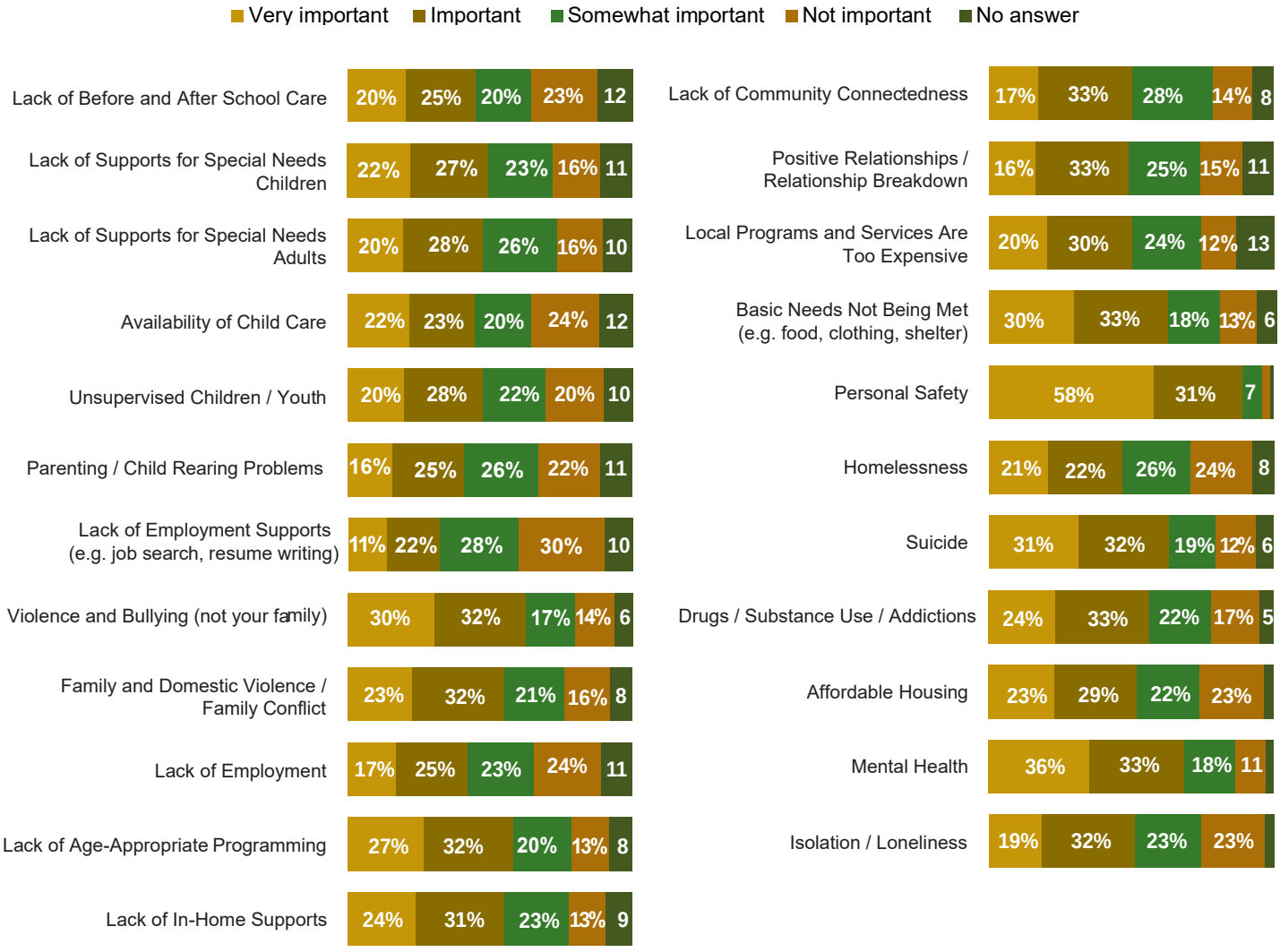
How Important Different Items are to Rocky View County Residents



The vast majority of respondents (82%) indicated that they are happy living in Rocky View County. Only 9% of respondents indicated that they are unhappy living in Rocky View County.



Importance of Having Social Issues Addressed in Rocky View County



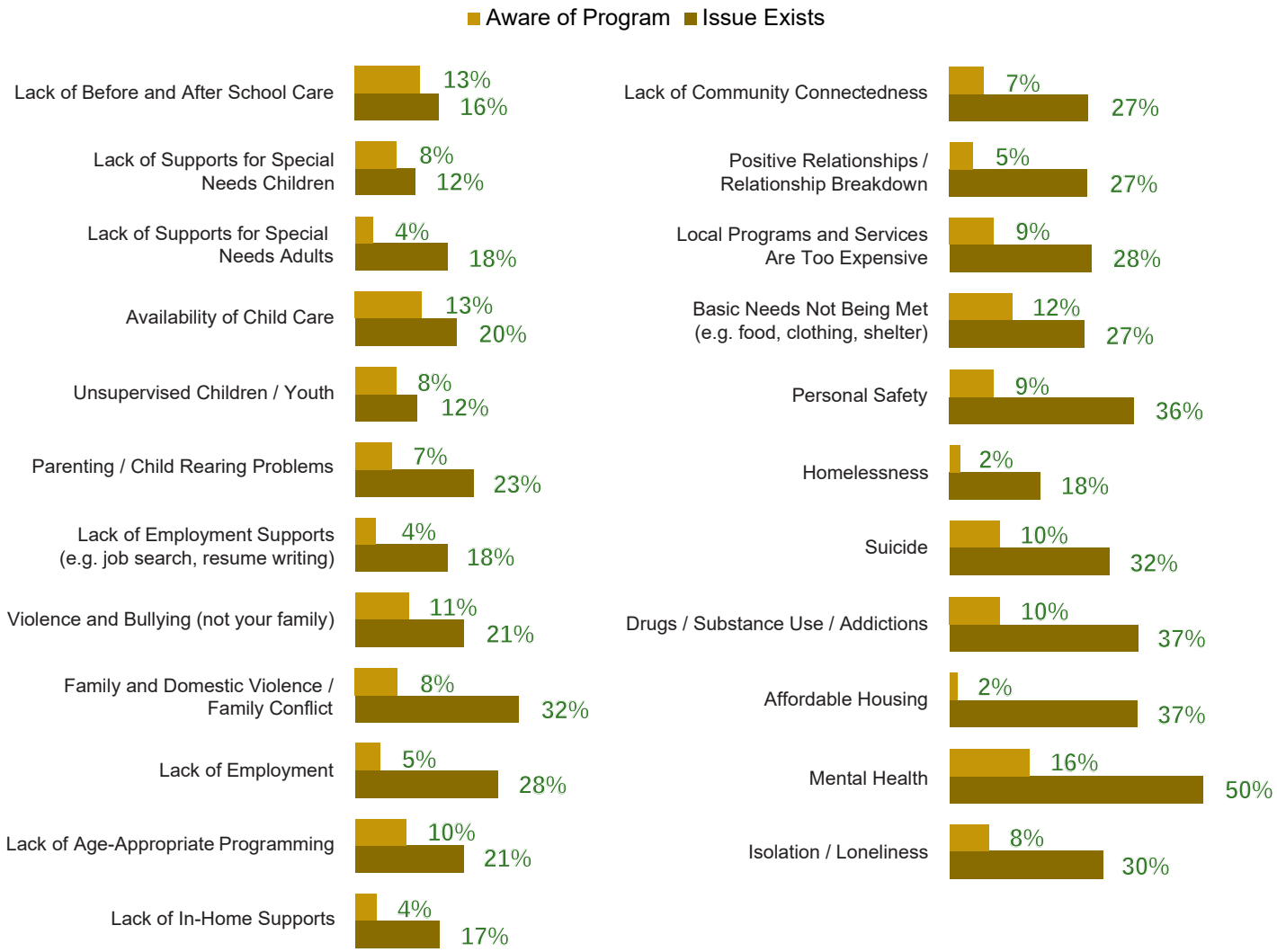
Nearly 90% of respondents indicated that having issues related to personal safety in Rocky View County addressed is of high importance. Mental health (69%), meeting basic needs (63%), and suicide (62%) were also identified as issues of high importance to address in the County.

Social Issues in Rocky View County

Children and Youth

As illustrated half of respondents (50%) said that mental health issues are experienced by children and youth in the County. More than a third of respondents (37%) said that children and youth experience issues with drugs, substance abuse, and addictions. Nearly a third of respondents (32%) indicated that children and youth are exposed to family and domestic violence in their homes. For each of these issues, only a small minority of respondents indicated that they are aware of programs that exist to address the issues.

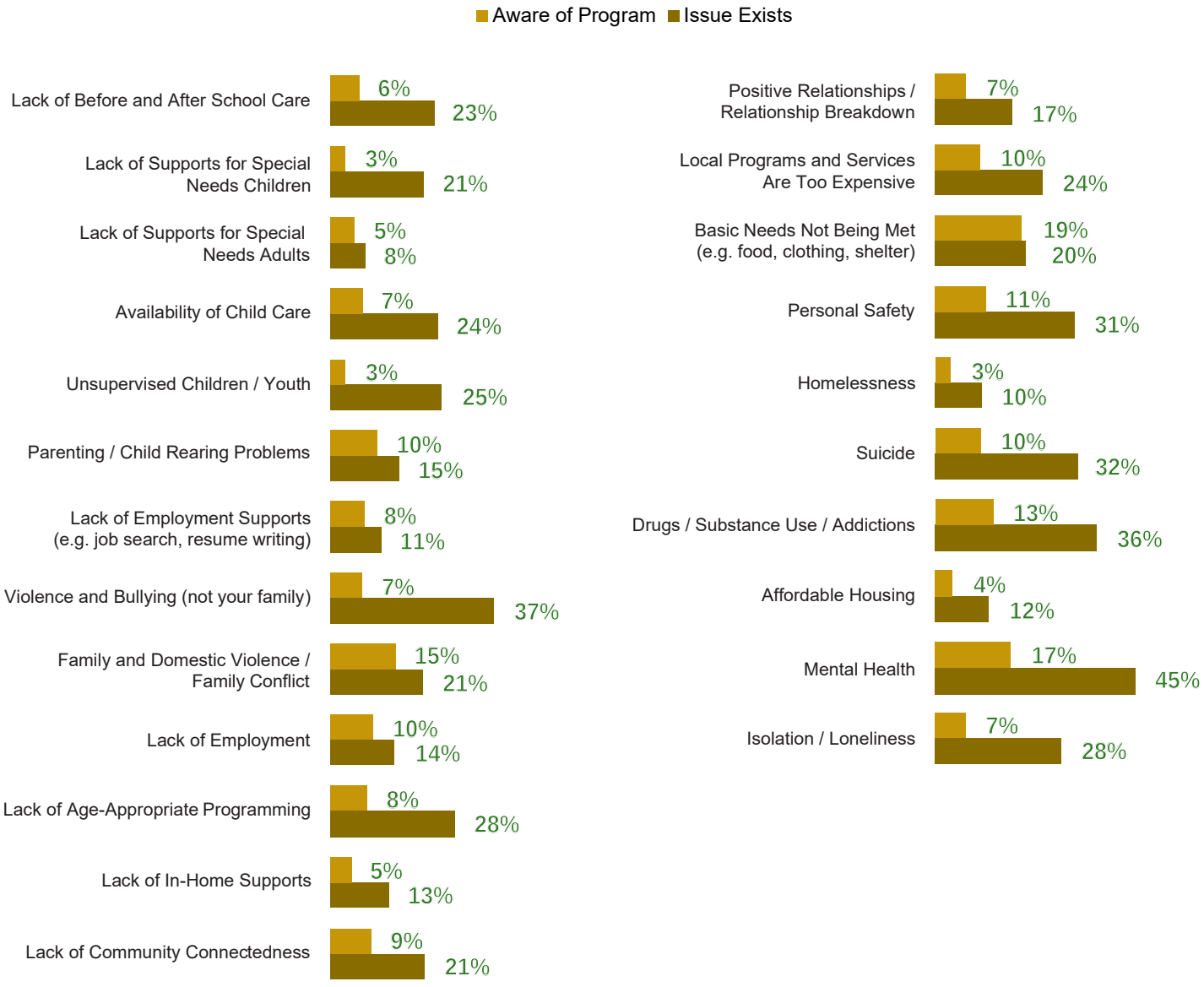
Social Issues Experienced by Children and Youth in Rocky View County and Residents Awareness of Programs



Adults and Families

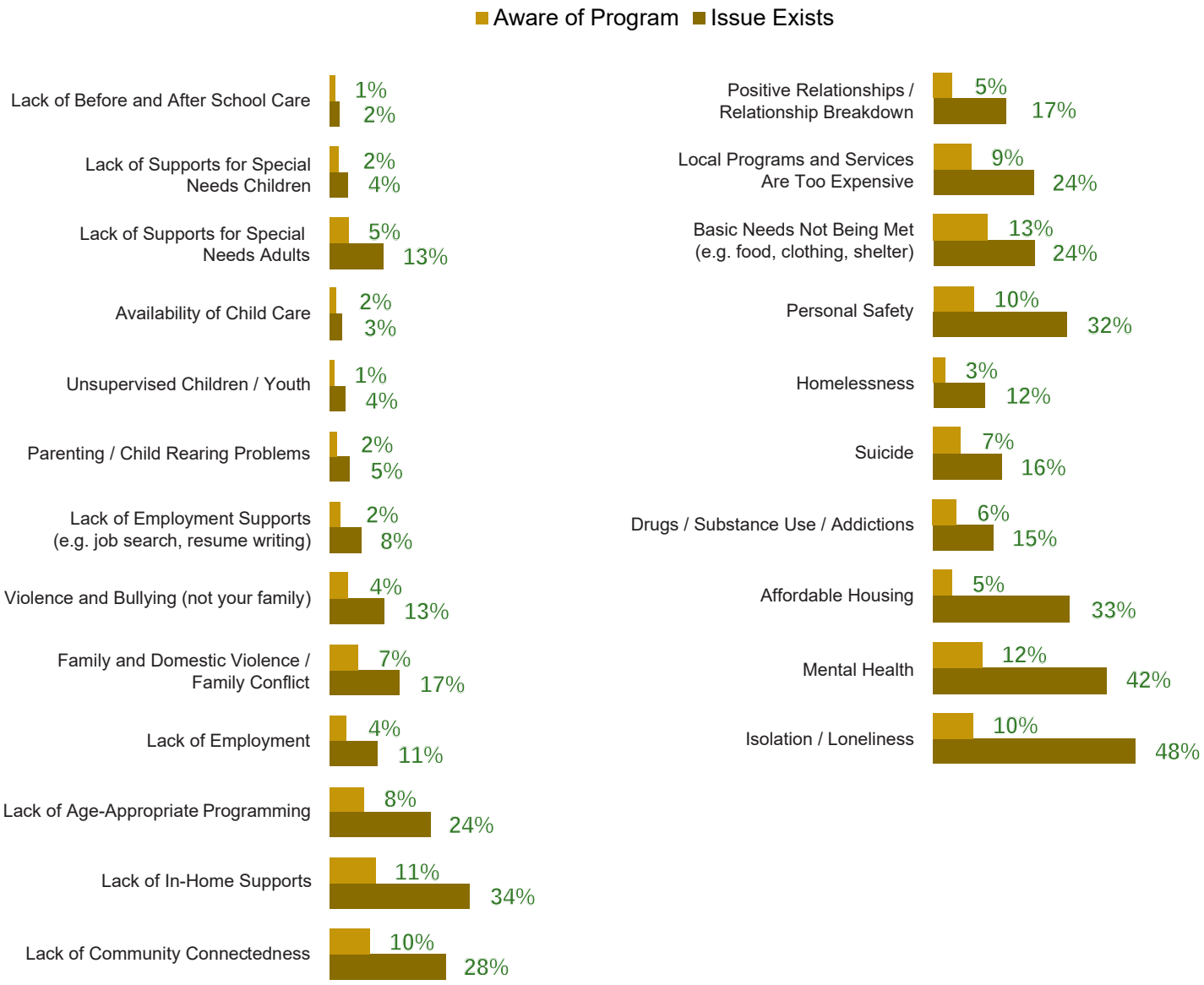
As illustrated in the graph below nearly half of respondents (45%) said that mental health issues are experienced by adults and families in the County. More than a third of respondents (36%) said that drugs, substance abuse, and addictions are an issue for adults and families. For both of these issues, only a small minority of respondents indicated that they are aware of programs that exist to address the issues.

Social Issues Experienced by Adults and Families in Rocky View County and Residents' Awareness of Programs



Seniors

Social Issues Experienced by Seniors in Rocky View County and Residents' Awareness of Programs

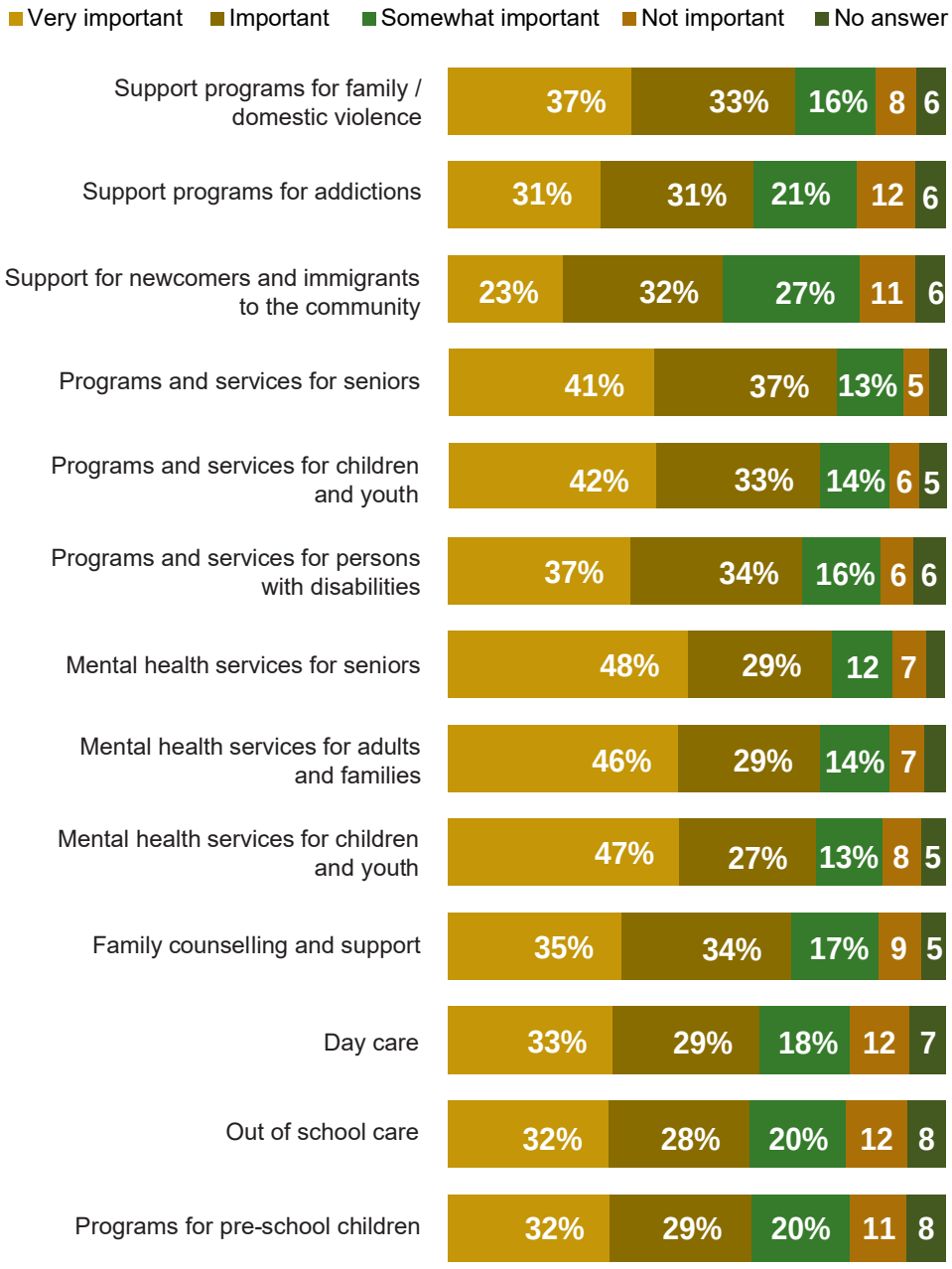


Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of providing various social programs and services in Rocky View County. The top three social programs and services that respondents wish to see offered in Rocky View County were as follows.

1. Mental health programs and services
2. Seniors programs and services
3. Children and youth programs and services

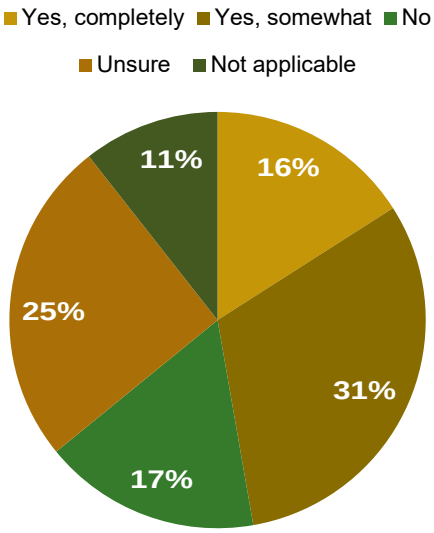
The graph below illustrates how respondents view the importance of all social programs and services.

Importance of Providing Each Program and Service in Rocky View County



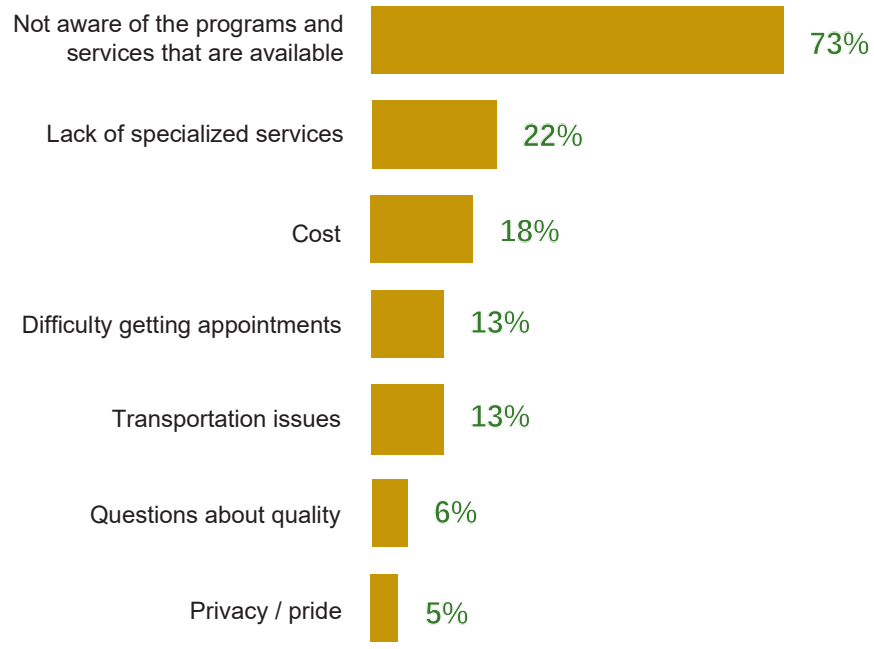
Nearly half of respondents (47%) indicated that they are able to access programs and services when needed in Rocky View County. Nearly a fifth of respondents (17%) indicated that they are unable to access programs and services when needed in Rocky View County. More than a third of respondents (36%) indicated that they were either unsure whether they could access programs and services when needed or that they did not require programs and services.

Are Residents able to Access Programs and Services in Rocky View County



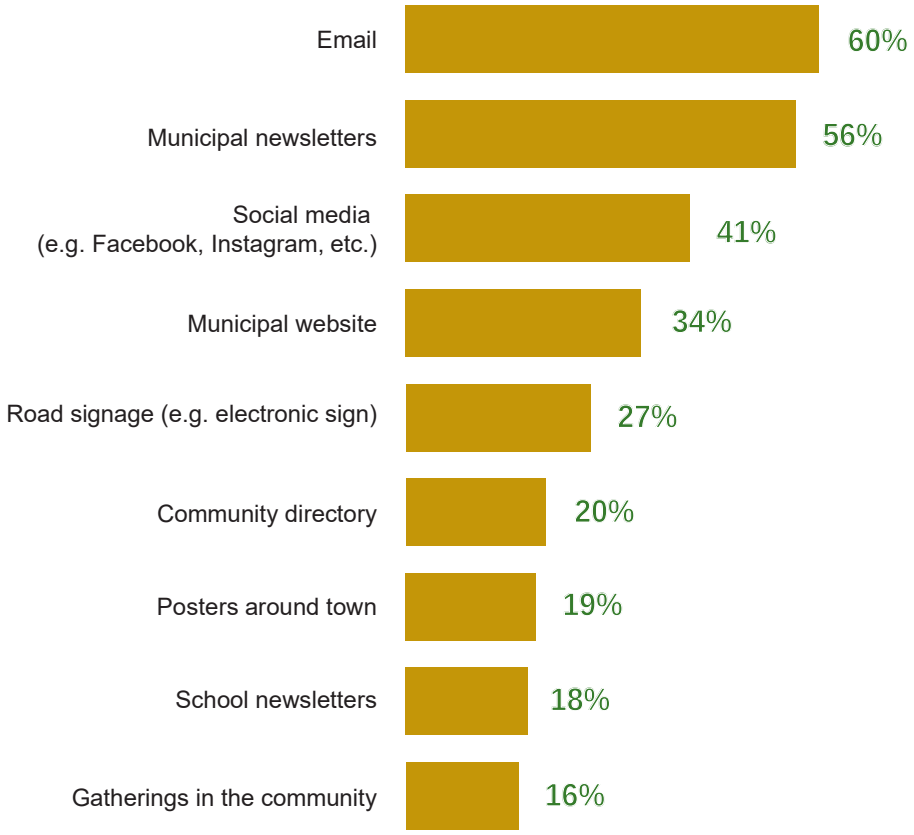
Nearly three quarters of respondents (73%) indicated that lack of awareness of programs and services available in Rocky View County was a factor in them not accessing programs and services when need. Nearly a quarter of respondents (22%) indicated that the lack of specialized services tailored to their individual needs was a barrier to access. Almost one fifth of respondents (18%) indicated that high cost prevented them from accessing programs and services when needed.

Factors that Prevent Residents from Accessing Program and Services in Rocky View County



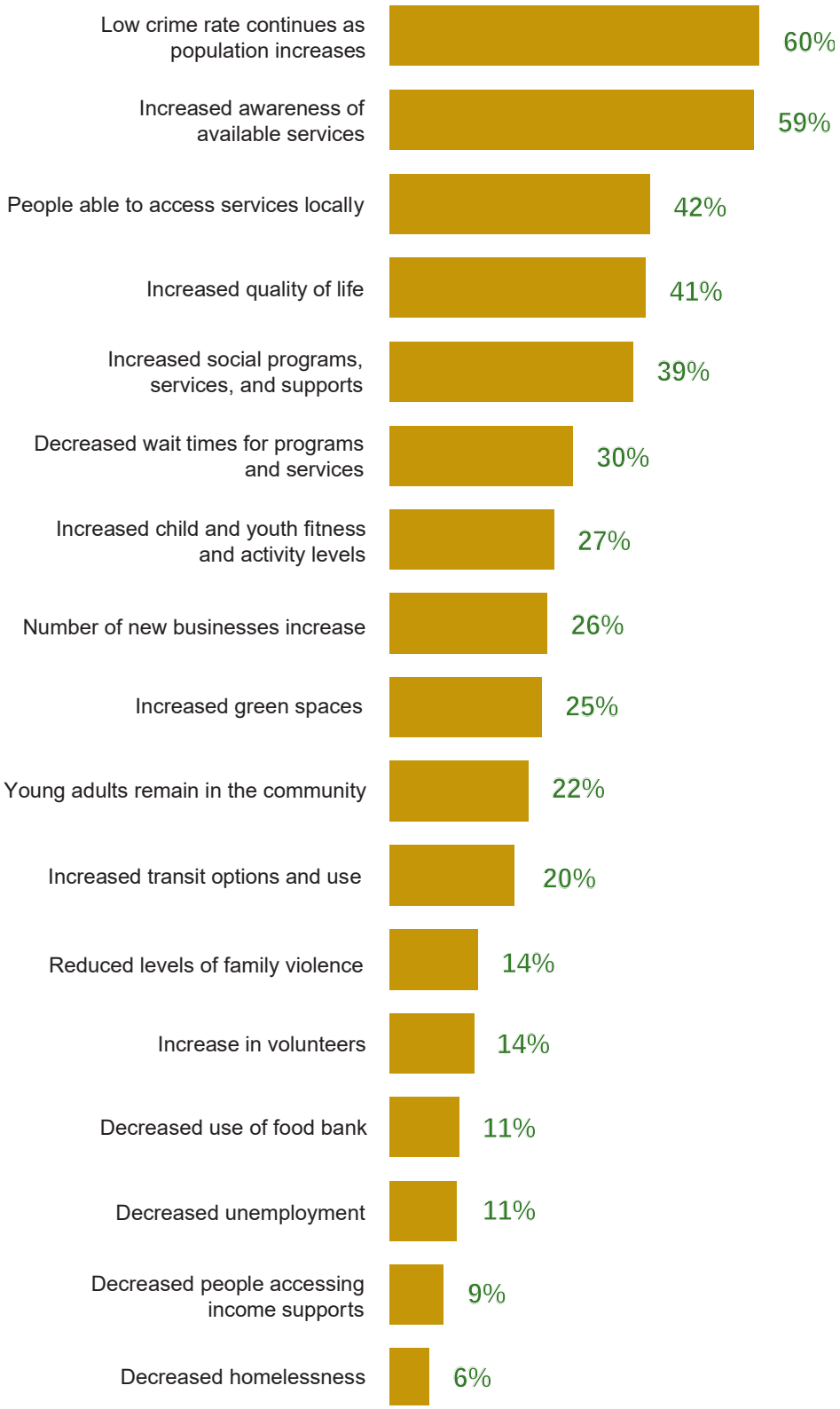
More than half of respondents (60%) indicated that email is their preferred methods to receive information about existing social programs and services in Rocky View County. More than half of respondents (56%) indicated that municipal newsletters are also a preferred way to receive this information. For nearly half of respondents (41%) social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram would be an effective way to share information about programs and services too.

Residents' Preferred Methods to Receive Information About Existing Programs and Services



Close to the conclusion of the resident survey respondents were asked to identify what they believe would constitute success and progress in Rocky View County, post social needs assessment. More than half of respondents (60%) indicated that low crime rates as the population increases would demonstrate success. More than half of respondents (59%) believed that an increase in awareness of social programs and services available to residents would be success. Nearly half of respondents (42%) indicated that people being able to access available programs and services would constitute success as well.

What Respondents Believe Would be Indicators of Success and Progress in Rocky View County



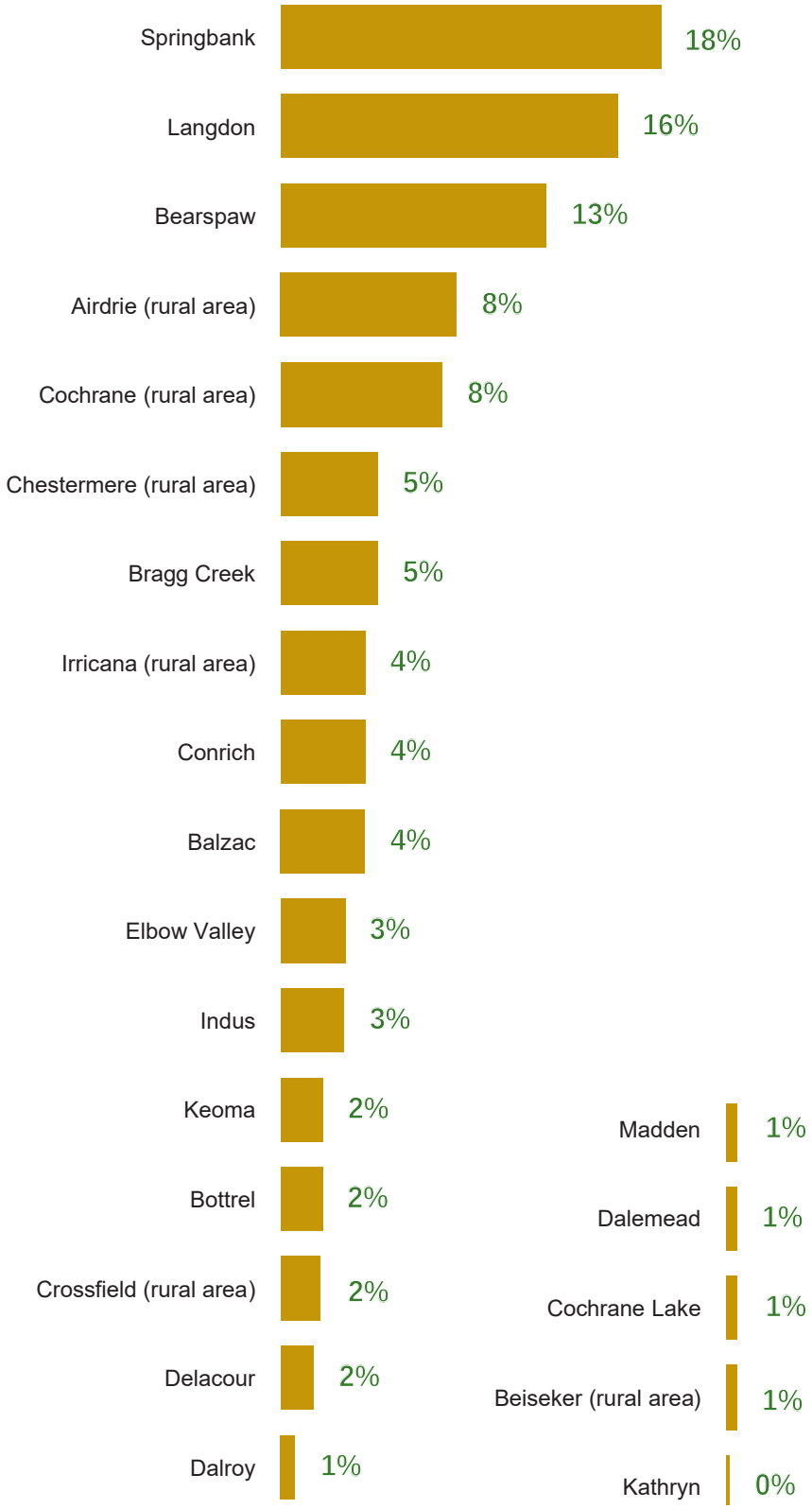
Youth Survey

Respondent Profile

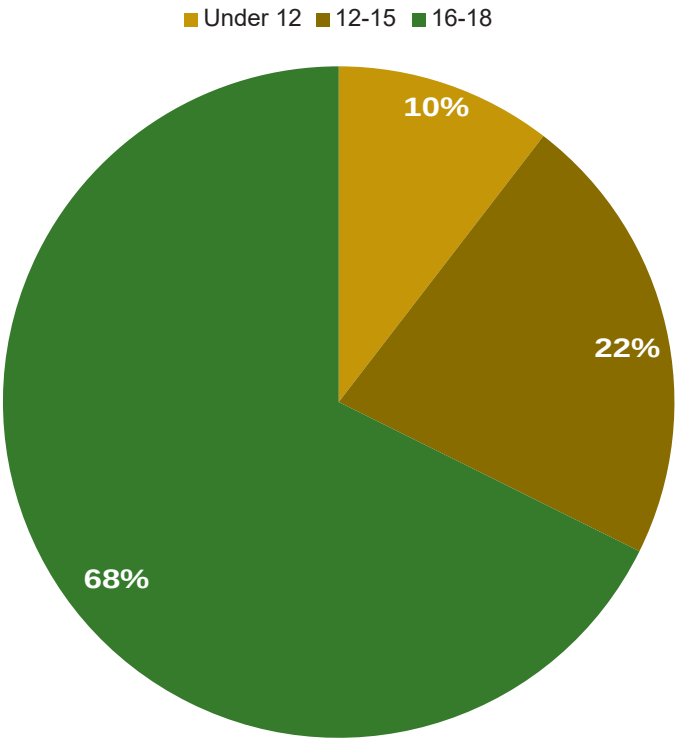
The demographic characteristics of the respondents who completed the youth survey are presented in the charts below.

Nearly a fifth of youth (18%) live in Springbank. Nearly a fifth of youth (16%) live in Langdon. The remaining youth living in various other communities within the County. The communities without representation in the youth survey results are Kathryn and Janet.

Which Community in Rocky View County Youth Live In

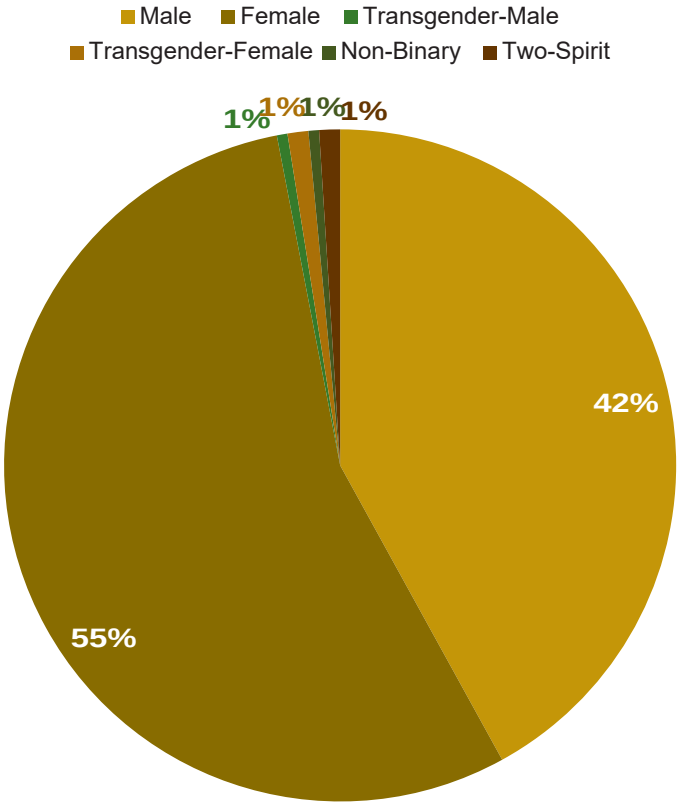


Respondents' Age



Nearly three quarters of youth (68%) were between 16 and 18 years of age. Slightly less than a quarter of youth (22%) were between 12 and 15 years of age. The remaining youth (10%) were 12 years of age or less.

Respondents' Gender



More than half of youth (55%) were female. Nearly half of youth were male (42%). The remaining youth identified as transgender, non-binary, or two-spirit.

Findings

Living in Rocky View County

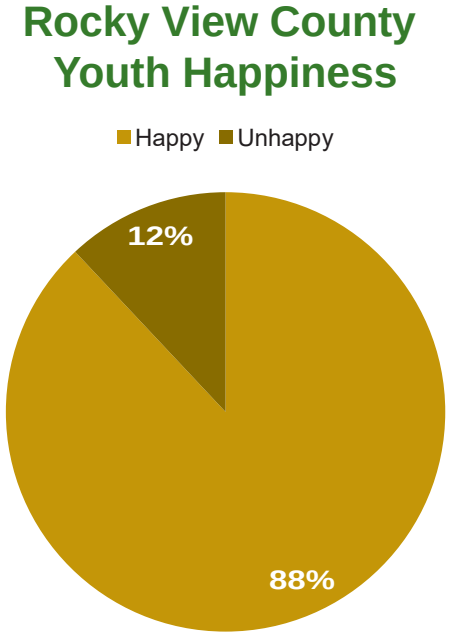
Youth were asked to identify what the best things about living in Rocky View County are. The following themes emerged from responses.

- Small town atmosphere and relationships with neighbours
- Proximity to a large city centre (i.e., Calgary) without having to live in an urban setting
- Safety and security
- Peace, quiet, and stillness
- Greenspaces and places to walk
- Personalized attention that teachers and others in schools are able to provide
- Wide variety of sports and recreation activities to engage in

The majority of youth (88%) indicated that they are happy living in Rocky View County. Only a small proportion of youth (12%) indicated that they were not happy living in the County.

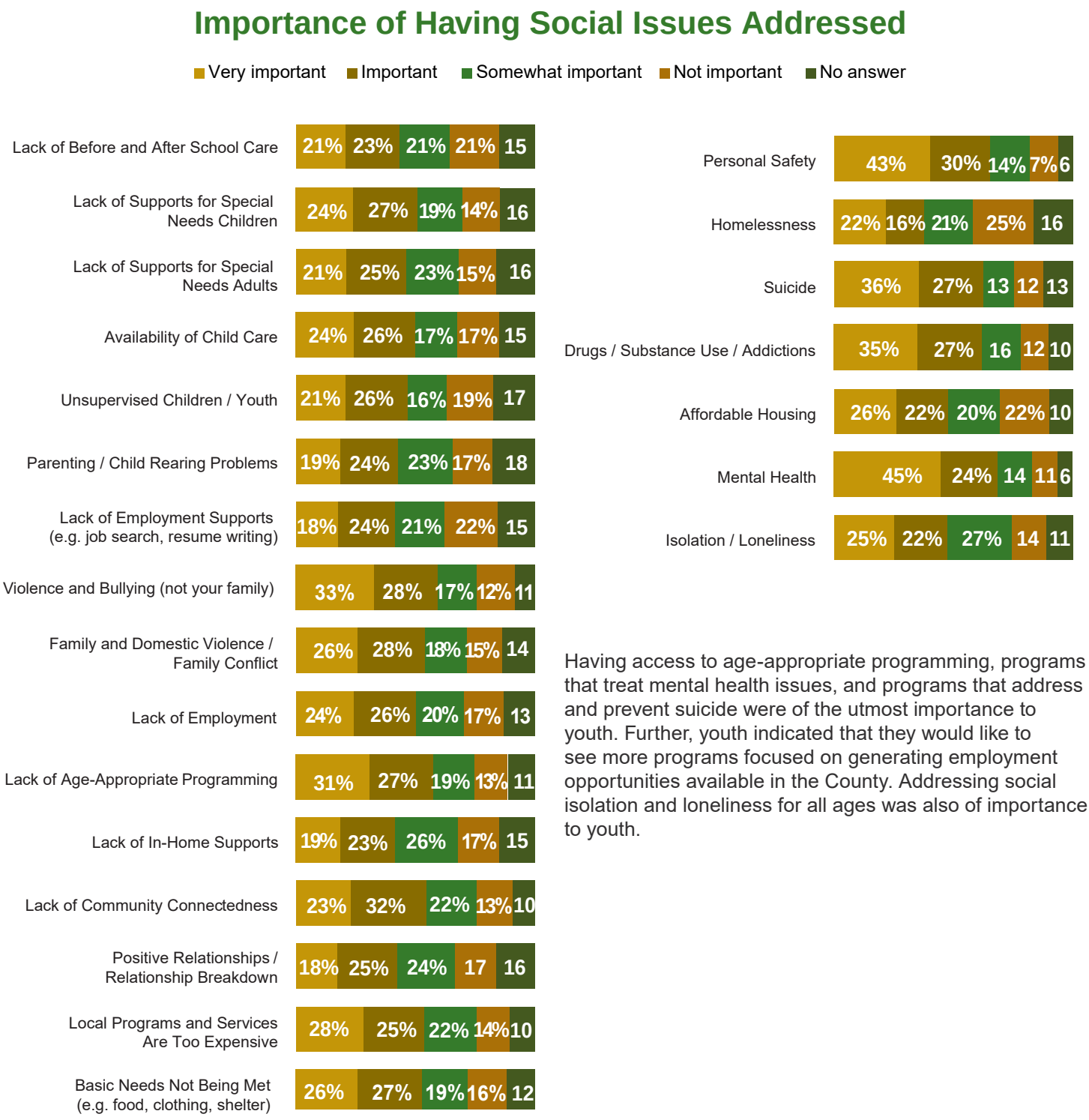
Youth were asked to identify what could be done to improve their quality of life. A wide variety of responses were provided. However, the following themes consistently emerged.

- Increased number of activities and amenities for children and youth to engage and do fun things
- More recreation facilities, greenspaces, and outdoor skating rinks that double as water parks
- Increase number of employment opportunities that are local and do not require travel outside of the County



Social Issues in Rocky View County

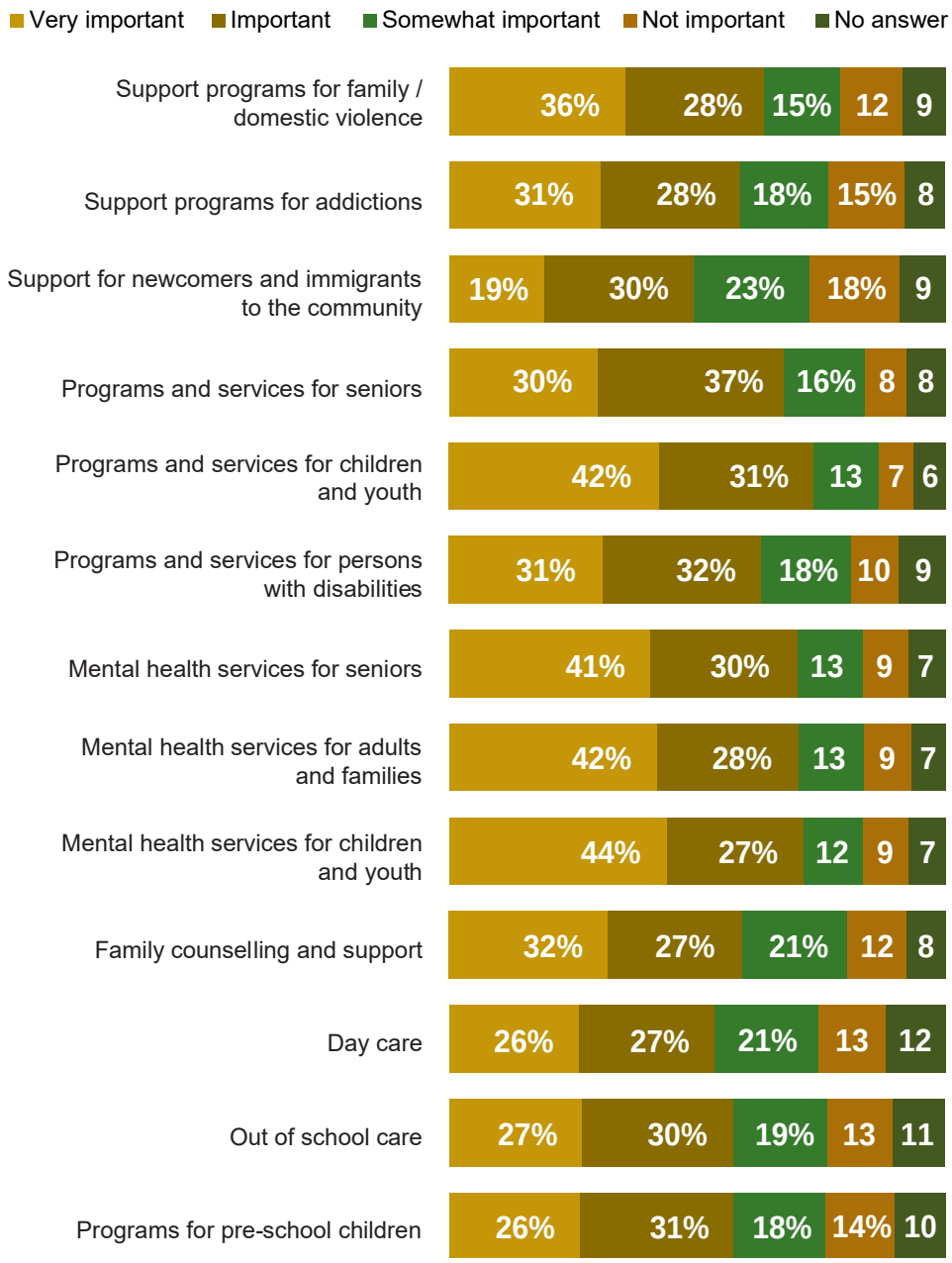
Youth were asked to express their views on how important it is to have different social issues address in Rocky View County.



Having access to age-appropriate programming, programs that treat mental health issues, and programs that address and prevent suicide were of the utmost importance to youth. Further, youth indicated that they would like to see more programs focused on generating employment opportunities available in the County. Addressing social isolation and loneliness for all ages was also of importance to youth.

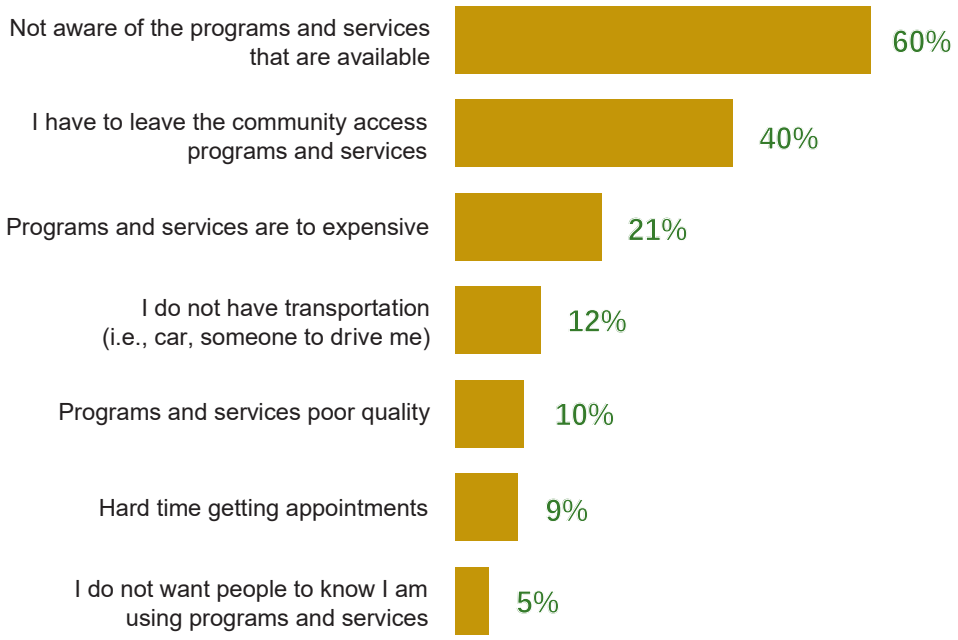
Youth were also asked to identify programs and services that they wish were available in Rocky View County, but presently are not. Again, mental health and addictions support were also flagged as needs in the County by youth.

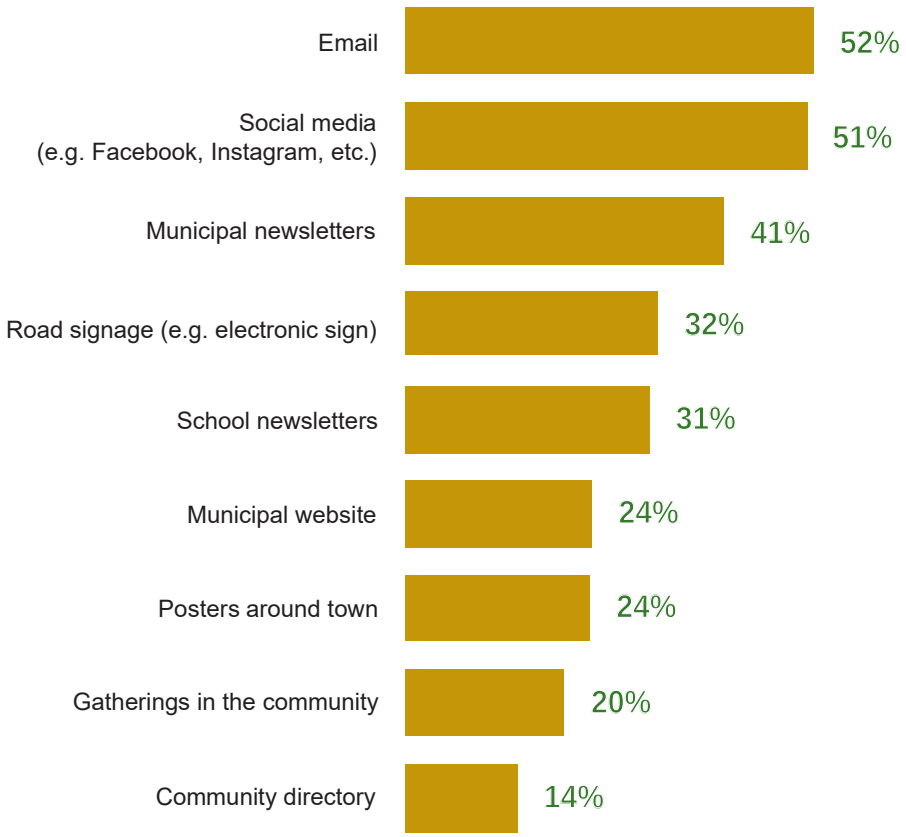
Importance of Having Access to Programs and Services in Rocky View County



Factors that Prevent Youth from Accessing Programs and Services in Rocky View County

More than half of youth (60%) indicated that lack of awareness of programs and services available in Rocky View County was a factor in them not accessing programs and services when need. More than one third of youth (40%) indicated that having to leave their local community to access programs and services was a barrier to access. An associated barrier for youth was the lack of transportation to attend programs and services.



Youth Preferred Methods to Receive Information About Existing Programs and Services

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