



ABBOTSFORD  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

2019 **Abbotsford's**  
**VitalSigns**<sup>®</sup>

## Message from the Board Chair & Executive Director

The Abbotsford Community Foundation is pleased to share its 2019 Vital Signs report with the community. Along with 25 communities across Canada and numerous others internationally, the Foundation participates in the Vital Signs program to better understand our community and to ensure that our work is aligned with community challenges and opportunities.

This year, we have chosen to examine four issues that continue to increase in importance in Abbotsford – Housing, Income Gap, Safety, and Work & Economy. There are many ties between these topics and we know that a thriving community is safe, prosperous, and seeks to care for all residents, including its most vulnerable.

No community is without its challenges, and the issues included in this report do not have simple solutions. However, the Abbotsford Community Foundation is committed to ongoing support of these issues and we are grateful to work with community non-profits and partners who share our vision of building a stronger, more caring community.



**Lorna Heart**  
Board Chair



**Wendy Neufeld**  
Executive Director

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## Methodology

This report relies on statistics and quantitative data from sources including Statistics Canada, various government bodies, local organizations, and others. A full list of sources is available on page 15. Statistics and quantitative data help us to gain an understanding of trends over time and provide benchmarks by which to measure the success of interventions.

Integrated into the report are results from our community survey, which ran in May and June 2019. The survey results complement the data by providing insights into how Abbotsford residents perceive community issues. In total, 530 survey responses were collected. The demographics of survey respondents, including age, educational attainment, and household income are reflective of community demographics.

## The United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals

If you have read our previous Vital Signs reports, you'll notice something new in our 2019 edition: the integration of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. In 2015, after the successful implementation of the UN's Millennium Development Goals, all UN member nations agreed to a "shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future."<sup>1</sup> This shared blueprint is comprised of 17 unique goals that member countries – including Canada – are working towards by 2030.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are ambitious and encompass essential issues including poverty, food security, health, education, gender equality, and many goals related to climate action, including goals centred on life on land and life below water. While an initial glance at the Goals may call to mind developing countries, the Goals are relevant worldwide. In Canada, there is still work to be done to accomplish all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Look for the following icons throughout this report to better understand the connection between local and global development:



**1 NO POVERTY**



**8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**



**11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES**



**16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS**



# ABOUT ABBOTSFORD

## Population estimate, 2018: 151,923

Census data provides evidence of an increase in population growth of **5.9%** between 2011 and 2016. Abbotsford is growing slightly faster than the province, which grew by **5.6%** during the same time period.<sup>2</sup>



## Population by age cohorts:<sup>2</sup>

- **Children and youth** (19 yrs & under)
- **Adult** (20 – 64 years)
- **Senior** (65 years & greater)

## Median age: 39.4 years

Abbotsford residents are younger than our provincial and national counterparts, who are **43.0** and **41.2**, respectively.<sup>2</sup>

## Newcomers:

**1 in 25** residents in Abbotsford is new to the community, having arrived within the last 1-5 years.<sup>2</sup>

## Visible minority population:<sup>2</sup>



Abbotsford: **1 in 3**  
British Columbia: **1 in 3**  
Canada: **1 in 5**

## Life expectancy:

Abbotsford is on par with the province and the country – all have a life expectancy of **82** years.<sup>3</sup>

## Median charitable donations:

Abbotsford has been recognized as Canada's most generous city for nearly a decade. Charitable tax returns indicate that the median charitable donation amount for an Abbotsford resident is **\$840**, far surpassing the provincial median of **\$460** and the Canadian median of **\$300**.<sup>2</sup>



## Proportion of doctors per capita:

There are **159** family physicians in Abbotsford, or 1 per 955 residents.<sup>4</sup>



## Proportion of the population reporting Indigenous identity:<sup>2</sup>

Abbotsford: **4.8%**  
British Columbia: **5.9%** Canada: **4.9%**



## Top 5 non-official languages spoken – and how to say hello in each:<sup>2</sup>



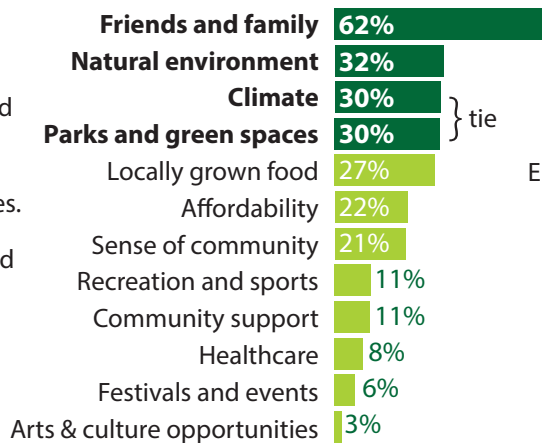
Punjabi **Sata sri akāla** German **Hallo**  
Chinese **Nǐ hǎo** Tagalog **Kamusta**  
Spanish **Hola**

## Your Voice<sup>5</sup>

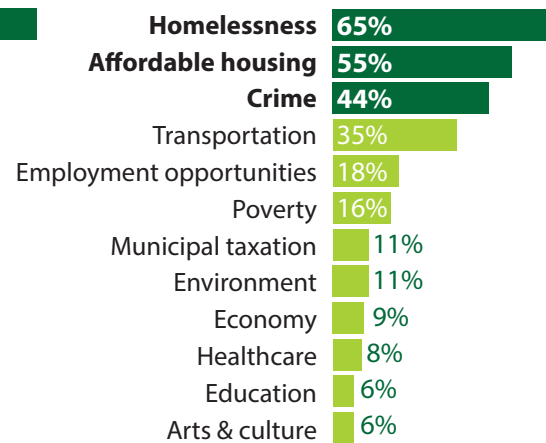
We surveyed Abbotsford residents to learn about our community's strengths and challenges.

Respondents were asked to choose three of the twelve options.

### What are the best things about living in Abbotsford?



### What are the most important issues facing Abbotsford today?





# HOUSING

## Benchmark home prices, Summer 2019

### Abbotsford<sup>6</sup>

Detached house: **\$808,000**

Townhouse: **\$379,500**

Apartment: **\$314,800**



### Vancouver<sup>7</sup>

Detached house: **\$1,423,500**

Townhouse: **\$774,700**

Apartment: **\$654,700**

### Did you know?

To be qualified to purchase an \$808,000 home, a gross household income of **\$155,000** is required.<sup>9</sup>



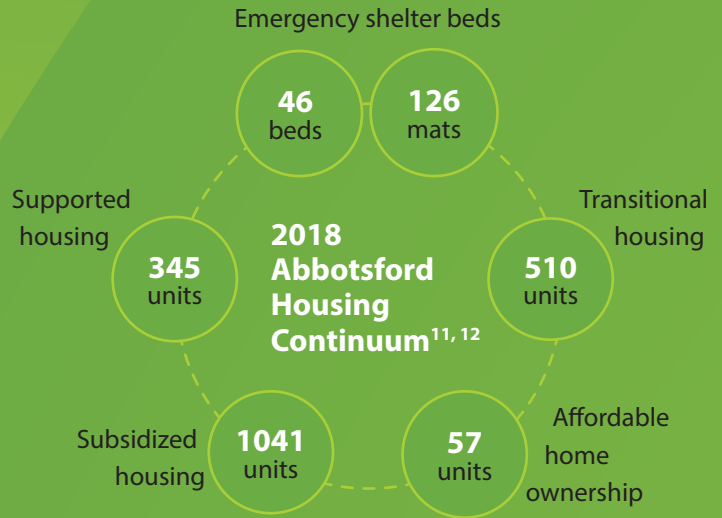
## BC Housing average assessed value, single family residential home in Abbotsford, 2019<sup>8</sup>

**\$758,000**, an increase of **9%** over the 2018 average

In the same time period, the average assessed value of a single family residential home in the city of Vancouver decreased by **4%**, from **\$1,832,000** in 2018 to **\$1,756,000** in 2019<sup>8</sup>



**\$758,000**  
(2019)



## Abbotsford Point-in-Time Homelessness Count<sup>13</sup>

2018:

**233**

2017:

**273**

2014:

**151**

## In 2018, the top three reasons for residents to be homeless were<sup>13</sup>

Affordability:

**33.7%**

Poor housing conditions; discrimination:

**18.5%**

Lack of suitable housing:

**13.2%**

## Sustainable Development Goals

### 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



### Sustainable Development Goal #11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

is just one of many SDGs focused on housing.

The goal's Target 11.1 is "By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums." The United Nations asks member nations to measure this in terms of the "Proportion of the urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing."

Although there are no slums in Abbotsford, we do have at least 233 homeless residents, as recorded by the 2018 Point in Time Homelessness Count. Others who may be living in inadequate conditions include those living in homes that require major repairs, and those living in overcrowded homes. Additionally, survey respondents noted homelessness and affordable housing as the most important issues facing Abbotsford today. **What changes would need to take place in our community to ensure that every Abbotsford resident lives in a safe and affordable home by 2030?**

### Median monthly shelter costs, home owner<sup>2</sup>



### Median monthly shelter costs, renter<sup>2</sup>



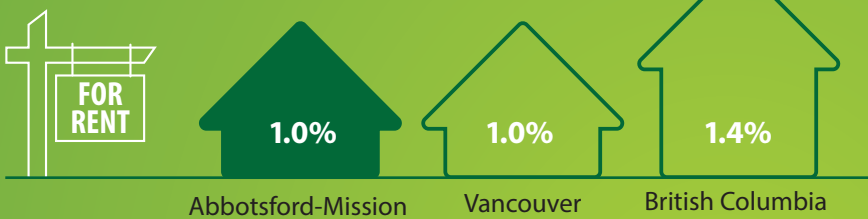
### Proportion of homeowners spending 30% or more on housing<sup>2</sup>



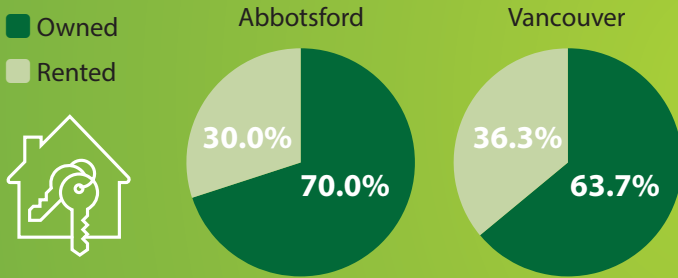
### Proportion of renters spending 30% or more on housing<sup>2</sup>



### Rental vacancy rate<sup>10</sup>



### Proportion of homes owned vs. rented<sup>2</sup>



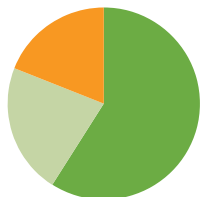
## Your Voice<sup>5</sup>

- Strongly agree and agree ■
- Neutral ■
- Disagree and strongly disagree ■

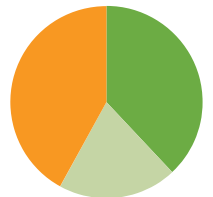
**Abbotsford needs to make efforts to slow down its population growth.**



**Future housing policies should encourage densification.**

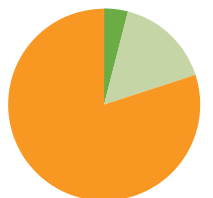


**The community takes homelessness seriously and demonstrates this through action.**



**Compared to five years ago, finding affordable housing is:**

- Easier ■
- About the same ■
- Harder ■



## Progress Report

In 2017, **Positive Living Fraser Valley Society** initiated the Housing Assistance Preparedness Program. This program responded to a community need – to better support Abbotsford residents who experience barriers to being housed. Although the organization works hard to house homeless clients, some clients need extra support in learning to be housed.

The Housing Assistance Preparedness Program relies on peer support to train the newly housed in practical skills, like obtaining identification, learning about the financial responsibilities of being housed, and to understand what is expected of them when they find housing. The program also offers hygiene and grooming supports to clients. In 2017, nearly 70 people benefitted from this program, including 17 community members that were housed and 35 that were either referred to shelters or assisted in other ways to find shelter.



# INCOME GAP

■ Abbotsford ■ British Columbia ■ Canada

## Overall poverty rate<sup>2</sup>



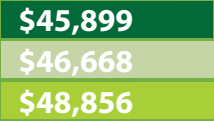
## Median after-tax income of couple families with children<sup>2</sup>



## Child poverty rate<sup>14</sup>



## Median after-tax income of lone-parent families<sup>2</sup>



## Elderly poverty rate<sup>2</sup>



## Sustainable Development Goals

1 NO POVERTY



### The first Sustainable Development Goal is

No Poverty, a foundational goal that must be realized to achieve success throughout the following 16 Goals. The mission of the goal is audacious: "To end poverty in all its forms everywhere." Specific targets include reducing the proportion of people of all ages living in poverty by half, and ensuring that men and women have equal rights to economic resources. One method used by the United Nations to measure progress on this Goal is the "Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age."

Our reporting on child and elderly poverty seeks to provide a better understanding of the number of individuals living below the poverty line in Abbotsford, as indicated by the Low Income Measure. With nearly 1 in 5 local children and 1 in 7 local seniors living in poverty, there is much work to be done. **But with nearly all of our survey respondents noting an income gap that has either stayed the same or increased in the last five years, and less than one-third of respondents confident in their ability to increase their economic situation, what creative ideas should be implemented to increase economic thriving in Abbotsford?**



## Household after-tax income groups<sup>2</sup>

■ Abbotsford ■ British Columbia



## Cost of healthy eating<sup>19</sup>



The monthly cost of a nutritious food basket for a family of four in the Fraser Health area was **\$982** in 2017, an increase of **\$24** from **\$958** in 2015. Fraser Health reports the lowest cost of healthy eating in the province. In British Columbia, a nutritious food basket cost **\$1,019** per month in 2017.

## Progress Report

Our 2013 Vital Signs report identified children as being significant clientele at the **Abbotsford Community Services** food bank – a full 40% of clients were children, compared to 30% of all British Columbia food bank users. We knew we had to respond to this troubling statistic by supporting programs that increase access to food for children and families. In 2014, the Food Bank launched the Starfish Pack Program, which the Abbotsford Community Foundation has supported via grants every year since.

The Starfish Pack Program is a community effort, enlisting the support of service clubs, churches, schools, businesses, and others. This program sends a backpack of food home with children who do not have access to adequate amounts of healthy food over the weekend. This allows children to return to school on Monday morning with full stomachs, ready to learn. Currently, the program offers backpacks to 316 children and youth across 35 elementary, middle, and high schools in Abbotsford.

## Food bank usage<sup>17,18</sup>

**3000** people use the Abbotsford Food Bank each month. Of those, **37%** are children and youth (0-18 years), and **8%** are seniors (60 years and greater). In British Columbia, **30.8%** of food bank visitors are children, compared to **35.2%** of food bank visitors across Canada. Across British Columbia, seniors comprise **9.9%** of food bank clientele compared to **6.3%** nationally.



## Living wage<sup>15</sup> Fraser Valley: **\$15.54/hr**

This calculation considers the costs of basic expenses, including rental housing, food, transportation, and child care, and health care for a family of four – two parents and two children.



There are **10** certified living wage employers in the Fraser Valley, including both non-profits/charities and private businesses.<sup>16</sup>

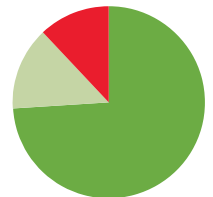
## Your Voice<sup>5</sup>

Strongly agree and agree ■

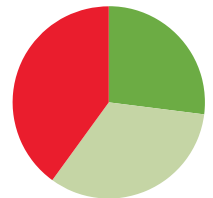
Neutral ■

Disagree and strongly disagree ■

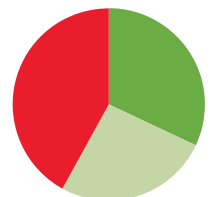
**I regularly interact with people from different economic backgrounds than my own.**



**There are adequate services and supports for the lowest income earners in our community.**



**If I wanted to better my economic situation, I could do so with relative ease.**

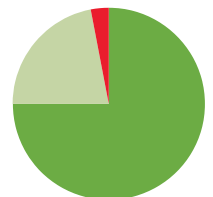


**Compared to five years ago, the gap between the rich and the poor in Abbotsford has:**

Increased ■

Stayed the same ■

Decreased ■





# SAFETY

■ Abbotsford ■ British Columbia ■ Canada

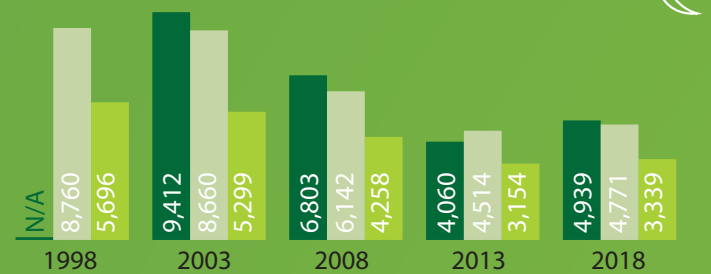
## Overall crime rate<sup>20</sup>

The ratio of crimes in a geographic area to the population of that area, expressed per 100,000 population per year.



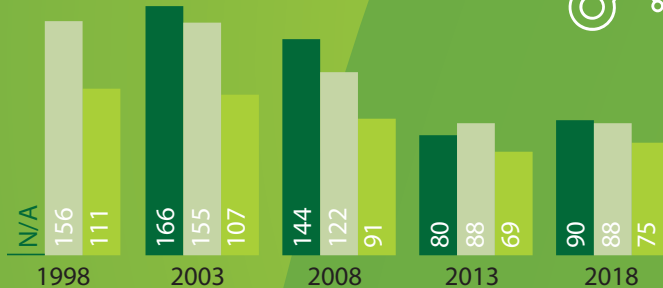
## Property crime rate<sup>20</sup>

The rate of property crimes – including burglary, theft, arson, and vandalism – per 100,000 population.



## Crime severity rate<sup>20</sup>

The measure of police-reported crime that reflects the relative seriousness of individual offenses.



## Youth crime<sup>20</sup>

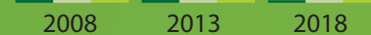
Total number of youth charged with a crime.

	British Columbia	Abbotsford
1998	14,475	N/A
2003	9,187	507
2008	7,199	299
2013	4,420	114
2018	2,777	101

## Deaths due to traffic code violations<sup>20</sup>



Rate of total deaths due to traffic code violations per 100,000 population.



## Progress Report



The word “safety” often calls to mind the reactive response to a problem – firefighters putting out a blaze, police responding to a call, or a good Samaritan stopping to help a neighbour in distress. However, the proactive approach to safety includes upstream intervention, strengthening community connections and fostering relationships.

The **Greater Vancouver Youth Unlimited’s** mobile drop-in centre is an excellent example of proactive intervention. The program will utilize a former fire engine cab and chassis as a foundation to connect youth with caring adults who facilitate their holistic growth. Every year, more than 400 youth are expected to interact with the mobile drop-in centre in Abbotsford, and the Abbotsford Community Foundation is proud to have provided funding to support even more youth engagement with the mobile unit.



## Homicide rate<sup>20</sup>

Rate of homicides per 100,000 population.



## Sexual assault rate<sup>20</sup>

Rate of reported sexual assaults per 100,000 population.



## Opioid overdose deaths<sup>21</sup>

In 2018, there were **1,334** fentanyl-detected deaths across British Columbia. Of those, **36** were Abbotsford residents. In the first half of 2019, the province has seen **446** fentanyl-detected deaths, of which **22** were Abbotsford residents.



## Number of beds in women's and children's transition homes<sup>22</sup>



There are **22** total beds available to women and children in crisis or fleeing violence in Abbotsford and Mission.

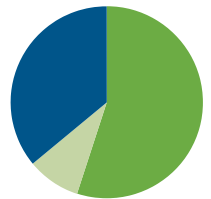
## Your Voice<sup>5</sup>

Strongly agree and agree ■

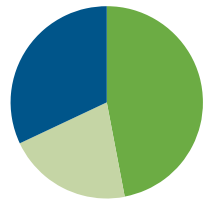
Neutral ■

Disagree and strongly disagree ■

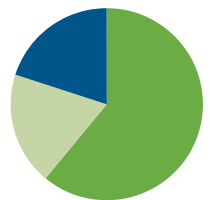
**I feel safe walking alone in my neighbourhood after dark.**



**There is enough police presence throughout the community.**



**Gang violence is the community's largest safety concern.**

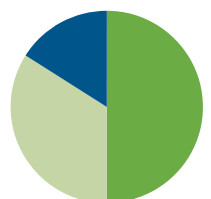


**Compared to five years ago, crime in Abbotsford has:**

Increased ■

Stayed the same ■

Decreased ■



## Sustainable Development Goals

### Sustainable Development Goal

**#16** calls for "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions" and focuses on decreasing violence, strengthening legal institutions, and increasing access to justice worldwide. This Goal has twelve different targets for improvement, and the most relevant for Abbotsford are those focused on reducing violence, including violence against children.

Interestingly, crime has demonstrably decreased in Abbotsford in the last couple of decades while public perception – as evidenced by our survey responses – indicates that residents remain concerned about crime and safety. **What kinds of changes would need to be observed in Abbotsford to help residents feel safer?**

**16** PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



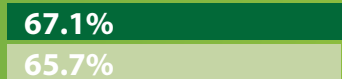


# WORK & ECONOMY

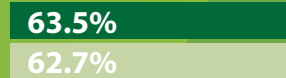
■ Abbotsford-Mission ■ British Columbia

## Labour force participation, 2019 average<sup>23</sup>

Percentage of total population 15 years and older participating in the labour force by working or looking for employment.



## Employment rate, 2019 average<sup>23</sup>



## Unemployment rate, 2019 average<sup>23</sup>



## Number of farms<sup>25</sup>

In 2016, there were **1,307** identified farms in Abbotsford. This is an increase over 2011's **1,282** farms.



**+25 farms**  
2011 → 2016

## Gross farm receipts<sup>25</sup>

Gross farm receipts totaled **\$853,000,000** in 2016, an increase of **33.5%** over 2011.



**+33.5%**  
2011 → 2016

While Abbotsford is home to **7.5%** of the province's farms, it realizes **23%** of the province's gross farm receipts.

## Number of airport passengers, Abbotsford International Airport<sup>26</sup>

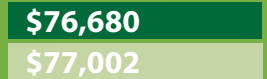


■ Abbotsford ■ British Columbia



## Median after-tax income of economic families<sup>2</sup>

An economic family is comprised of two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related by blood, marriage, a common-law union, adoption, or a foster relationship.

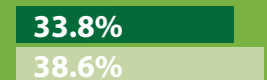


## Median employment income for full-time, full-year workers<sup>2</sup>



## Women in management positions<sup>2</sup>

One-third, or **33.8%**, of managerial positions in Abbotsford are held by women, which is nearly 5 percentage points lower than the provincial average of **38.6%**.



## Sustainable Development Goals

**8** DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

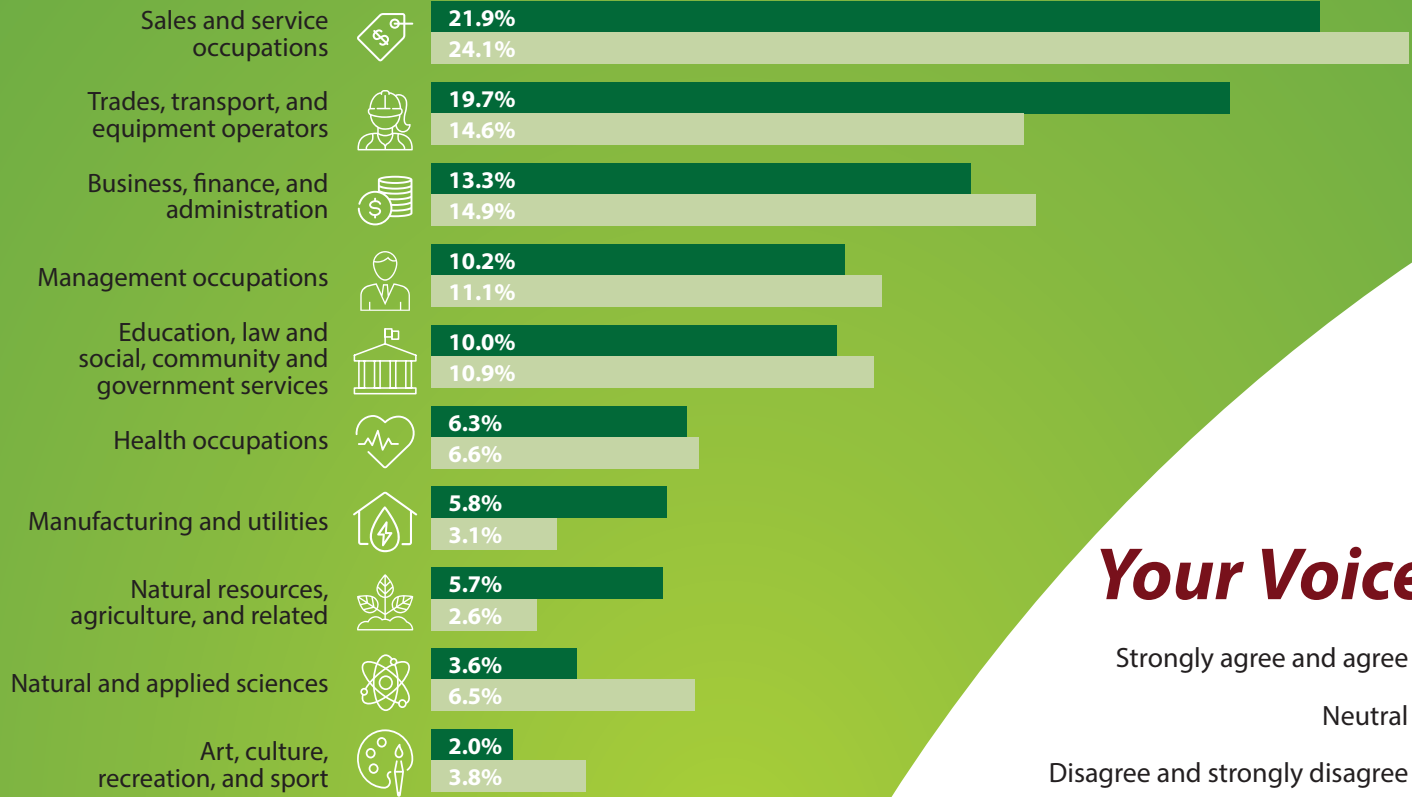


A key to international sustainable development is ensuring economic opportunity to all. **Sustainable Development Goal #8** is focused on exactly that: "Decent Work and Economic Growth." This Goal was developed with the understanding that sustainable economic progress can be harnessed to implement the entirety of the Sustainable Development Goals.

This Goal is measured by a number of targets, including equal pay for equal work across gender, age, and ability; increasing training and employment opportunities for youth; and perhaps most boldly, to decouple economic growth and environmental degradation through more efficient use of resources in both production and consumption. **While 68.1% of our survey respondents are in agreement that their work benefits the local economy, slightly less than 40% believe their work is beneficial to the environment. How could Abbotsford start closing this gap?**

## Employment by sector (NOCS)<sup>2</sup>

■ Abbotsford ■ British Columbia



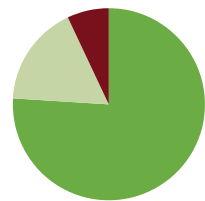
## Progress Report

**Raven's Moon Resource Society** is a local non-profit that provides supportive housing to those at-risk of or experiencing homelessness. Savvy program staff observed that for many homeless individuals, employment has not been attainable. Going from the streets to a workplace is a transition that requires both time and mentorship. Raven's Moon initiated the "Living 4 Change" project to create opportunities for homeless individuals to receive a wage subsidy to enter employment. Over the course of 3 months, participants are paired with an employer and begin by working two short shifts per week. The participants learn new skills, increase their connections in the community, and gain work experience and/or an ongoing job.

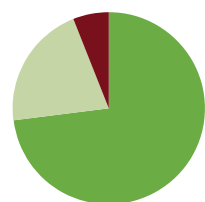
## Your Voice<sup>5</sup>

Strongly agree and agree ■  
 Neutral ■  
 Disagree and strongly disagree ■

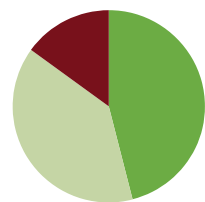
**The work I do is beneficial to the economic prosperity of the community.**



**The work I do is beneficial to the social vibrancy of the community.**

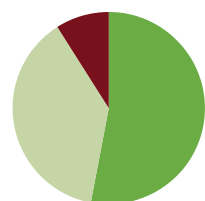


**The work I do is beneficial to the environmental health of the community.**



**Compared to five years ago, the Abbotsford economy is doing:**

Better ■  
 About the same ■  
 Worse ■



# HELPSEEKER IN ABBOTSFORD

*Where do you go when you or someone you care about needs help? Sometimes, the answer is obvious – when you're sick, you might call your doctor. When you need assistance accessing food or housing, there are a number of organizations to help you. But what about less obvious services? For example, what if you were an immigrant or refugee to Abbotsford, looking for help getting settled into the community? Or, what if you experience a mental health issue and need peer support? Enter HelpSeeker.*

HelpSeeker matches people with the resources and support they need. This free, location-based services app is home to a real-time inventory and map of health and social services. It offers a strong search function that allows users to find the service that they need, filtered by cost, population focus, and other facets. The end goal is to offer users a private search function that connects them with the services they need most.

For health and social service providers in the community, HelpSeeker also aids in helping to identify community needs. As a platform, HelpSeeker is a systems mapping and analytics tool that supports efforts to enhance social service and benefit coordination and integration to maximum effect. The platform helps local service providers better understand service duplication or gaps, trends in user searches or needs, feedback, demand, and sources of funding that exist in the community. With all of this information, communities can develop an agile, data-driven approach to providing valuable programs and services to residents.

***User searches help to make evident the gap between services available and services needed.***

## **In Abbotsford, the greatest gaps are evident for the following populations:**

- Immigrants/refugees
- Indigenous peoples
- LGBTQ2S+
- Infants/early childhood
- Seniors

## **Other gaps in service provision? The following terms were searched frequently but lack sufficient responses:**

- Transportation
- Legal
- Suicide
- Clothing
- Hygiene
- Employment
- Addictions/Opioid addiction services
- Sexual abuse
- Sex trade/Exploitation
- Food



**To access HelpSeeker, visit <https://helpseeker.org> and use the website search or download the app.**

# TAKING ACTION

Strong and caring communities don't just happen - they are built by thoughtful and responsible residents. Responses to our survey demonstrate that Abbotsford residents are aware of and concerned about the issues that impact all of us: housing that is affordable across all incomes, the opportunity for economic thriving and poverty reduction, living in safe neighbourhoods, and participating in work that provides materially while also creating a stronger and more resilient community and environment.

## How You Can Help

### Housing



1. Donate household goods, including kitchenware and furniture, to a transition house or shelter.
2. If you own a home, consider adding a secondary suite or carriage house to your property.
3. Advocate for increased affordable housing units in Abbotsford.

### Safety



1. If you haven't already, introduce yourself to your neighbours. Look out for each other.
2. Spend time outside, walking your neighbourhood, working in your yard, and making memories with your family.
3. Volunteer with a community safety program, like Community Policing or Search and Rescue.

### Income Gap



1. Support programs that aid the most vulnerable low-income populations: children, lone-parent families, and the elderly.
2. If you grow your food, share with your neighbours and friends.
3. If you are an employer, become a Living Wage employer. This means that staff working full-time can cover their basic expenses.

### Work & Economy



1. Support local small businesses, including farmer's markets and farm stands.
2. Want to strengthen your resume? Volunteer with a local non-profit.
3. If you are an employer, opt-in to a wage subsidy program that supports a marginalized person in building work experience and skills.

How will the Abbotsford Community Foundation respond? Through our ongoing Vital Signs work, we are committed to monitoring the trends and opportunities in our community. This ensures that our funding is meeting demonstrated community needs and supporting positive change.

## We want to hear from you if:

- You used this report as a catalyst for positive change. Email [info@abbotsfordcf.org](mailto:info@abbotsfordcf.org).
- You would like to know more about the work that we do. The Abbotsford Community Foundation knows the issues and organizations in our community. If you are looking for ways to make a difference, we can help.
- You would like to see additional grant funds for local non-profits. Please donate on our website or contact us to discuss how to best utilize your gifts. Email [info@abbotsfordcf.org](mailto:info@abbotsfordcf.org) or call 604-850-3755.



## ABBOTSFORD COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

### We Give Where We Live.

We serve Abbotsford by connecting donors with causes that matter to them.

Together, we build, invest and manage the gifts we have been given, for the long-term vitality of our community. We offer leadership and build bridges between the diverse groups that give our community life.

Because donations are pooled and invested, with the annual earnings being reinvested into Abbotsford, your gifts to the Abbotsford Community Foundation continue to make an impact for years to come.

### Our Vision

Together, we build a stronger, more caring community.

### Our Mission

To inspire philanthropy and develop partnerships by investing in people, projects, and programs to strengthen our community.

### Our Definition of Success

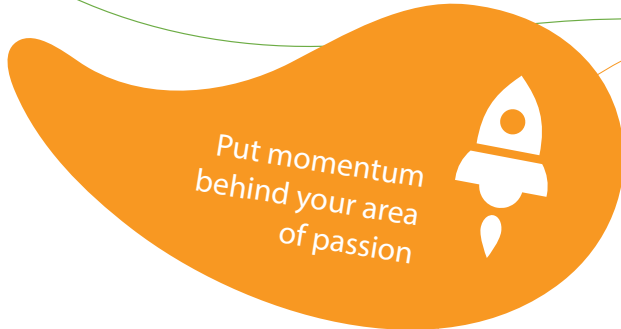
To be an outstanding community leader and capacity builder in the not-for-profit sector, facilitated by a growing endowment, with a goal of \$20 million by 2020.

### Our Strategic Priorities

- Grow our endowment funds.
- Deepen our impact through granting.
- Raise our Foundation profile.

### Our Values

Caring, engaged, responsible, trustworthy, accountable



## Photo credits

**Front cover:** Tourism Abbotsford **Page 2:** Abbotsford Community Foundation **Page 4:** John Morrow  
**Page 6:** Tourism Abbotsford **Page 8:** Abbotsford Police **Page 10:** Tourism Abbotsford **Page 11:** John Morrow

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