

Collecting and Using Meaningful Data to Influence Change

Measuring housing insecurity in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities



A misty forest landscape with tall evergreen trees and a mountain peak in the background. The scene is hazy, with the trees in the foreground appearing more distinct than those in the distance. The overall color palette is muted greens and greys.

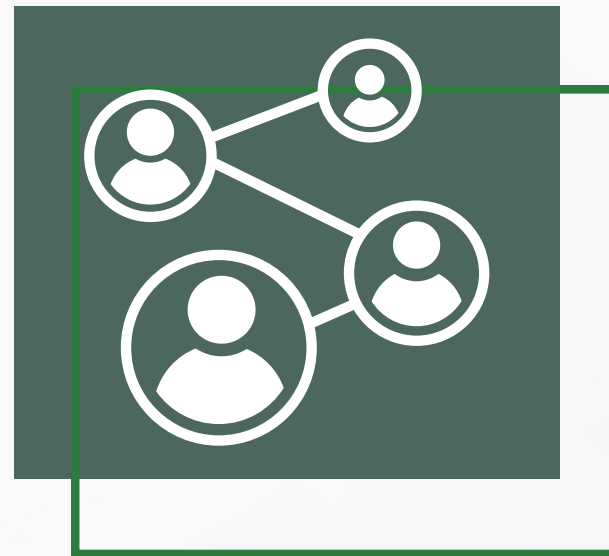
Land Acknowledgement

Rural Development Network

RDN is a non-profit that supports the **sustainability of rural communities**. We **collaborate** to identify and bring focus to rural issues, **build local capacity**, and develop **innovative, rural-based solutions** to unique issues.



**Innovative Tools
& Resources**



**Expertise &
Capacity**



**Advocacy to
amplify the
rural voice**



**Help with
accessing
funding**



RDN's Key Services



IMMIGRATION



**RURAL
REVITALIZATION**



HOMELESSNESS



**POLICY
DEVELOPMENT**



**NETWORK &
EVENTS**



**INIDGENOUS
ENGAGEMENT**



HOUSING



Definitions: What Does Homelessness Mean?

Unsheltered: Absolute homelessness; living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation. (e.g. living on sidewalks, squares, parks; vehicles, garages, etc.).

Emergency Sheltered: People who are staying in overnight shelters due to homelessness as well as those staying in shelters due to family violence.

Provisionally Accommodated: People with an accommodation that is temporary or that lacks security (e.g. couch-surfing, living in transitional housing, living in abandoned buildings, living in places unfit for human habitation, people in domestic violence situations, etc.).

At Risk of Homelessness: People who are not yet homeless but their current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards. (e.g. people who are one rent payment missed from eviction, people whose housing may be condemned for health, by-law, or safety violations, etc.)

*Umbrella Term: **Housing Insecurity***

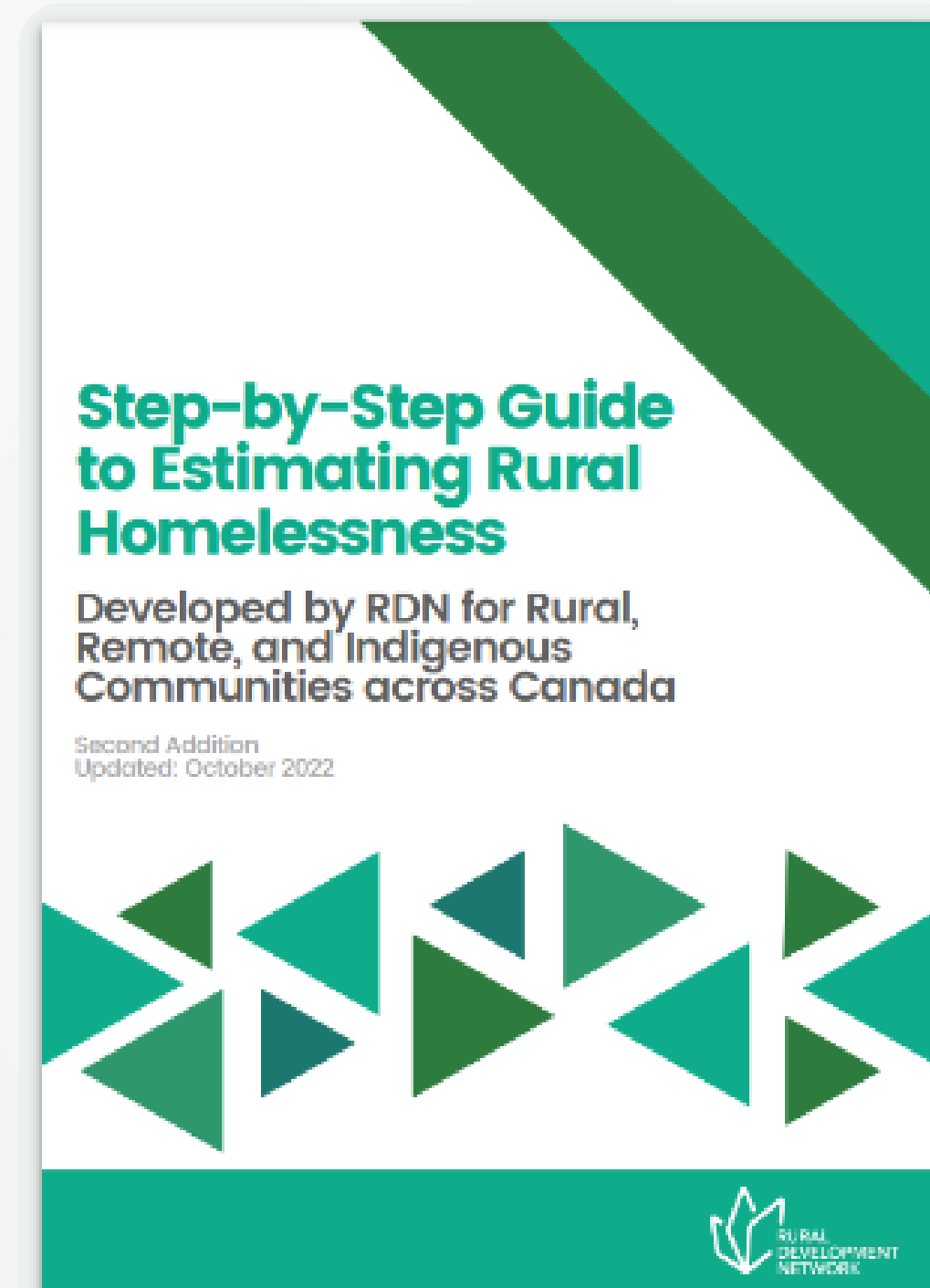


Step-By-Step Guide to Estimating Housing Insecurity

Download your free copy at
ruraldevelopment.ca

Since its launch in 2017

- 75+ community estimations
- Recipient of **CMHC's GOLD Roof Award for Knowledge to Action**



How Do We Estimate Housing Insecurity?

RDN provides training for lead partners and local agencies. Designated lead coordinators will have support as needed.

RDN

Lead Partner A

Lead coordinators connect with local agencies to get them on-board with the project and gather surveys when project finishes.

Local Agency
(e.g. Food Bank)

Recurring client

First-time client

Local Agency
(e.g. FCSS)

Local Agency
(e.g. Library)

Local resident
accessing services

Client coming in
from surrounding
area

Local Agency
(e.g. Clergy)

Client in a
lone-parent
household

Lead Partner B



An aerial photograph of a winding asphalt road that snakes through a dense, lush green forest. The road has white lane markings and curves gracefully through the trees. The forest is composed of various types of trees, with some showing lighter green foliage and others in deeper shades of green. The overall scene is serene and natural.

2023 Alberta Provincial Housing and Service Needs Estimation

About the Project



[Click here for full report](#)

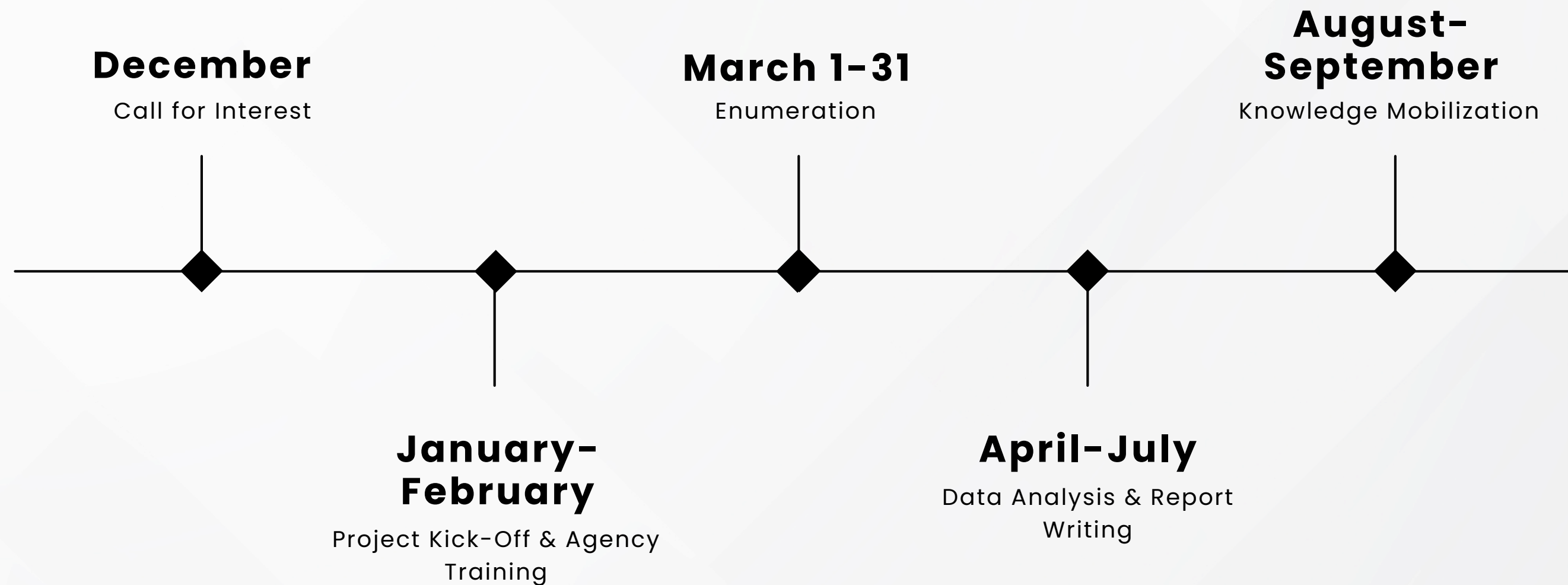
- Third iteration of the Alberta Provincial Estimation (2018, 2020, 2023)
- 21 organizations/municipalities representing 45 communities

Funded in part by the Government of Canada's Reaching Home Program:

Canada 



Methodology

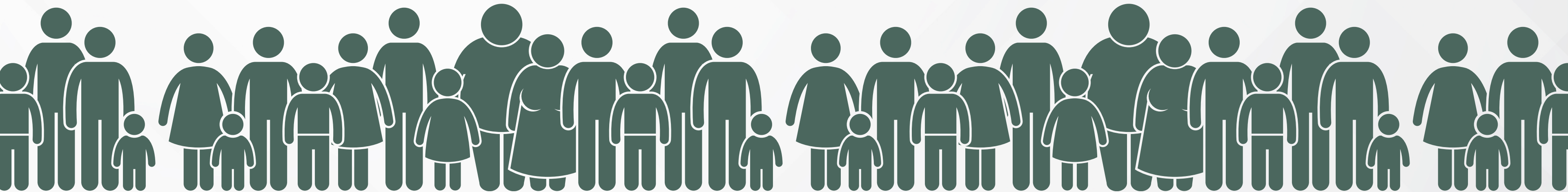


- Received **4,877** surveys during the enumeration period; **1,666 were excluded**, largely due to missing consent and incomplete identifiers.
- In total, **3,211** were determined to be suitable for further analysis.



Objective Housing Situation

- **2,429** survey respondents were housing insecure
- **2,354** dependents and **2,537** additional adults



Based on survey results, there were at least **7,320 community members experiencing housing insecurity** across participating rural, remote, and Indigenous communities in Alberta.



Reasons for Housing Insecurity

Top three reported reasons for housing insecurity:



Low wages



Inability to afford rent/mortgage



Increasing rent costs



Exploring the Spectrum of Housing Insecurity

Place on the Homelessness Spectrum	# of Respondents in Each Category
Unsheltered	151
Emergency Sheltered	244
Provisionally Accommodated	1,504
At Risk of Homelessness	2,810



Housing Insecure Survey Population Demographic Trends

- **91%** of Indigenous respondents were housing insecure
- **97%** of respondents who spent time in care were housing insecure
- **81%** of housing insecure respondents who spent time in care were Indigenous
- **93%** of 2SLGBTQIA+ respondents were housing insecure
- **88%** of respondents who were born outside of Canada were housing insecure
- **89%** of respondents who serve(d) in the Canadian Armed Forces, RCMP, and/or emergency services were housing insecure



Employment & Income Trends

Respondents' Employment Rates:

Housing Secure  70%

Housing Insecure  69%

Despite **69%** of housing insecure respondents being employed in some capacity, **49%** reported an annual household income of **\$49,999 or less** in 2022.



Living Situation: Missing Amenities

Sufficient & affordable heating – **23%**

Fire protection (smoke alarms, fire extinguishers) – **18%**

Safe drinking water – **16%**

Indoor plumbing/bathing facilities – **11%**

Refrigeration – **11%**

Electricity (or equivalent – i.e. solar power) – **11%**

Cooking facilities – **10%**



Emergency Shelter Use and Barriers to Shelter Use

- **13%** or **326** unique respondents accessed emergency shelter at least once between March 2022–March 2023.
- **5%** or 124 unique respondents reported stays in a transitional housing unit between March 2022–March 2023.

24%

or **581** unique respondents **did not** access emergency shelter when they needed one.



OPPORTUNITIES MOVING FORWARD

2023 Alberta Provincial Housing And Service Needs Estimation

Increase community awareness and understanding of housing insecurity and homelessness

only **52%** of respondents determined to be housing insecure **self-identified** as insecure

- the remainder likely did not access available supports and services
- qualitative responses indicate community divides and discrimination towards housing insecure respondents



Consider public transportation options



Only **36%** of respondents believed there **were enough** public transportation options within their community

- accessibility of existing transportation infrastructure was a commonly mentioned issue
- transportation is crucial to accessing supports and services needed to enable stable housing situations

Conduct a gap analysis and audit of service offerings



24% of housing insecure respondents **did not access emergency shelter when they needed it**

21% of housing insecure respondents **had not completed high school**

- these are just two examples highlighting lack of supports and services
- housing insecure respondents without access to appropriate supports and services will undoubtedly struggle to stabilize their housing situation



Conduct an audit of current housing options with the goal of increasing accessible and affordable housing



Increasing housing options could involve considering:



transitional/permanent supportive housing



emergency shelters



income-based housing units



repairing existing housing



Funded in part by the Government of Canada's Reaching Home Program.
Canada

Conclusions & Project Wrap-Up

- A regional approach to service delivery is necessary.
- Additional research and data collection is essential.
- An increase in provincial and federal homelessness funding is required.



A scenic view of a river flowing through a rocky landscape with snow-capped mountains in the background. The river is surrounded by dense green trees and shrubs. The water is clear and fast-moving, creating white rapids as it flows over the rocks. The mountains in the distance are covered in snow and partially obscured by the trees.

Using Data to Influence Change

Mobilizing Data to Develop Emergency Shelter Responses



**Drayton Valley, AB
Shelter Pods**

Canmore, AB Shelter/Mat Program

Canmore pilot project offering shelter from the cold

"They may be going through a rough patch, or may have suffered some kind of traumatic event. This gives them the opportunity to be safe and hopefully we will be able to connect them through the various helping agencies in the Bow Valley to accommodation that meets their needs."



Tanya Foubert
Feb 4, 2021 7:00 AM



Peace River opens first overnight homeless shelter



Rural homelessness an issue often unseen, unacknowledged

[Stephen Cook](#) · CBC News · Posted: Jan 12, 2020 6:00 AM MT | Last Updated: January 12, 2020



**Peace River, AB
Out of the Cold Shelter**



Mobilizing Data to Develop Supportive Housing



**Soaring Eagle Support Society – Eagles Nest Motel
Whitecourt, AB**



How do you mobilize homelessness data to influence decision-making on policy, funding, and programming?



Thank you

Questions?

Emma Wallace

emmaw@ruraldevelopment.ca

613-229-1144

Sydney Stenekes

programs@ruraldevelopment.ca

613-986-5207