



Vancouver Foundation's
VitalSigns[®] 2016

vancouver
foundation



COMMUNITY
FOUNDATIONS
OF CANADA
all for community.



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Foreword

How do people across British Columbia feel about their communities? What are we most concerned about? What are we doing well? Where do we need to improve? These are the kinds of questions Vancouver Foundation explores through our 2016 Vital Signs report.

Community Foundations need to understand the communities they serve. At Vancouver Foundation, we call this being Community Inspired. This year we have produced a provincial report for the first time, in partnership with Community Foundations across British Columbia. We were curious to learn about any regional differences in our experiences, and keen to support other Community Foundations to collect data about their local communities.

Over 7,000 people told us about the things they love, the issues they face, and how connected they are to their local community. Overall we heard some encouraging news. People in BC love the natural beauty of our province, we feel positive most of the time, and rate our quality of life as high. But there are some key areas – housing, safety, and employment – where we are experiencing issues differently depending on where we live. As a Community Foundation, these challenges require our attention.

This report offers some suggestions – by listening to community – on ways we can strengthen our communities. But as a philanthropic partner to organizations across BC, we believe there are more opportunities that could emerge from the data and findings contained in this report. That is one of the reasons we have adopted an Open License policy to make sure that the full potential value of this work is unlocked.

We hope our 2016 Vital Signs report will spark discussion and action among the people who care about our communities. It will inform and guide our own work as a funder, partner, and convener, and we plan to use it to engage community and civic organizations in discussion about working together to build healthy, vibrant and livable communities across BC.

Thank you to the many organizations and individuals who gave their time and energy to this report.

Kevin McCort,
President and CEO, Vancouver Foundation



Vancouver Foundation

With over 1,700 funds and total assets of \$1.06 billion, Vancouver Foundation is Canada's largest community foundation. In 2015, Vancouver Foundation and its donors made more than 4,300 grants, and distributions totaling approximately \$53 million, to registered charities across Canada. Grant recipients range from social services to medical research groups, to organizations devoted to arts and culture, the environment, education, children and families, youth, and animal welfare.

Executive Summary

How do people across BC feel about their communities?

Community Foundations across our province exist to build stronger communities by learning about the experiences and priorities of local people, and investing to create better places to live.

Our report shows that BC is a great place to call home, but depending on where we live, we experience different challenges to overcome. We invite organizations and individuals across BC to work in partnership with us on these challenges.

We feel good about where we live

We feel positive most of the time, and share a sense of leading meaningful and purposeful lives, regardless of where we live. We treasure the natural beauty of our province – particularly outside Metro Vancouver - enjoy our quality of life, and appreciate having friends and family close by. Depending on where we live, we enjoy our communities in different ways. In Metro Vancouver we particularly enjoy walkability and ease of moving around within our communities, while in the rest of the province we have a great appreciation for lifestyle and recreation opportunities.

We are concerned about housing, safety, and employment

We experience concerns about housing, safety, and employment differently depending on where we live. We feel housing pressures strongest in Metro Vancouver, particularly in Vancouver and Richmond. Safety is our second highest concern overall, and our top concern if we live in the Fraser regions. We ranked employment and economy as our third concern overall and significantly higher in communities outside Metro Vancouver.

Most of us are active in our communities and report high levels of trust and safety in our neighbourhoods, but there are opportunities for better connections

Taking part in community life is important to us no matter where we live. We love our local libraries, community centres and recreation centres, and many of us give our time to volunteering. The majority of us feel safe walking alone in our neighbourhood after dark and believe our neighbours would return a lost wallet with the money inside. However, fewer of us agree that someone new moving onto our street would be welcomed into our neighbourhood.

We know about opportunities to be more involved in our communities

Most of us know how we want to get more involved in building stronger communities. We know about the opportunities that exist to contribute, and our preferred ways to do this include volunteering or participating in a local community project.



About this report

Methodology

Our survey was completed online by over 7,000 BC residents between June 14th and July 5th, 2016. The final sample was weighted to match Statistics Canada census data on the basis of gender, age, and region of residence. Community Foundations across British Columbia (including Vancouver Foundation) promoted the survey through websites, social media, and via email.

Approximately 70% of interviews were collected by Mustel Group, and 30% by Community Foundations. Respondents could complete the survey in English, Chinese, or Punjabi. Some responses included 'select all that apply' or 'select up to three options'. Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding and 'prefer not to say' responses.

See our website - www.vancouverfoundationvitalsigns.ca/ - for a full copy of the survey and more information about our methodology.

Regional Clusters

To enable Community Foundations and other organizations to view findings for the communities they serve, we asked respondents to identify where they live based on major centres where foundations are located. Respondents from smaller surrounding communities were asked to select the centre they live closest to. Communities were grouped into 'Regional Clusters' based predominately on BC Health Boundaries.

We defined the Metro Vancouver area as: Vancouver, Richmond, New Westminister, Burnaby, Fraser

We defined the Metro Vancouver area as: Vancouver, Richmond, New Westminister, Burnaby, Fraser South, Fraser North, North Shore and Sea to Sky.

- **Vancouver**
- **Richmond**
- **Fraser South** – Surrey, Delta, White Rock, Langley and Area
- **Fraser East** – Mission, Abbotsford, Agassiz and Area
- **Fraser North** – Pitt Meadows, Maple Ridge, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody and Area
- **Central Metro** – New Westminister, Burnaby and Area
- **North Shore and Sea to Sky** – North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Squamish, Whistler and Area
- **Coast Garibaldi** – Bowen Island, Sunshine Coast, Powell River and Area
- **Southern Vancouver Island** – Greater Victoria, Gulf Islands and Area
- **Central and Northern Vancouver Island** – Duncan, Nanaimo, Campbell River, Port Alberni, Clayoquot, Courtenay, Thetis Island, Qualicum, Parksville and Area
- **Northeast** – Quesnel, Prince George, Dawson Creek and Area
- **Northern Interior and Northwest** – Prince Rupert, Smithers, Kitimat, Haida Gwaii and Area
- **Thompson/Cariboo/Shuswap** – Salmon Arm, Kamloops, Clearwater, Revelstoke and Area
- **Okanagan** – Vernon, Kelowna, Penticton and Area
- **Kootenay Boundary** – Nakusp, Nelson, Castlegar, Trail, Kootenay Lake, Grand Forks and Area
- **East Kootenay** – Kimberley, Cranbrook, Invermere, Golden and Area

Things we love

How do we feel about life? Why do we love calling BC home? What makes our local communities great places to live?

Most of us feel good about living in BC. We share a positive outlook on life, and feel our lives have meaning and purpose. We love the natural beauty of our province, enjoy our quality of life, and appreciate having friends and family close by.

In Metro Vancouver, we value our local surroundings and amenities. We enjoy walking and moving around easily within our communities, and accessing our local parks and public spaces. Outside Metro Vancouver, residents enjoy lifestyle and recreation opportunities.



Top 5 reasons we love our communities

#1
36%
Natural beauty/scenery

#2
30%
Overall quality of life

#3
27%
Friends and family close by

#4
21%
Walkability/easy to move around

#5
19%
Climate

Q2. What do you like most about living in your community? (Select up to three).

Total respondents = 7,137

*Items were selected from a list of 21 choices.

We feel positive about life

Feeling positive about life is something we share across BC, regardless of where we live. We also share a sense of leading purposeful and meaningful lives – a feeling that increases as we get older.

7.4/10

We feel positive most of the time

Q14. In general, how often do you feel positive? (0=Never, 10=Always)
Total respondents = 7,137

7.4/10

We lead purposeful and meaningful lives

Q15. In general, to what extent do you lead a purposeful and meaningful life? (0=not at all, 10=completely).
Total respondents = 7,137

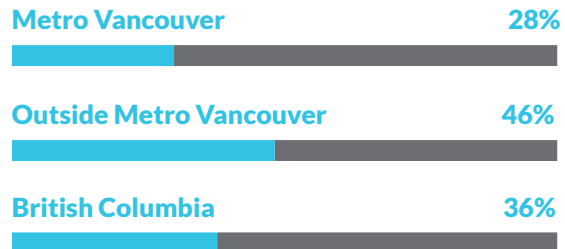
We love nature, enjoy our quality of life, and appreciate friends and family

Natural beauty and scenery, our overall quality of life, and having our friends and family close by are the top three reasons we like living in our communities. Our love for nature and our ratings for quality of life tend to be higher outside Metro Vancouver, but no matter where we live we appreciate having friends and family close by.

Natural beauty is the top reason we love BC

Natural beauty is important to us in BC – it's the number one reason we love living here – and our love for nature is even greater when we live outside Metro Vancouver.

We choose natural beauty as the thing we love most about our community in 11 out of 16 regions – highest in Coast Garibaldi (62%), East Kootenay (56%), North Interior / Northwest (54%). Natural beauty was ranked highest by people from British (42%) and Aboriginal (41%) ethnic and cultural origins.



Q2. What do you like most about living in your community? (Select up to three).
Total respondents = 7,137
*Items were selected from a list of 21 choices.



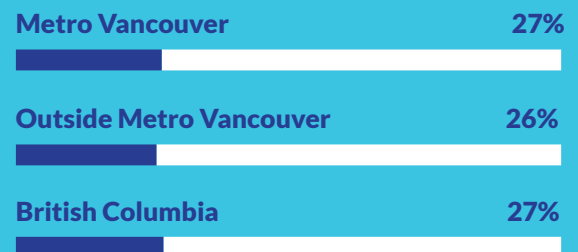
We value our quality of life as high in BC

We enjoy our overall quality of life across BC, making it the second most popular reason we love living in our community. We value our quality of life particularly highly in Coast Garibaldi (44%) and Central / North Vancouver Island (42%). We also rate quality of life higher if we are retired (39%) or self-employed (38%).



We appreciate having friends and family close

Across the province, we appreciate having friends and family close by. People living in the North East (39%) and Richmond (36%) particularly value this aspect of their community.

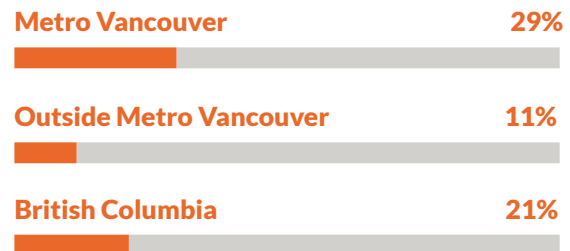


We enjoy our communities in different ways

Depending on where we live, we enjoy our communities in different ways. In Metro Vancouver, we enjoy our ability to walk or move around easily within our communities, and to access our local parks and public spaces. Outside Metro Vancouver, we appreciate the lifestyle and recreation opportunities on offer, while climate has more appeal in some communities.

Walkability and ease to move around important in Metro Vancouver

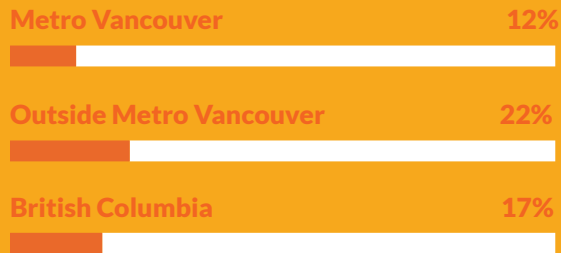
We value walkability and ease to move around as the thing we like most about our community in Vancouver (47%) and New Westminster / Burnaby (35%). We also rate walkability and ease to move around higher if we live alone (28%) or are renting (26%).



47%
of Vancouverites
value walkability



Lifestyle and recreation opportunities enjoyed more outside Metro Vancouver



We particularly like the lifestyle and recreation opportunities in East Kootenay (47%), North Interior / Northwest (27%), and North Shore / Sea to Sky (25%).

Climate appreciated more in some regions

Our climate is especially appreciated by communities in the Okanagan (48%), Southern Vancouver Island (39%), and Central / North Vancouver Island (32%), in comparison to BC overall (19%).



Parks and public spaces enjoyed most in Metro Vancouver



Communities that particularly value their parks and public spaces include Fraser North (27%), New Westminister / Burnaby (26%), and Fraser Valley East (23%).

Q2. What do you like most about living in your community? (Select up to three).

Total respondents = 7,137

*Items were selected from a list of 21 choices.

Issues we face

What concerns do we have about our communities? How do we experience these differently? What are the priorities to improve?

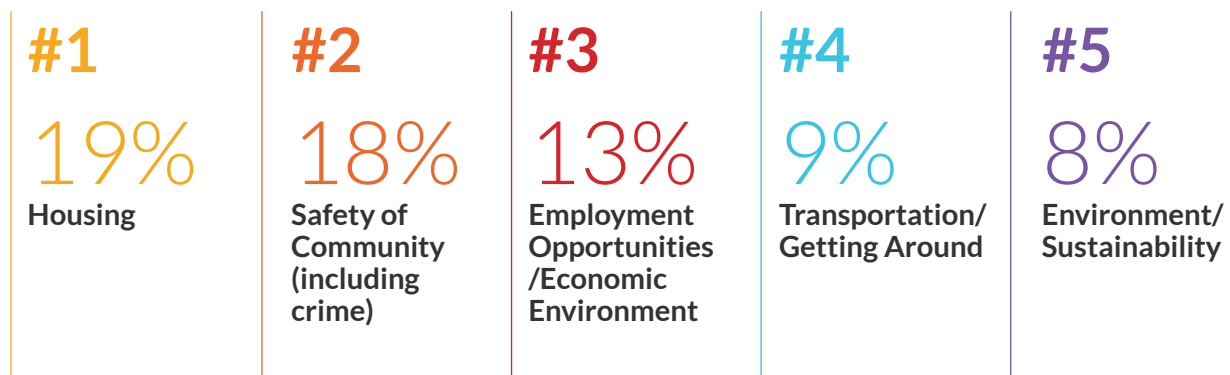
Our greatest concerns across BC are housing, safety and employment. But we experience these concerns differently depending on where we live in our province.

In Metro Vancouver, housing is our top concern – particularly in Vancouver, Richmond, and New Westminister/Burnaby. However, we are also feeling housing pressure in other regions including Southern Vancouver Island. In the Fraser regions,

safety is our top concern. For every other region, employment is our greatest concern – especially for communities in the Kootenay Regions.

We asked people to choose from a list of 14 issues or concerns they have about living in their communities, and then further asked them to identify their most important priority for improving their greatest concern.

Top 5 concerns in our communities



Q3b. And of these, what would be the most important issue or concern?
Total respondents = 7,137

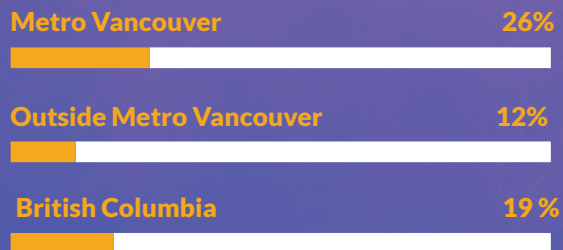




We feel housing pressures strongest in Metro Vancouver

We experience housing pressures most in our large urban areas, particularly Metro Vancouver. Housing concerns are experienced regardless of income. Concerns are strongest if we are 34 or younger, newer residents in the community, non-homeowners, or of Asian descent.

We choose housing as our greatest concern in Vancouver (37%), Richmond (30%), New Westminster / Burnaby (29%), North Shore / Sea to Sky (24%), and Southern Vancouver Island (21%).



Our top priorities for improving housing options

We identify home ownership as an even greater priority if we live in Fraser North (71%), while rental housing affordability is of greatest concern in Thompson/Cariboo/Shuswap (89%).

1

Improving the affordability of home ownership
56%

2

Improving the affordability of rental housing
46%

3

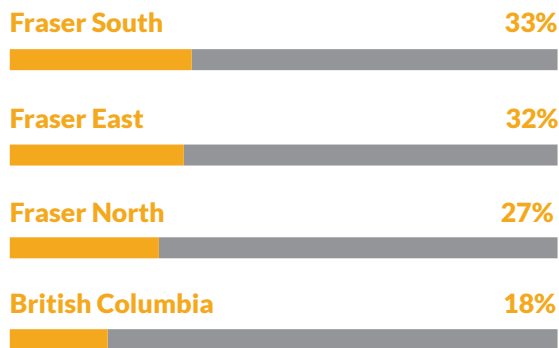
Increasing rental vacancy availability
30%

Q3c. Which of the following do you believe is the most important priority for improving housing options in your community?
Total respondents = 1,263

We're concerned about safety across BC, particularly in the Fraser regions

Safety is our second greatest concern across BC overall, and our top concern if we live in the Fraser regions. We feel safety is an issue regardless of our age and gender, however non-homeowners and those from Asian countries express higher levels of concern. Our top three priorities for improving community safety are consistent across the province.

Safety concerns higher in the Fraser Regions



Q3b. And of these, what would be the most important issue or concern?
Total respondents = 7,137

Our top priorities for improving community safety

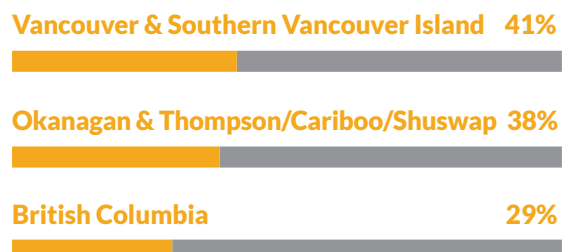
- 1 Reducing levels of property crime – 37%

- 2 Reducing use of illegal drugs – 33%

- 3 Increasing the visible presence of police – 32%

Q3c. Which of the following do you believe is the most important priority for improving safety in your community?
Total respondents = 1,269

Reducing levels of street disorder is our fourth priority, but varies greatly depending on region

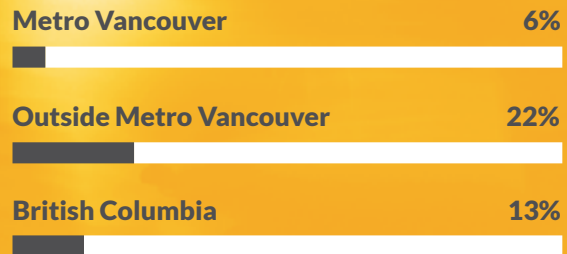


We experience significantly greater employment and economic concerns in communities outside Metro Vancouver

Employment and the economic environment is our third greatest concern in BC overall, but of greatest concern outside Metro Vancouver, particularly if we are 55 or younger. It is the number one reason we move to a new community. We view providing more opportunities for full-time employment as the top priority to address economic and employment issues in our community, regardless of where we live across the province.

Employment concerns are greater outside Metro Vancouver

We experience the greatest concerns about employment opportunities and the economy if we live in Kootenay East (41%) and Kootenay Boundary (36%). Finding employment (19%) is the top reason we move to a new area.



Q3b. And of these, what would be the most important issue or concern?
Total respondents = 7,137

Our top priorities for improving our economy and employment

1

Providing more opportunities for full time employment
53%

2

Providing more support for small business development
26%

3

Decrease need to travel to a different community/region for work
25%

We share providing more opportunities for full-time employment across the province as our top priority, regardless of age or where we live.

Q3c. Which of the following do you believe is the most important priority for improving the economy and employment opportunities in your community.
Total respondents = 892.

Our connections

How strong is our sense of belonging? What connections do we feel to our community? Are we ready to get more involved?

Across BC we are active in our communities, and two thirds of us feel a sense of belonging to our neighbourhood. Almost all of us have participated in a community activity, and regardless of our age, ethnicity or income, we enjoy visiting our local library, community centre or recreation centre. We also know how to be more involved in our communities, and our preferred ways to do so.

We generally feel safe walking in our neighbourhood after dark, and trust our neighbours would return a lost wallet or purse with the money still inside. But there are opportunities for better connections - particularly if we are unemployed or under 35, and further room for improvement, especially when it comes to welcoming new people moving onto our street.

Top 5 ways we are active in our community

#1

72%

Visit a local library, community centre or recreation centre

#2

67%

Donate to a cause

#3

50%

Volunteer time to an organization

#4

47%

Provide unpaid help to a non-family member

#5

43%

Sign a petition



Q4. Thinking about the last 12 months, please indicate if you have done any of the following in your community.
Total respondents = 7,137

Two thirds of us describe our sense of belonging to our local neighbourhood as strong

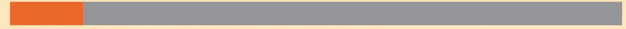
Across the province, 66% of us describe our sense of belonging to our local neighbourhood as strong, but only 18% describe it as very strong suggesting room to further strengthen our local connections.

We feel the same about belonging regardless of gender, and feel a stronger sense of belonging as we grow older and live longer in our community. Our sense of belonging also increases if we have a spouse or partner (regardless of whether or not we have children), or if we are a single parent.

Have a strong sense of belonging to their neighbourhood 26%



Describe their sense of belonging as weak 32%



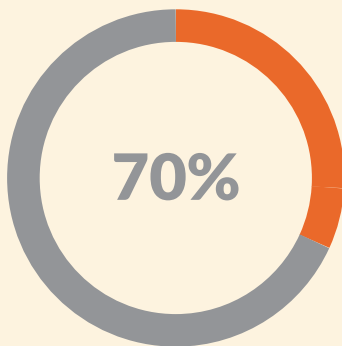
Prefer not to say 2%



Q5. How would you describe your sense of belonging to your local neighbourhood?

Total respondents = 7,137

Most of us trust people in our neighbourhood, but feel unsure if people moving onto our street would be welcomed



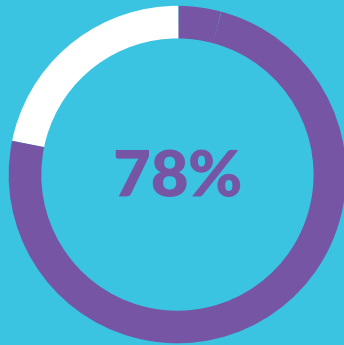
Q12. If you lost a wallet or purse containing \$100 dollars, how likely do you think it would be returned to you, with the money inside, if it was found by one of your neighbours? Total respondents = 7,137

Think a lost wallet or purse would be returned, with the money inside, if it was found by a neighbour

Across BC most of us trust our neighbours. In fact, the majority of us believe a wallet or purse would be returned with the money inside, and this increases as we grow older and live longer in our community.

In Metro Vancouver the perceived likelihood was 63%, and outside Metro Vancouver the likelihood was 77%.

Most of us feel safe in our neighbourhoods, but some experience concerns



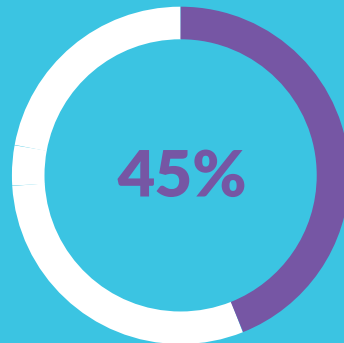
Feel safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark

Our feeling of safety while walking alone in our neighbourhood after dark is lower if we are female (70%), Aboriginal (68%), or if we are under 25 (65%). Our feeling of safety increases with higher levels of household income and education.

Base: Total (n=7,137)

Q10. Do you feel safe walking alone in your neighbourhood after dark?

We feel unsure if people moving onto our street would be welcomed



Agree that someone new moving onto their street would be welcomed into the neighbourhood.

Fewer than half of us feel that someone new moving onto our street would be welcomed into the neighbourhood.

Q16. When someone new moves onto my street, they are welcomed into the neighbourhood?
Total respondents = 7,137



We know about opportunities to be more involved in our communities

The overwhelming majority of us

94%

have participated in a community activity in the last year, and most of us know about opportunities to get more involved.

72%

Have visited a local library, community or recreation centre

Q4. Thinking about the last 12 months, please indicate if you have done any of the following in your community.
Total respondents = 7,137

71%

Know about opportunities to get more involved in our community, regardless of our age, ethnicity, or income.

Q7. If you wanted to contribute or be more involved in your community, would you know what opportunities exist to do so?
Total respondents = 7,137

Our top opportunities for strengthening connections

Across BC, our most common suggestion for getting involved in community is through volunteering. Our interest in volunteering remains the same regardless of our income, education, age, or family status.

However, the biggest opportunity to strengthen community connections is by participating in a neighbourhood project. The gap between those interested in participating in a local project, and those that have done so, represents the greatest opportunity to invite people across BC to strengthen communities together.

Volunteering

65%

are interested in volunteering

50%

have volunteered

Local projects

53%

would participate in a local project

18%

have participated in a local project

Q8. If you wanted to be more involved in your community and help strengthen your community, which of the following would you be likely to do?
Total respondents = 7,137

Q4. Thinking about the last 12 months, please indicate if you have done any of the following in your community.
Total respondents = 7,137

What happens next?

Vancouver Foundation's 2016 Vital Signs is part of our ongoing commitment to understanding the priorities and experiences of community. We will use it to inform and guide our work as a funder, partner, and convener, and share it with organizations that we hope might create new opportunities from the data and findings.

We invite you to think about how the findings in our report can support your efforts to strengthen community across BC. Please share it with others in your community, and get in touch if we can help.

How to use this report

Reflect on your experiences:

- Ask if the findings mirror your own experience, and think about where you might be able to get involved to make a difference in your community.
- Connect with your local Community Foundation to see if they have produced a local Vital Signs report which will provide you with more detailed information on issues in your area.

Take action:

- Use this report as a conversation starter within your social networks or place of work, with elected officials, and with family and friends.
- Consider volunteering with an organization in your community that is seeking to make a difference on an issue that is important to you.
- Consider donating to a cause that inspires you.
- Take part in a festival or neighbourhood gathering. Welcome newcomers. Spend time on what matters to your community.



Acknowledgements:

Vital Signs® is a community check-up conducted by Community Foundations across Canada that measures the vitality of our communities and identifies significant trends in a range of areas critical to quality of life. Vital Signs is coordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada and with special thanks to the Toronto Foundation for developing and sharing the Vital Signs concept. For more information visit: www.vitalsignscanada.ca

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BC Community Foundations

Special thanks to the Community Foundation movement in British Columbia and in particular those Community Foundations who contributed to this survey.

Mustel Group

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MUSTEL GROUP

Affinity Bridge

Vancouver-based creative technology team who work with environmental organizations, social non-profits, co-operatives, and social good enterprises from British Columbia and around the world.



Find a Community Foundation Near You

Community Foundations help guide volunteer efforts and financial support to where it will have the greatest impact. Connect with your local Community Foundation to learn more about the difference they're making and the best way to contribute to make your community a better place.

communityfoundations.ca

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