



2020 The Alberni Valley's
VitalSigns[®]



*The Alberni Valley
Community Foundation*

Message from the Board Chair

We began our 2020 Vital Signs® report before COVID-19 was a known issue, and we planned to look forward to 2030 and consider the Alberni Valley's role in meeting the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (You'll see these icons woven throughout the report, and we plan to explore them further in future years). However, though important, those Goals feel less a priority now as our community deals with the immediate impact of a global pandemic: jobs lost, an economy damaged, new ways of learning and working, deferred celebrations, and so many other ways of living that comprise our new normal.

We have scaled down our report this year, focusing on four issue areas: Learning, Housing, Food Security, and the Environment. In addition to providing updated statistical indicators, we are also sharing stories about how the pandemic has impacted each of these areas, and how Alberni Valley residents are coming together to create innovative solutions to some of the problems that the coronavirus has wrought. As always, we aspire to see clearly the challenges before us and to support the individuals and agencies that respond.

Hugh Grist, Board Chair

Alberni Valley Community Foundation

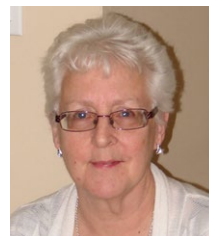
Alberni Valley Community Foundation board members



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John Mayba
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Peggy Hartman
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Ken Watson



Robert Gunn



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The Alberni Valley Community Foundation would like to acknowledge that the geographical scope of this report is within the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territory of the Hupacasath and Tseshaht people.

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Alberni Valley Fast Facts

- Population: **25,112**
 - 0-19 years old: **20.3%**
 - 20 - 64 years old: **55.6%**
 - 65 years and older: **24.1%**
- Median age: **49.6**
- Indigenous identity: **16.8%**
- Median household income, after tax: **\$49,609**

For additional demographic information, please see our 2018 Vital Signs Report.

About Vital Signs®

Vital Signs® is a community check-up conducted by community foundations across Canada. It measures the vitality of our communities, identifies significant trends, and supports action on issues that are critical to our quality of life. For more information, please visit www.communityfoundations.ca/initiatives/vital-signs/.

The Alberni Valley is defined as the City of Port Alberni, Regional Districts B, D, E, and F, and the Tsahaheh 1, Ahahswinis 1, Alberni 1, and Klehkoot 2 reservations. All efforts have been made to obtain data for this geographic area, but occasionally different geographic areas are measured. This will be noted.



Learning

Alberni Valley students are on par with their provincial counterparts when measuring high school completion rates and the transition to post-secondary, while the community lags behind the province in attaining post-secondary education.

83.0%

High school completion rate

Data from the British Columbia Ministry of Education demonstrates that the School District 70 six-year high school completion rate has hit an all-time high, at **83.0%** in both the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years. This compares to **89.0%** provincially.¹

70.0%

Indigenous high school completion rate

The six-year high school completion rate for Indigenous students in School District 70 has increased since our last report: from **56.0%** in 2016-2017 to **70.0%** in 2018-2019. This compares to **69.0%** provincially.¹

69.0%

Transition to post-secondary

The post-secondary transition rate provides the proportion of high school graduates that transition to a post-secondary institute within three years of graduation. **69.0%** of School District 70 students who graduated in 2013-2014 transitioned to post-secondary, which is on par with the provincial rate of **69.0%**.²

44.7%

Percentage of population with post-secondary

In the Alberni Valley, **44.7%** of the population 15 years and older has post-secondary education. This is an increase from 2015's rate of **43.9%**. Provincially, **55.0%** of the population 15 years and older has post-secondary. This indicator has not been updated since 2016, but will be updated in 2021.³

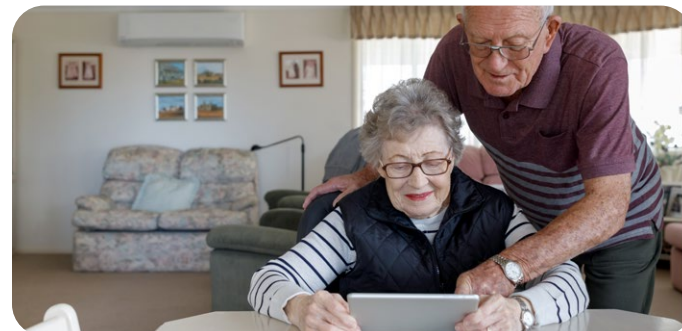


The Impact of COVID-19

One of the fastest changes that the coronavirus brought about was the closure of schools and the transition to schooling from home for students from elementary to post-secondary. But informal learning was also impacted by the pandemic. Recreation programs and library services were both restricted and then brought online. For seniors living in residential care facilities, having their entertainment options go online presented multiple barriers: the first, a need for a device, and the second, the ability to find information, download ebooks, and stream music and movies. The AVCF helped fund the Vancouver Island Regional Library's Digital Care Package program, which provided residential care facilities with a computer, instruction about how to use the library's digital collection, and the means to stream content to a shared screen. Facilities that were without an internet connection were provided with one. This program brought connection and entertainment to a group of people who faced strict isolation.

\$4,521 Average annual cost of undergraduate university tuition

Vancouver Island University is the closest public university. Tuition has increased every year for the last decade, and was **\$4,521** for the 2019-2020 academic year, compared to **\$5612** provincially. There is no similar comparison for North Island College, where fees vary greatly depending on the program.⁴



Related Sustainable Development Goal

4 QUALITY EDUCATION





Housing

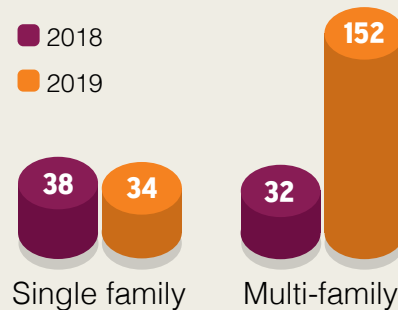
Home values and sales prices continue to increase, and Port Alberni saw a jump in multi-family housing recently, with 152 units in progress (140 from the same developer).

\$299,000 Median home value

The median value of a home in Port Alberni has increased from **\$278,000** in 2019 to **\$299,000** in 2020 – an 8% increase.⁶

34; 152 Housing starts by dwelling type

In 2019, **34** single-family housing starts were recorded, a slight decrease over 2018's **38**. There were **152** multi-family housing starts recorded in 2019 – an incredible **375%** increase over the **32** units of multi-family housing started in 2018.⁷



\$342,700 Benchmark home price

The benchmark sale price of a single-family home in summer 2020 in the Alberni Valley was **\$342,700** – still the most affordable city on Vancouver Island, but **\$47,800** more than in summer 2018. On Vancouver Island, the average single-family home increased from **\$507,700** in summer 2018 to **\$545,700** in summer 2020.⁵



9.0%

Proportion of units requiring major repair

As of 2016, **9.0%** of housing in the Alberni Valley required major repair (for example, dwellings that have defective plumbing or electrical wiring). Across the province, the proportion of units requiring major repair was **6.3%** in 2016.⁸

73.2%

Owner households

Of the **11,360** households in the Alberni Valley, **73.2%** are occupied by their owners. Of these, just over half (**53.3%**) carry a mortgage. Provincially, **67.8%** of households are owner households.⁸

\$701 Median monthly home ownership costs

Median monthly home ownership costs were last captured in 2016. At that time, monthly home ownership costs, which include mortgage payments, electricity, heat, water, and other municipal services total **\$701**. This compares to **\$1,149** provincially.⁸

\$797 Median rent

Median rent costs include rent payments, electricity, heat, water, and other municipal services. In the Alberni Valley, the median rent has risen to **\$797** in 2019. This compares to **\$1,363** provincially.⁹

1.1%

Rental vacancy rate

The rental vacancy rate in the Alberni Valley has decreased every year since 2011. It is currently **1.1%**, having fallen from **1.7%** in 2017. British Columbia's rental vacancy rate is **1.4%**.⁹

147

Homeless count

The Alberni Valley's homeless population was counted in April 2018. An updated count was planned for April 2020, but was postponed due to COVID-19.¹⁰

12

Number of beds in emergency shelter

The Port Alberni Shelter Society operates the emergency shelter in the Alberni Valley. It has **12** beds year-round, and may offer **20+** additional beds during periods of extreme weather (November 1 – March 31 of each year).¹¹



The Impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 had immediate impacts on housing: at the start of the pandemic, housing sales slowed and prospective buyers had to adjust to virtual open houses. As the housing market has rebounded, there has been a return to normal for homeowners. But for the homeless, the effects of COVID-19 are still being felt. Shelters and programs for people who are homeless needed to adapt their services quickly to promote social distancing and increased hygiene practices while offering a level of service similar to pre-pandemic. The Port Alberni branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association responded quickly, and received \$10,000 in Emergency Community Support Funding through the AVCF in support of an additional Homeless Outreach Worker. This staff member continued the work of homeless outreach, but took on additional tasks in the time of a pandemic, promoting and providing access to hygiene supplies for the homeless population, often living in rough, transient, or dangerous situations.



106

Number of affordable housing units

As of January 2020, there were **106** affordable housing units spread across 8 different sites in Port Alberni. Of these, 1 is operated by BC Housing and the remainder are operated by non-profit organizations.¹²

Related Sustainable Development Goal

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES





Food

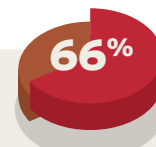
The pandemic has put increased pressure on food programs, which have adapted as necessary to serve more people and in different ways.

\$1029 Cost of healthy eating

There has been no update to the cost of healthy eating since 2017. At that time, a family of four on Central Vancouver Island paid **\$1029** monthly to eat healthy meals. This is only slightly more than the provincial average of **\$1019**.¹³

Food program usage, March 1 - August 31, 2020¹⁷

ADSS Breakfast Club	Provided 1000+ hot meals; offered grocery and takeout gift cards and hygiene supplies
Alberni Valley Community School Lunch Program	1,111 grocery bags provided to families from April - June; Daily snack for 308 students (June only)
Alberni Valley Neighbourlink Society Read & Feed Program	Program paused during the pandemic due to school closures
Canadian Mental Health Association, Port Alberni branch	
EJ Dunn/Maquinna Backpack Program	418 packs of food given
Grace Point Church Downtown Hope	Program no longer in operation
Island Health Lunch Club Program	Weekly lunch programs paused and grocery and farmers market gift cards delivered weekly instead; monthly meal bag delivery
Jericho Road Mobile Outreach	Program not currently in operation
KUU-US Crisis Line Society	Providing hygiene and COVID kits alongside Salvation Army meals
Port Alberni Friendship Centre	1,680 hampers provided to families; 7,200 meals provided (breakfast bags and lunch boxes provided 5 days/week)
Port Alberni Shelter Society	
Salvation Army/Bread of Life	55,903 families fed
Vincent de Paul	312 families assisted, primarily through grocery gift cards



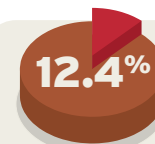
Meals with adults at home

The percentage of Alberni Valley Grade 4 and Grade 7 students who eat meals with their parents or other adult family members 5 or more times per week has decreased since our last report. During the 2019-2020 school year, **74%** of Grade 4 students and **66%** of Grade 7 students ate family meals 5 or more times per week, compared to **77%** and **74%** in 2017-2018.¹⁶



The Impact of COVID-19

For Alberni Valley charities, providing food to community members was – and remains – one of the most pressing priorities of the pandemic. The Alberni Valley's most vulnerable may not have had the finances or space available to stockpile food at the beginning of COVID-19, and, as the pandemic has continued and Valley residents have faced unemployment or lowered income, the demand for food has increased. The Bread of Life, Salvation Army, Canadian Mental Health Association, Shelter Society, and Literacy Alberni quickly came together to form the Alberni Covid Community Response and ensure the both meals and food items are available to anyone in need. The Alberni Valley Community Foundation has provided \$42,000 to various food programs responding to increased need due to COVID. Another grant has been provided to the Bread of Life to better understand the need going forward, so that organizations can source and provide food for all in need.



Food insecurity

An analysis of data from Statistics Canada from 2017-2018 demonstrates that **12.4%** of British Columbia residents are food insecure, meaning that households have inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints. This compares to **12.7%** of all Canadian households. Due to COVID-19, Statistics Canada has found that household food insecurity has increased to **14.6%** across the country, and is predicted to increase as the pandemic continues.^{14,15}

Related Sustainable Development Goal

2 ZERO HUNGER





Environment

Good news: in 2019, air quality was better than in recent years, while water consumption decreased slightly over 2017, and household recycling household recycling increased.

8.8ug/m³ Air quality

There are many measures of air quality, including concentration of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) Fine particulate matter is reported here because it is a public health concern – PM2.5 can lead to lung and heart problems. In 2019, the Alberni Valley's annual average PM2.5 reading was **8.8ug/m³**. Canada's standard is 10.0ug/m³ or less.¹⁸

503L Daily water consumption per capita

In the Alberni Valley, metered water usage is provided by the City of Port Alberni, Beaver Creek Water System, and Cherry Creek Waterworks District. Daily average water consumption per capita was **503** litres in 2019, a decrease over 2017's **530L**.^{19,20,21}

84kg Household recycling

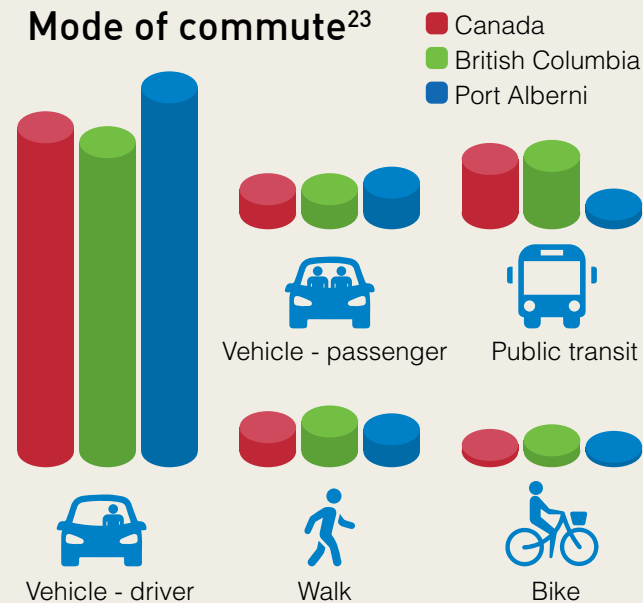
The Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District collects household recycling from residents in the City of Port Alberni, Beaver Creek, Tshesht, and Hupacasath. In 2017, each household in these communities averaged **75.7kg** of recycling per year. In 2019, the household average increased to **84kg** per household, on average.²⁰

1,588.0mm Annual precipitation

In 2018, the most recent year with comprehensive weather reports, **1,588.0mm** of precipitation fell in the Alberni Valley. This was an decrease from 2017 and 2016, at **1616.7mm** and **2,069.0mm** respectively.²²



Mode of commute²³



Related Sustainable Development Goals

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



15 LIFE ON LAND



**THANK YOU TO
OUR SPONSORS:**



Alberni-Clayoquot
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Economic Development Department



ABOUT THE AVCF

Formed in 1995, the Alberni Valley Community Foundation (AVCF) is one of 191 community foundations across Canada. The AVCF invests in the future of the community by creating and managing endowment funds, by providing grants to local charities to increase our shared quality of life, and by identifying community needs and opportunities.

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Image sources:

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