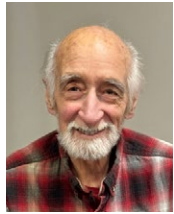


# The Alberni Valley's

2026  
**Vital**Signs.



*The Alberni Valley  
Community Foundation*



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Board Chair



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Grants Committee



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## Table of Contents

About Vital Signs .....	3
Our Valley .....	4
Housing .....	6
Income Gap .....	8
Work and Economy .....	10
Environment .....	12
Food .....	14
Health and Wellness .....	16
Getting Started in Our Community .....	18
Older Adults and Elders .....	19
Children and Youth .....	20
Learning .....	22
Safety .....	24
Arts, Culture and Recreation .....	26
Belonging and Leadership .....	28
References .....	30

## Message From the Board Chair

The Alberni Valley Community Foundation has been proudly publishing Vital Signs reports for more than ten years. The most pressing issues have changed over time, with reports in the last decade spotlighting vexing concerns including child poverty, food security, access to appropriate housing, substance use, and climate, among others. This year, safety stands out as one issue that is challenging our community. Of course, safety doesn't exist in a vacuum - it is indeed linked to housing, income, community belonging, etc.

While a variety of challenges persist, we endeavour to highlight some of the local organizations and projects working to alleviate these stressors. Because it's true that more affordable housing is needed, and it's also true that the recent units constructed by Sage Haven, Citaapi Mahtii Housing Society, and Walyaqit Tiny Shelter Village have played a part in providing housing security to our neighbours. Similarly disheartening are rapidly increasing food prices, yet we are grateful for the Salvation Army/Bread of Life and the Port Alberni Friendship Centre - among many other food-focused organizations in the Alberni Valley - because they make sure that community members have full stomachs and cupboards.

As your Community Foundation, we funnel financial support to the organizations taking care of our community. That is our promise, in perpetuity.

**Hugh Grist**, Board Chair

*The Alberni Valley Community Foundation operates within the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territory of the Hupacasath and Tseshaht people.*

# About Vital Signs®: FAQ

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 [communityfoundations.ca/initiatives/vital-signs/](https://communityfoundations.ca/initiatives/vital-signs/).

## Why Vital Signs?

Compiling local information and tracking it over time provides the Alberni Valley Community Foundation with valuable insights about the community's strengths and challenges. But Vital Signs is not only a tool for the Foundation. For local non-profits, charitable organizations, and governments, Vital Signs is used to support the development of evidence-informed plans and strategies. For residents, Vital Signs offers a way to better understand our shared community.

## What is the Alberni Valley?

For this report, the Alberni Valley is defined per Statistics Canada's "Port Alberni (Census Agglomeration)" area, which includes the City of Port Alberni, Alberni Clayoquot Regional District electoral areas B (Beaufort), D (Sproat Lake), E (Beaver Creek), and F (Cherry Creek), 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 used. This will be noted.

## What's Different in 2026?

The Alberni Valley Community Foundation has previously published full Vital Signs reports in 2015, 2018, and 2023, and a truncated report in 2020 due to Covid-19. Continuity of research methods, indicator definitions, and sources were not consistent in the 2023 report. Where possible, historical data has been included in this report. Where that wasn't possible, consider comparing this edition to the 2018 report.

## Where does the data come from?

There are two kinds of data used in this report: indicator data and community response data.

**Indicator data** is derived from sources at the local, provincial, and national levels. Local sources include local non-profits, charitable organizations, and governments. Provincial sources include BC Stats and various provincial ministries. Federal sources are primarily Census and other Statistics Canada products. All sources are listed on page 30 and all digital sources are hyperlinked.

**Community response data** came from local knowledge holders, community organizations, and the community at large.

A community survey was open to all residents of the Alberni Valley in November and December 2025. Survey recruitment was completed by posters, emails, social media, and targeted ads. In total, 412 respondents completed the survey. Data from the survey is included throughout the report under "Community Voice".

Local knowledge holders and leaders of community organizations that had recently received a grant from the Foundation were interviewed. Interviews focused on the trends and changes observed in their work in the last two years. Some organizations provided data, which is noted on the "References" page.

## Sustainable Development Goals

Like many community foundations, the Alberni Valley Community Foundation affirms the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations. More information about the goals is available at: [sustainabledevelopment.un.org](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org).



The funds granted by the Alberni Valley Community Foundation support the local achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Look for the SDG icons throughout the report as they relate to each impact area.

# Our Valley



In three years, the Alberni Valley's population has grown by 10%. The population is also slightly younger than in 2021, likely the result of new residents. The local Indigenous population is younger yet.

The Alberni Valley's Indigenous population is younger than the overall population. The average age for the non-Indigenous population in the Alberni Valley is 48.9 years, while the average age of the Indigenous population is 33.9 years. Of the total Indigenous population locally, 26.4% of people are 14 years and younger, while the same is true of 11.7% of the local non-Indigenous population<sup>1</sup>.

## 28,528

**Estimated population, 2024<sup>2</sup>**

Increase since 2021 **+10.6%**

Population change in  
neighbouring communities:

Nanaimo Regional District **+5.5%**

Comox Valley Regional District **+5.7%**



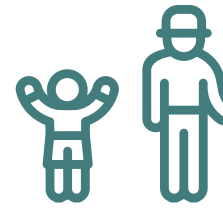
**Median age, Alberni Valley<sup>2</sup>**

2021 **50 years**

2024 **48.5 years**  
(a decrease of 1.5 years)

## 40.9

**Median age, British Columbia<sup>2</sup>**



**Population by age<sup>2</sup>**

0–19 years old **19.0%**

20–64 years old **53.5%**

65 years and older **27.5%**

**Population by sex<sup>2</sup>**

Female **50%**

Male **50%**



## 35

**Nuu-chah-nulth language  
speakers in the Alberni Valley<sup>3</sup>**

## 16.8%

**Proportion of the Alberni Valley population  
reporting Indigenous identity<sup>3</sup>**

Indigenous identity, British Columbia **5.9%**

Indigenous identity, Canada **5.0%**

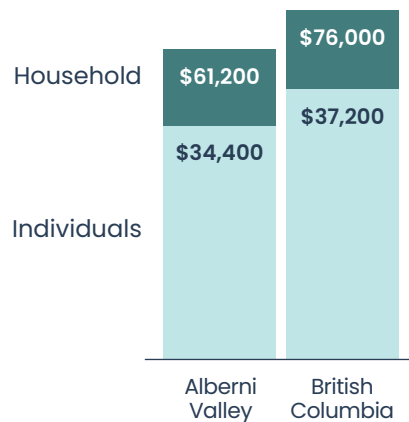
### Marital status<sup>3</sup>

	Alberni Valley
Married/Common-law	56.3%
Never married	24.4%
Separated	3.1%
Divorced	8.8%
Widowed	7.3%

### Household composition<sup>3</sup>

	Alberni Valley	BC
Couples without children	30.4%	22.7%
Couples with children	16.9%	26.4%
One-parent families	9.2%	7.6%
Multi-generational households	2.1%	3.7%
One-person households	33.0%	29.4%
Other	8.3%	10.2%

### Median after-tax income in 2020<sup>3</sup>



### Top three employment sectors<sup>3</sup>

	Alberni Valley	British Columbia
Health care and social assistance	18.0%	12.0%
Retail trade	13.1%	11.3%
Construction	10.1%	8.8%



#### Community Voice

"I am satisfied with my quality of life."

- Strongly agree and agree **79.7%**
- Disagree and strongly disagree **16.4%**

The three answers that were most frequently chosen by survey respondents when asked about assets that contribute positively to their quality of life:

- Recreation activities **65.7%**
- Arts activities **45.2%**
- Health care services **41.4%**

Conversely, respondents were asked to identify the challenges that impact their quality of life. The top three:

- I don't have enough money for extras that would enrich my quality of life **45.1%**
- I have difficulty accessing adequate health services **44.4%**
- I have few people I can turn to when I need help **27.2%**

"The cost of living is impacting a lot of extracurricular events I used to do. [I'm] just working now for the basics - food, shelter, very minimal extras."

# Housing



Housing in the Alberni Valley is relatively affordable compared to housing costs provincially, and using national affordability measures. Housing starts are not keeping pace with the anticipated five year need but the area has seen an increase in second stage and affordable housing developments.

## Benchmark price, single-family home<sup>4</sup>

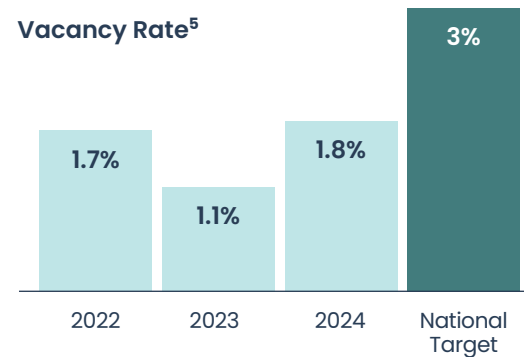
	2022	2023	2024	2025
Alberni Valley	\$528,700	\$538,000	\$501,100	\$519,300
Vancouver Island (excludes Capital Region)	\$764,300	\$776,200	\$777,600	\$796,200

## Housing affordability<sup>3</sup>

In the Alberni Valley, 19.3% of residents spend 30% or more of their income on housing, leaving them housing insecure. Renters are more likely to spend a higher proportion of their income on housing, with 39.9% spending 30% or more. In contrast, only 11.9% of

owners spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Provincially, 25.5% of households spend 30% or more of their income on housing. Mirroring local trends, 37.8% of provincial renter households spend 30% or more on housing, while the same is true of 19.3% of provincial owner households.

## Vacancy Rate<sup>5</sup>



**\$1025**

The average monthly rent (all unit types) in Port Alberni<sup>6</sup>

## Number of new units needed to house the population<sup>7</sup>

	5 Yr. Targets (2030)	20 Yr. Targets (2040)	30 Yr. Targets (2050)
All Housing Types	1,220	1,913	2,825
Units Required to House Residents in Core Housing Need	111	222	443

**Note:** Core Housing Need refers to housing which does not meet one or more of the indicator thresholds for housing adequacy, affordability or suitability. Residents in Core Housing Need would have to spend 30% or more of their total before-tax income to pay rent for an acceptable alternative unit.

### Housing starts by dwelling type<sup>8</sup>

	2023	2024	2025
Single Family	26	18	12
Multi Family	6	58	55

### Alberni Valley Point in Time Homeless Count<sup>9</sup>

	2018	2021	2023	2025
Sheltered	63	73	62	73
Unsheltered	84	52	101	107
Total	147	125	163	180

The Alberni Valley has **91** emergency shelter beds with **20** additional cold weather beds and **118** transitional to long-term supportive housing units.



#### Community Voice

“Homelessness is being addressed with urgency in the Alberni Valley.”

- Strongly agree and agree **14.3%**
- Neither agree nor disagree **15.1%**
- Disagree and strongly disagree **58.3%**

“There are not enough moderate to low income housing options. It seems a lot of focus is on visible homelessness, but there’s a need to prevent homelessness by creating affordable housing or providing subsidies.”



#### Spotlight: New AV Community Housing Units

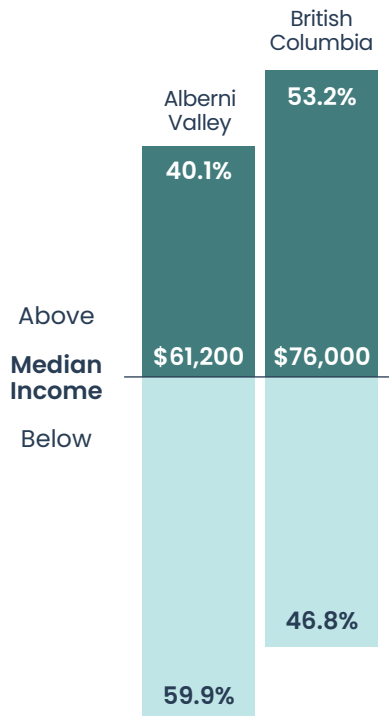
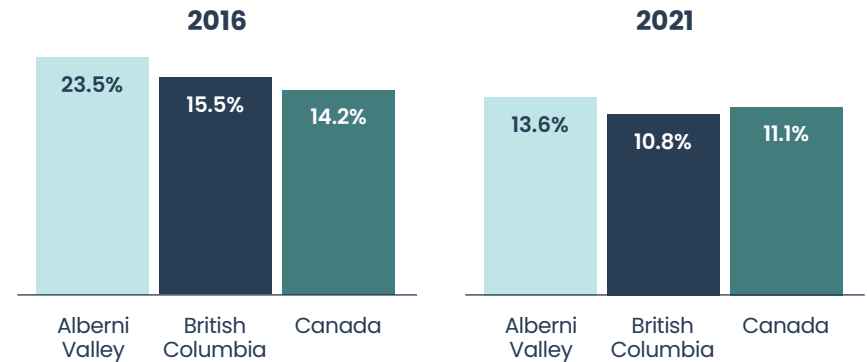
- **22 units** Sage Haven Second Stage housing units for women and children who have experienced domestic violence.
- **35 units** Citaapi Mahtii Housing Society, low-to-moderate income indigenous housing that embraces the Indigenous history, values, and culture of the region.
- **20 Tiny Homes** The Port Alberni Friendship Centre’s, Walyaqit Tiny Shelter Village, a nurturing and supportive haven for our most vulnerable community members, with 24-hour support staff and on-site programs.

# Income Gap



## Poverty in the Alberni Valley - Low income measure, after-tax (LIM-AT)<sup>3</sup>

The Low Income Measure identifies households earning 50% less than the median income in a given community. CERB and other COVID benefits help to explain the dramatic decrease in poverty rates between 2016 and 2021. The forthcoming 2026 census will provide some clarity about whether these gains were sustained or not.



The Valley still experiences poverty at a higher rate than its provincial and national counterparts. The child poverty rate has decreased recently.

### Income Distribution<sup>3</sup>

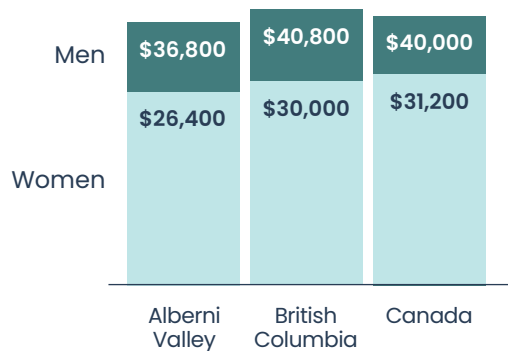
Income distribution (data from Census income by decile reporting) measures the population's income by who is earning above the median income and who is earning below the median income. In the Alberni Valley, 59.9% of residents earn an income below the median income while 40.1% earn above the median income. In BC, 46.8% of residents earn an income below the median income while 53.2% earn in the top half.

### Child poverty rate, 2022<sup>10</sup>

Rates of children in poverty decreased drastically during the COVID-19 pandemic but are rising back to pre-pandemic levels. This trend is consistent across BC.

	2019	2020	2021	2022
British Columbia	18.6%	13.3%	14.3%	16.7%
Port Alberni	28.2%	19.3%	20.3%	23.2%
Alberni Clayoquot Regional District (includes Bamfield and the West Coast)	28.8%	20.3%	22.4%	23.9%

### Median after-tax income by gender (for individuals)<sup>3</sup>



### Income distribution across households<sup>3</sup>

The median income, after-tax of all economic family types in the Valley is \$78,500 with an average household size of 2.7 people.

	Couple with Children	Couple Only Family	One Parent Family	Single Person
Average Household Size	3.9 people	2 people	2.7 people	1 person
Median income, after-tax	\$105,000	\$71,500	\$58,000	\$33,200

### Living Wage<sup>11</sup>

The 2025 Living Wage for the Alberni Valley is \$22.60/hr. This is calculated as an average of three family types: a family of four, a one-parent family, and a single person household. In 2019, the Living Wage was \$17/hr and had risen to \$21.82 in 2024. The table below demonstrates the positive impact of child tax credits and other government transfers for families.

### Living Wage breakdown by family type

Family Type	Hourly Wage	Annual After-Tax Income	Annual Income + Gov. Transfers
Family of four (two working parents, two children)	\$22.05	\$67,573.81	\$79,363.86
Single parent, one child	\$17.85	\$33,226.89	\$48,046.19
Single person	\$24.07	\$36,646.38	\$37,534.38



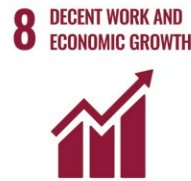
### Community Voice

"In relation to the cost of living, my wage is sufficient."

- Strongly agree and agree **45.7%**
- Neither agree nor disagree **11.6%**
- Disagree and strongly disagree **40.4%**

"I answer this in my current status as fully employed. However, I am 69 years old and cannot afford to retire, so this answer would be entirely different when I do eventually need to stop working."

# Work and Economy



## Spotlight: Cameron Bluffs Fire and Highway Closure<sup>12</sup>

In 2023, the Cameron Bluffs fire closed Highway 4, shutting off access to the Alberni Clayoquot region for 2 weeks – one of several disturbances in recent years. Due to the duration of the road closure, communities were reliant on a poorly maintained secondary route on gravel. Chambers of Commerce in the ACRD surveyed local business and economic contributors to estimate the cost and ripple effects of the events.

### In the ACRD

- 35% of the 279 businesses surveyed indicated that the closure impacted their workforce's ability to get to work.
- An estimated 1,280 staff were laid off temporarily or let go due to lack of work.
- Employees outside ACRD experienced challenges

- commuting to work.
- These events impact outside recruitment of skilled professionals.

### In the Alberni Valley

- An estimated \$14.9 million in losses was reported.

The Alberni Valley's economy has faced significant headwinds in the last five years, having survived a pandemic, wildfires, and road closures – all of which have negatively impacted commuters, shipping, the recruitment and retention of employees, and more. Despite challenges, the Alberni Valley has seen relatively stable employment and unemployment rates that are comparable to the province.

### Commuters<sup>3</sup>

Members of the Alberni Valley labour force who work outside of their home arrive at these destinations to work:

**57.6%**

**Within Port  
Alberni**  
4,260

**11.8%**

**To another regional  
district within BC**  
870

**29.9%**

**Within the Alberni  
Clayoquot Region**  
2,215

**0.7%**

**To another Province  
or Territory**  
55

Additionally, 490 people working within the ACRD (which includes Bamfield and the West Coast) commute from another region of Vancouver Island.<sup>12</sup>

### Employment rates, 2021<sup>3</sup>

	Port Alberni	ACRD	Vancouver Isl. Coast Economic Region
Employment	46.7%	51.1%	60.9%
Unemployment	5.1%	5.4%	4.5%

### Average monthly Employment Insurance (EI) benefits beneficiaries, Alberni Valley<sup>13</sup>

2021	1,162*
2022	655
2023	608
2024	587
2025	601

\*EI usage surged in 2021 due to the widespread disruption to work brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Annual job postings, Alberni Valley Employment Centre<sup>14</sup>

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
# of Postings	2,785	3,323	3,555	4,351	4,855	3,831

### Labour force participation in Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting

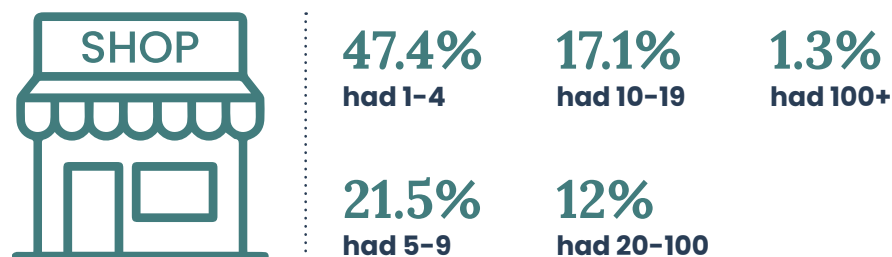
	Absolute # - Alberni Valley	Portion of labour force - Alberni Valley	Portion of labour force - BC
2011 <sup>15</sup>	785	7.2%	2.6%
2016 <sup>16</sup>	855	7.6%	2.6%
2021 <sup>3</sup>	740	6.4%	2.3%

### Businesses in Port Alberni<sup>17</sup>

	2023	2024
Total Businesses	1,600	1,685
New Businesses	76	94

There are 2,792 self-employed people in the Alberni Valley, of whom 1,825 are in Port Alberni.<sup>1</sup>

In 2024, 63.9% of businesses did not have employees, while the remaining 36.1% did. Of the 608 businesses with employees<sup>17</sup>.



#### Community Voice

"The Alberni Valley has a resilient local economy."

- Strongly agree and agree **21.6%**
- Neither agree nor disagree **25.2%**
- Disagree and strongly disagree **44.0%**

Survey respondents were asked to identify the reasons that they shop locally. The four most frequent responses were:

- I care about the economic benefit of shopping local **81.2%**
- I receive excellent customer service at local businesses **61.1%**
- I need the product or service quickly/immediately **47.7%**
- I have a personal connection to the local business **42.0%**

# Environment



Our environment and efforts to keep it pristine impact health and wellbeing in our community. In some measures, the Alberni Valley is on the right track. In others, the current and forthcoming effects of climate change are being seen.

### Alberni Valley average annual air quality, PM2.5\*<sup>18</sup>

2020	8.9
2021	7.0
2022	7.4
2023	6.4
2024	5.7
Canada's ambient air quality annual standard	<b>10.0 or less</b>

\*Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5) are microscopic particles in the air that typically consist of smoke, soot, biological matter like mold, bacteria, pollen and animal dander. PM2.5 poses a health risk because, when inhaled, it can travel deeply into a person's lungs.<sup>19</sup>

### Avg. annual precipitation, mm<sup>20</sup>



1,415.8  
2022

1,732.9  
2023

1,868.9  
2024

**1,725mm**  
Avg. annual precipitation, since 1990.

### Threatened species<sup>21</sup>

Within the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, which includes the Alberni Valley, there are 252 species that have Extirpated, Endangered, or Threatened status or are of Special Concern. Of these,

- 94 are vertebrates (mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes)
- 43 are invertebrates (animals without a backbone)
- The remainder are vascular plants, bryophytes (mosses and worts), lichens, macrofungi, and ecological communities

### Curbside program household waste disposal in Port Alberni<sup>22</sup>

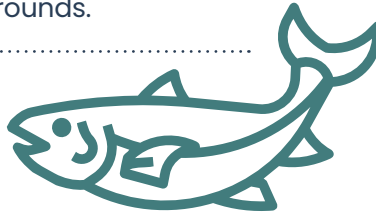
	2022	2023	2024
Organics	2,083	2,045	2,221
Recycling	695	661	667
Garbage	1,932	1,944	2,038
<b>Total (tonnes)</b>	<b>4,710</b>	<b>4,650</b>	<b>4,926</b>
<b>% of waste diverted</b>	<b>59.0%</b>	<b>58.2%</b>	<b>58.6%</b>

## Salmon<sup>23</sup>

The West Vancouver Island Region covers 17,674 km<sup>2</sup> west of Vancouver Island's mountain ranges, from San Josef Bay to Sooke. Key salmon systems include Great Central Lake and Sproat Lake. Chinook salmon here are notably large, often exceeding 13 kg, and are a crucial food source for the endangered Southern Resident killer whale. However, juvenile survival has declined due to marine ecosystem changes, while wild diversity is threatened by hatchery interbreeding and size-selective fishing. Recent droughts have also reduced stream access to spawning grounds.

### Did You Know?

Salmon support valuable fisheries from Vancouver Island to south-east Alaska.



### Community Voice

"The Alberni Valley has adequate options for getting around without a personal vehicle (consider public transportation and active transportation options)."

- Strongly agree and agree **28.3%**
- Neither agree nor disagree **18.1%**
- Disagree and strongly disagree **34.6%**
- Don't know **18.6%**

"Local governments in the Alberni Valley are taking a satisfactory approach to mitigating and/or adapting to the effects of climate change."

- Strongly agree and agree **17.5%**
- Neither agree nor disagree **33.5%**
- Disagree and strongly disagree **23.2%**
  - Don't know **24.7%**



### Spotlight: Mt. Underwood Wildfire<sup>24, 25</sup>

On August 11, 2025, evacuation alerts and orders were issued in South Alberni and Bamfield due to a rapidly growing wildfire on Mount Underwood, west of Port Alberni. Suspected to be human-caused, it was intensified by warm, dry conditions, a drought beginning in May, and forestry practices such as heavy logging, clear-cutting, and slash left as fuel. Air quality quickly worsened, and Franklin River Road (Bamfield Main) was closed for over two months, affecting residents, tourists, and businesses in Bamfield and Anacla.

Although the fire weakened in September, it was not declared out until December 8, 2025.

# Food



The increase to the cost of food has outpaced inflation, putting more pressure on local food programs. One in five of survey respondents were not able to afford a sufficient amount of healthy food.

## Cost of healthy eating, 2022<sup>26</sup>

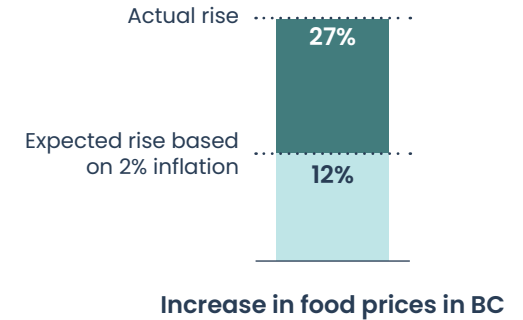
The monthly amount that a family of four would expect to spend on a nutritious diet:



**\$1,263**  
British Columbia

**\$1,366**  
Island Health

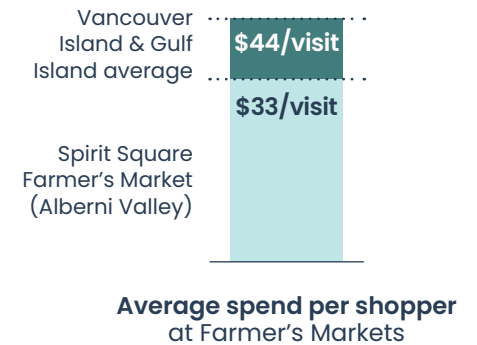
In BC, food prices have risen by 27% between January 2019 and July 2024. If food costs had risen at the 2% inflation rate per annum as predicted by the Bank of Canada, food costs would have increased by only 12% in that time frame.<sup>27</sup>



## Economic impact of farmer's market<sup>28</sup>

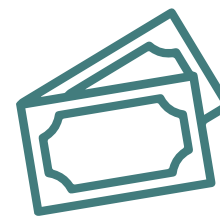
The Spirit Square Farmer's Market generated an economic impact of \$1,055,695 in 2024. Roughly two-thirds of the economic impact was produced by spending at the market, while the remaining one-third by spending in neighbouring businesses.

Of shoppers, 60% had been shopping at the market for 5 years or more. 16% were tourists. The average spend was \$33 per shopper per visit, below the Vancouver Island & Gulf Islands average of \$44 per shopper per visit.



## Alberni Valley Farmers Market Coupon Program<sup>29</sup>

Households participating per year:



**144**  
2023

**139**  
2024

**139**  
2025

Each household is allocated \$27/week for 16 weeks, or \$432 per year.

### Distribution of local food<sup>30</sup>

The Alberni Valley Food Security Society's (AVFSS) gleaning program picks fruit from local trees and shares the harvest between the land owner, gleaners, and the community. The amount of fruit distributed to local organizations more than doubled between 2024 and 2025 - from 2,420lbs in 2024 to 4,951lbs in 2025.



### Did You Know?

Similarly, demand for the AVFSS' pruning workshop increased significantly year-over-year, from 5 registrations in 2024 to 14 in 2025.



### Community Voice

"My household is able to afford a sufficient amount of nutritious, culturally-appropriate food."

- Strongly agree and agree **65.4%**
- Neither agree nor disagree **13.4%**
- Disagree and strongly disagree **20.2%**

When asked about what would help a respondent's household access more nutritious, culturally appropriate food, three responses stood out:

- Bulk buying opportunities **29.5%**
- Subsidies/coupon programs **23.8%**
  - Gardening skills/education **23.5%**



### Spotlight: Community Food Programs<sup>31</sup>

In 2025, the Alberni Valley Food Security Society identified **13 organizations** offering over **18 food services** to community members ranging from light snacks to meals. Of these:

- **8 programs for the general public:** three meals 7 days a week, hampers, and frozen meals.
- **4 programs for Indigenous people:** elders dinner and hampers.
- **6 programs for children and youth:** school food programs, access to healthy foods, and food on weekends.

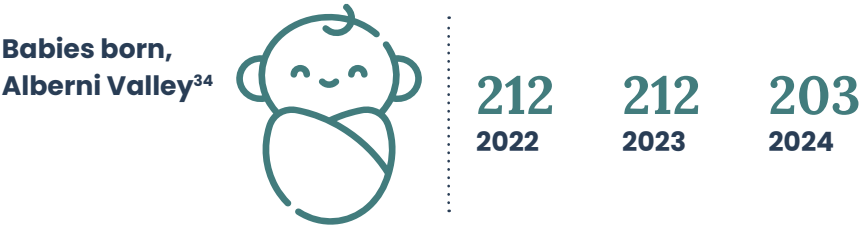
# Health and Wellness



Health indicators measure very specific facets of physical and mental health, but they are influenced by the social determinants of health – factors such as housing, income and social inclusion which can effect our health outcomes.

### Birth rate (Per 1,000 population)

	Alberni Clayoquot Local Health Area	Island Health	BC
2017 <sup>32</sup>	9.8	8.3	9.4
2023 <sup>33</sup>	8.1	6.7	8.0



### Life Expectancy from Birth

	Alberni Clayoquot Local Health Area	BC
2019 <sup>35</sup>	79	82.6
2023 <sup>33</sup>	75.7	82

### Physician Attachment Rate

The physician attachment rate measures the percentage of residents that have a family doctor.

	Alberni Clayoquot Local Health Area	Island Health	BC
2017 <sup>32</sup>	83%	78%	76%
2023 <sup>33</sup>	75%	77.5%	75%

### Unregulated Drug Deaths, Alberni Clayoquot<sup>36</sup>

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Alberni Valley	26	37	24	13
BC	2,390	2,590	2,315	1,825

While the Alberni Valley has experienced an improvement in the number of unregulated drug deaths, compared to the province, the rate per 100,000 population is significantly higher.

### Unregulated Drug Deaths, Rates per 100,000 population

	Alberni Clayoquot	British Columbia
2023	103.2	46.8
2024	66.3	40.6
2025	54.5	32.3

### Chronic disease prevalence<sup>33</sup>

Island Health reports on the pervasiveness of 10 chronic conditions, all of which have higher prevalence rates in the Alberni Clayoquot Local Health Area (LHA) than our Island Health and BC counterparts. The Alberni Clayoquot LHA reported the highest rates of chronic disease prevalence per 1,000 of the population amongst all Island Health LHAs in these four chronic conditions, further broken down to disease categories:

#### Chronic disease prevalence (age-standardized rate per 1,000)

	Alberni Clayoquot	Island Health	BC
Alzheimer's and other dementia	21.9	18.6	19.0
Chronic kidney disease	42.9	34.8	36.2
Depression	326.3	296.4	256.6
Episodic depression	105.3	91.6	76.0
Hypertension	251.0	213.8	227.9
Ischemic heart disease	99.0	69.8	75.0

### Drinks per week (2023)<sup>33</sup>



**15.3**  
Alberni Clayoquot

**12.2**  
Island Health

**9.7**  
British Columbia



### Community Voice

*"In general, I am physically healthy."*

- Strongly agree and agree **77.0%**
- Neither agree nor disagree **11.8%**
- Disagree and strongly disagree **10.0%**

*"In general, I am mentally healthy."*

- Strongly agree and agree **78.3%**
- Neither agree nor disagree **11.3%**
- Disagree and strongly disagree **8.8%**

*"I receive timely access to health care services that I need."\**

- Strongly agree and agree **39.4%**
- Neither agree nor disagree **14.3%**
- Disagree and strongly disagree **45.1%**

\*Compared to 2023, the proportion of survey respondents who strongly agreed and agreed with this statement decreased by 18.4 percentage points.

*"I receive timely access to the social services that I need."*

- Strongly agree and agree **37.0%**
- Neither agree nor disagree **35.9%**
- Disagree and strongly disagree **27.1%**

# Getting Started in Our Community



The Alberni Valley is growing, thanks to both natural increase (more births than deaths) and newcomers to the community, from within Canada and internationally.

## Alberni Valley net migration<sup>38</sup>

The difference between the number of people entering a region (in-migrants) and those leaving (out-migrants)



+333	+147	+247
2022	2023	2024

## Number of unique languages spoken by residents<sup>3</sup>



27	36	33
2011	2016	2021

## Proportion of the population comprised by immigrants<sup>3</sup>

	Alberni Valley	British Columbia
2006	11.2%	27.5%
2011	8.8%	27.6%
2016	9.7%	28.3%
2021	9.3%	29.0%

In the Alberni Valley, approximately 1 in 10 residents are immigrants, coming to Canada from another country at some point in their life. Between 2016 and 2021 the top three countries of birth for immigrants living in the Alberni Valley were India (20.6%), South Korea (11.8%) and Viet Nam (11.8%)<sup>3</sup>.

## Port Alberni Neighbourhood Welcome, new resident greetings<sup>37</sup>



283	338	299
2023	2024	2025

### Spotlight: Neighbourhood Welcome

Connection is the first step to belonging. Since launching in the Alberni Valley, the program has helped newcomers feel supported, and informed as they begin their life here. On average, the program greets one new resident every day—introducing them to local businesses, services, and community resources while offering a personal welcome to their new home.

# Older Adults and Elders



Similar to demographic trends provincially and nationally, the Alberni Valley’s aging population has been increasing and is expected to continue growing for the next decade. The health and happiness of older adults is dependent on community amenities including health care and recreation and is impacted by affordability.

### Percentage of the population<sup>2</sup>

In 2024, older adults (65+) made up 27.8% of the population in the Alberni Valley and are projected to make up 31.4% of the population in 2034 and 29.4% of the population in 2044.

### Low Income Older Adults 65+<sup>3</sup>

	Port Alberni	Alberni Valley	Island Health	BC
2016	15.8%	13.9%	11.7%	14.9%
2021	15.4%	10.2%	11.6%	13.8%

### Home Care Clients<sup>33</sup>

Home care clients in the Alberni Clayoquot have decreased from 220 in 2019/2020 to 200 in 2023/2024 (per 1,000 population age 75+) and home care visits decreased by 20% in the same time period. By comparison, Island Health rates have increased in this timeframe, from 197 to 229 (per 1,000 population age 75+) with visits increasing by more than 20%.

### Long Term Care Beds (rate per 1,000 population aged 75+)<sup>33</sup>



### Echo Sunshine Club<sup>40</sup>

The Club hosted 31 different activities throughout 2024. Activities include arts, sports, day trips, and other hobbies for community members 50+ years old through a paid annual membership.

### Community Voice

Compared to all survey respondents, older adults are more positive about their prompt access to health care.

“I have timely access to the health care I need.”

- Strongly agree and agree **49%** (compared to 39.4% of all respondents)
- Disagree and strongly disagree **40%** (compared to 45% of all survey respondents)

# Children and Youth



The share of the Alberni Valley’s population of children and youth is growing. While some progress has been made in child care centres and spaces, youth self-reports on physical health are concerning.



**5,412**

**Population of children and youth, 2024<sup>2</sup>**

There are 5,412 children and youth ages 0-19 in the Alberni Valley, up from 4,835 - an 11.9% increase - over 2021.

Children and youth make up 19.0% of the total population in the Alberni Valley, compared to 18.5% of the BC population.

## Licensed childcare in the Alberni Valley, 2025<sup>41</sup>



**35**  
Centres

**898**  
Spaces

Licensed childcare services have increased in the Alberni Valley since 2019, when there were 24 centres and 593 spaces.<sup>42</sup> While recruiting and retaining staff for 0-5 year old spaces is an ongoing challenge, gains have been made in before-and-after school care.



### Did You Know?

**There are 241 \$10-a-day childcare spaces in the Alberni Valley, or 26.8% of the total number of spaces. Families with children in a \$10 a day childcare space pay no more than \$200/month for full-time childcare. Families with children in centres without the \$10 a day childcare spaces often pay significantly more.<sup>43</sup>**

**34.4%**

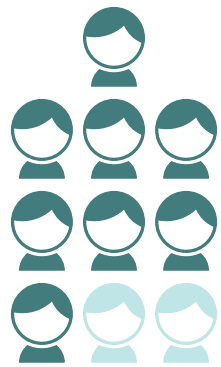
**Vulnerability rate<sup>44</sup>**

The Early Development Instrument, a tool used to understand how experiences in a child’s first five years may impact the rest of their life, produces a vulnerability rate: the proportion of Kindergarten children in a given wave that, without additional support, may experience challenges in education and society. In the most recent period (Wave 8: 2019-2022), 34.4% of Kindergarten children in Pacific

Rim School District (SD #70) were vulnerable. This is a decrease since Wave 7 (2016–2019), when the rate was 38.0%. The Wave 8 rate of 34.4% is slightly higher than the provincial rate of 32.9%.

### Middle years<sup>45</sup>

The Middle Years Development Instrument is administered to students in Grades 4 and 7 and probes a number of domains that contribute to overall well-being. In the 2024–25 school year, Grade 4 students in Pacific Rim School District (SD #70) reported Thriving in the dimension of:



**79.4%**  
Eating Breakfast



**63.1%**  
Frequency of Good Sleep

### Youth health<sup>46</sup>

The BC Adolescent Health Survey, administered in 2023 to school districts across British Columbia, offers a look at topics spanning physical and mental wellness. Youth in Pacific Rim School District (SD #70) reported:

- By the time students get to high school, **38%** of students are not eating breakfast (this compares to 29% provincially)
- Youth are getting poorer sleep: in 2018, **46%** of local youth reported getting at least 8 hours of sleep, which decreased to **37%** in 2023 (comparatively, the provincial rate was 48% in 2018 and 42% in 2023)



### Spotlight: Foundry Alberni (Coming soon!)

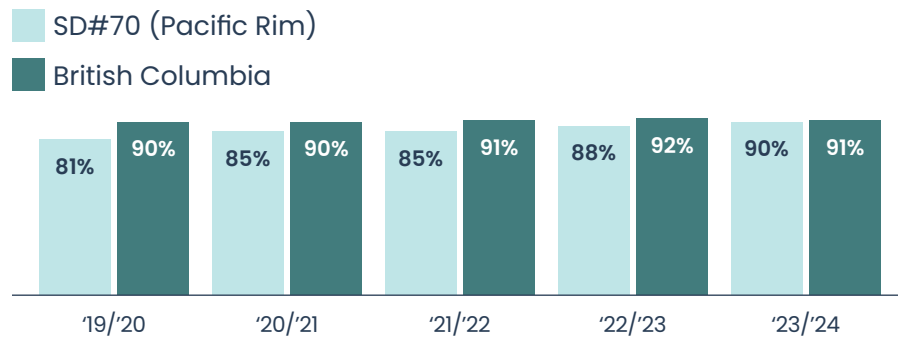
ADAPS Alberni Valley Youth and Family Services has been successful in an application for a Foundry BC Centre in the Alberni Valley. Foundry BC is a model that hosts primary care and mental health and wellness support for local youth under one roof. Property for the Alberni Valley Foundry has been purchased and planning is underway for renovations. The Alberni Valley Foundry is being planned with strong youth input and is unique in its delivery of satellite services to the rural and remote communities in the Alberni Clayoquot.

# Learning

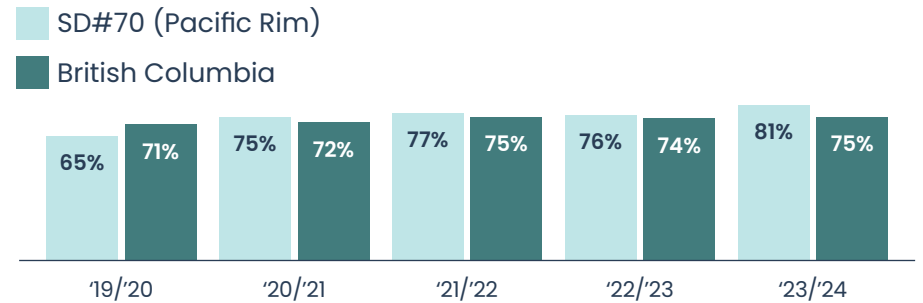


In recent years, the region's high school completion rate is on par with that of the province, while the Indigenous high school completion rate has exceeded the provincial rate since the 2020-21 school year.

## High school completion rate<sup>47</sup>



## Indigenous high school completion rate<sup>47</sup>



## Transition to post-secondary<sup>47</sup>

In Pacific Rim School District (SD #70), 54% of students who started grade 8 in 2013/14 and graduated high school by 2018/2019 had enrolled in a BC public post-secondary institution by Fall 2023. The same was true for 68% of students province wide.

## North Island College, Port Alberni campus<sup>48</sup>



**481**  
2024/2025 enrollment

**93%**  
Domestic students

**7%**  
International students

**Annual tuition fees for arts programs, Vancouver Island post-secondary institutions, 2024-25 academic year<sup>49</sup>**



**\$3,334**  
North Island  
College

**\$3,846**  
Camosun  
College

**\$4,992**  
Vancouver Island  
University

**\$6,289**  
University of  
Victoria

**\$8,104**  
Royal Roads  
University

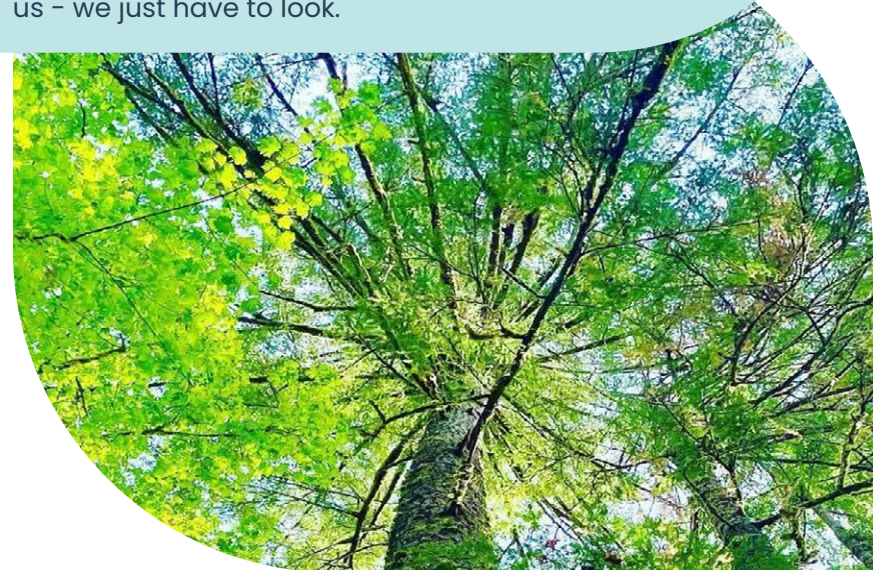


**Community Voice**

**15.6%** of survey respondents cited “adult education and/or training opportunities” as an asset that contributes positively to their quality of life.

**Spotlight: Land-Based Learning<sup>50,51</sup>**

What better way to study subjects including Environmental Science, Active Living, Foods, and Math, but outside in the stunning nature of the Alberni Valley? Launched in September 2024, the Land-Based Learning (LBL) program allows Alberni Valley students to connect their learning with the natural world. Offered for students in grades 8-12, the LBL program utilizes Indigenous perspectives to guide the learning, a variety of natural environments to present progressively challenging curriculum, and local experts and guests to illuminate various topics, including forestry and climate change. Learning is all around us - we just have to look.



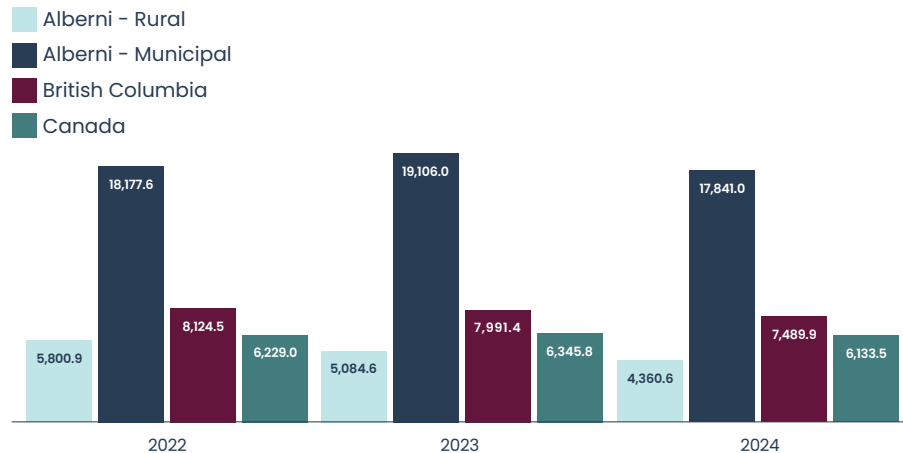
# Safety



Of the crime data reported here, Alberni-Municipal rates are consistently higher than national and provincial rates, and Alberni-Rural rates.

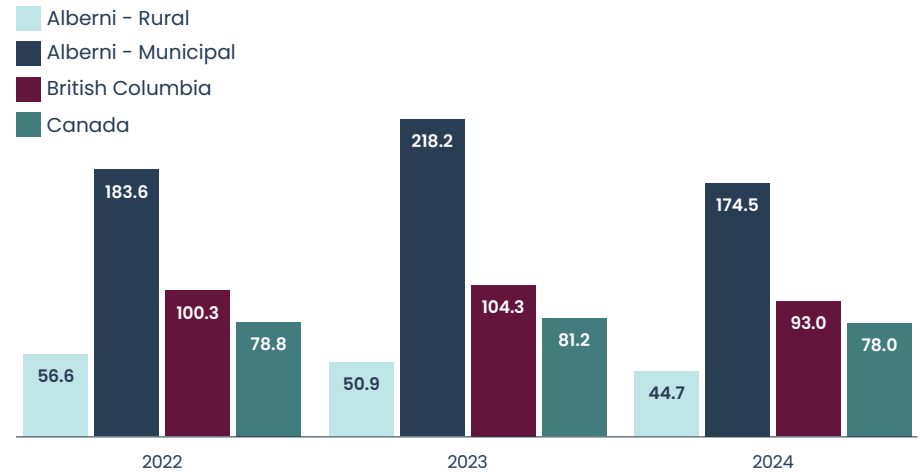
## Overall crime rate (per 100,000 population)<sup>52</sup>

The volume of crime per 100,000 population, including all Criminal Code violations (except traffic violations).



## Crime severity index (CSI)<sup>52</sup>

The volume and severity of police-reported crime in an area.



## Property crime rate (per 100,000 population)<sup>52</sup>

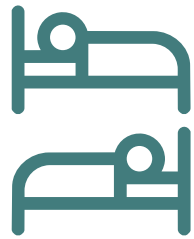
The number of non-violent criminal incidents intended to gain property.

	2022	2023	2024
Canada	3,325.0	3,409.6	3,236.0
British Columbia	4,163.9	4,081.2	3,821.1
Alberni - Municipal	8,520.6	8,399.4	7,625.1
Alberni - Rural	2,701.8	1,937.5	1,762.3

## Sexual assault rate (per 100,000 population)<sup>52</sup>

	2022	2023	2024
Canada	91.1	90.0	87.1
British Columbia	84.0	79.3	77.1
Alberni - Municipal	275.0	190.5	188.0
Alberni - Rural	90.8	112.0	79.1

### Transition House bed stays<sup>53</sup>



2,205  
2022/23

1,539  
2024/25

1,797  
2023/24

**Note:** There are 11 beds in the Transition House.

### Alberni Valley Rescue Squad (Search and Rescue) Callouts<sup>54</sup>



40  
2020

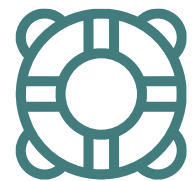
51  
2023

51  
2021

85  
2024

37  
2022

### Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue Station 39 (Pacific Region) callouts<sup>55</sup>



11  
2025



### Community Voice

*"I feel safe in my own home."*

- Strongly agree and agree **77.7%**
- Neither agree nor disagree **9.9%**
- Disagree and strongly agree **11.9%**

*"I feel safe in my neighbourhood."*

- Strongly agree and agree **71.9%**
- Neither agree nor disagree **12.2%**
- Disagree and strongly disagree **14.9%**

*"I feel safe while out in the evening."*

- Strongly agree and agree **41.0%**
- Neither agree nor disagree **20.8%**
- Disagree and strongly disagree **34.9%**

To the last question, a handful of survey respondents spoke to the role of infrastructure in community safety: "Minimal street-lights make me feel vulnerable to physical injury and crime."

### Spotlight: Alberni Valley Restorative Justice Society<sup>56</sup>

Rooted in Indigenous traditions, Restorative Justice is a transformative approach to addressing crime and conflict that prioritizes healing over punishment. By bringing together offenders, victims, and the community, this method aims to repair harm, foster understanding, and rebuild relationships. This can provide a sense of closure while also promoting accountability and rehabilitation. Locally, the Alberni Valley Restorative Justice Society (AVRJS) facilitates conversations between offenders and victims, and cases are referred to AVRJS by various organizations including R.C.M.P., BC & Federal Courts, BC Corrections, school districts, unions, and more. In 2025, AVRJS opened 21 new files, including a handful of complex cases. A team of 7 volunteer facilitators contributed a total of 1,218 hours of service, which led to positive outcomes for 58 participants in restorative justice processes.

# Arts, Culture and Recreation



**3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

Survey respondents identified recreation as the community’s main asset positively affecting quality of life. Local support for arts and culture remains stable, as evidenced by the visitorship and attendance data for local arts organizations.



## Annual art gallery visitorship, The Grove Gallery<sup>57</sup>

<b>8,605</b>	<b>13,270</b>
2024	2025

## Annual visitorship, Alberni Valley Museum<sup>22</sup>

<b>14,328</b>	<b>17,632</b>	<b>15,952</b>
2022	2023	2024



## Did You Know?

The Community Arts Council champions the arts in the Alberni Valley by bringing together local artists to advance arts education, programming, and policy. In 2025, the Community Arts Council had 313 members.

## Library usage<sup>58</sup>

Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) serves 38 communities across more than 42,000 km<sup>2</sup> of coastal BC.

In 2025, the Port Alberni branch of VIRL reported more than 91,000 physical items borrowed, 2,600 program attendees and almost 36,000 eBooks and audiobooks downloaded.

**Program highlights:** At the annual Salmon Festival, VIRL educated attendees about 3D-printing and showcased services that promote affordability and sustainability, helping reduce household costs and conserve energy. The Port Alberni branch has partnered with CBC for Island Voices, a platform for local storytelling and feedback on national issues.



## Community Voice

“I can access local arts and cultural activities.”

- Strongly agree and agree **70.5%**
- Neither agree nor disagree **14.3%**
- Disagree and strongly disagree **10.3%**

“Arts and culture play an important role in the local economy.”

- Strongly agree and agree **66.8%**
- Neither agree nor disagree **14.0%**
- Disagree and strongly disagree **10.0%**

## Participation in City of Port Alberni Recreation Programs<sup>22</sup>

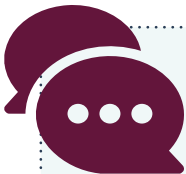
	2022*	2023	2024
Children & Youth	455	1,924	4,882
Adults	346	1,521	1,215

\*Department recreation programmer staffing was minimal in 2022 coming out of COVID, but as capacity increased, so too did programming and participation.

## Admission to Echo Pool and Fitness Centre<sup>22</sup>



<b>42,139</b>	<b>53,299</b>	<b>55,000</b>
2022	2023	2024



### Community Voice

**65.7%** of survey respondents reported that recreation activities as assets that contribute positively to their quality of life.

Survey respondents provided information about the rec. activities they participated in over the last 12 months:

- **84.2%** had spent leisure time at a local river, lake, or ocean
- **82.9%** had visited a park
- **81.5%** had walked, ran, or hiked a local trail
- **57.1%** had visited a rec. centre
  - **25.6%** cycled for leisure



### Spotlight: Backcountry Access<sup>59</sup>

In summer 2025, Mosaic Forest Management surveyed the public about recreation on its lands, receiving 7,600+ responses from mid-Vancouver Island. The most commonly reported activities were walking/hiking, biking, camping at Mosaic's not-for-profit campgrounds, and fishing or hunting.

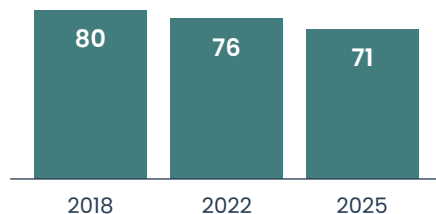
Forty-six percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that access to Mosaic's private forest lands may need to be restricted to protect people, nature, or forest resources, while 37% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Key concerns about recreational access were gates and access, garbage and illegal dumping, risk of being stuck behind a gate, and wildfire risk.

# Belonging and Leadership

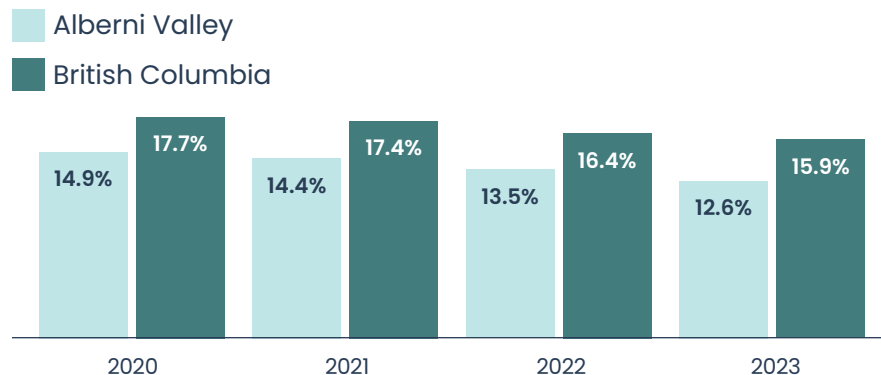


The charitable sector is shrinking, both in the number of registered organizations and in community support, as the proportion of donors and median donation amounts diminish. In better news, the Alberni Valley sees slightly stronger voter turnout than the provincial average, and scores higher on nearly all measures of general well-being and community belonging when compared to the province.

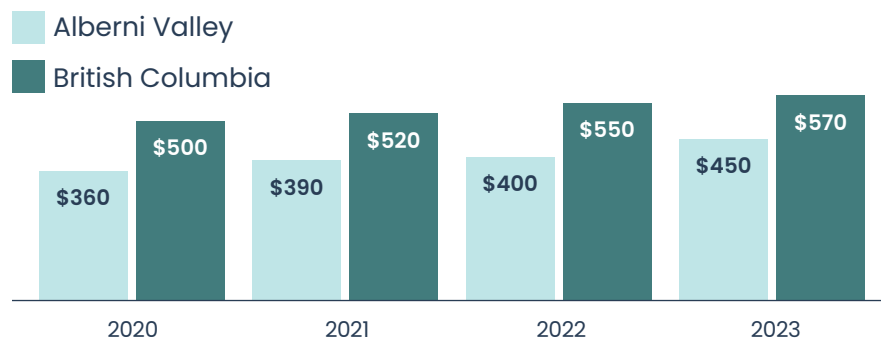
## Number of registered charities in the Alberni Valley<sup>60</sup>



## Proportion of tax filers making charitable donation(s)<sup>61</sup>



## Median receipted charitable donation<sup>60</sup>

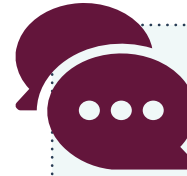
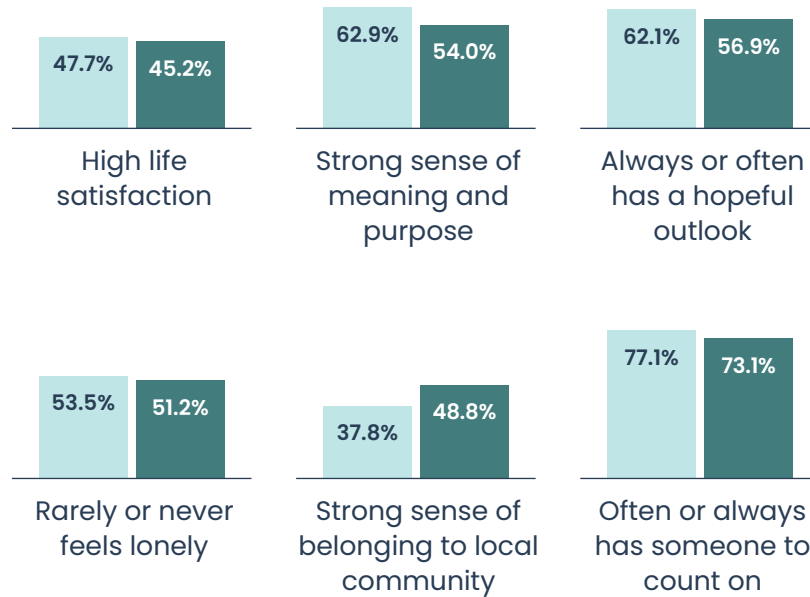


## Voter turnout, provincial elections<sup>62</sup>

	Mid-Island/Pacific Rim	British Columbia
2020	54.4%	53.9%
2024	59.6%	58.5%

## General well-being and community belonging<sup>63</sup>

Alberni Valley  
British Columbia



### Community Voice

We asked survey respondents about their participation in community activities in the last twelve months. This is what they reported:

- Donated to a cause **58.5%**
- Provided unpaid help to a non family member **50.0%**
- Signed a petition **28.5%**
- Attended a neighbourhood or community meeting **26.1%**
- Attended a cultural or ethnic event put on by a cultural or ethnic group different from their own **25.6%**
- Attended a faith-based service/activity **15.6%**
- Participated in a community project such as a neighbourhood clean-up or community garden **12.0%**

Only **1.8%** of respondents hadn't done any community activities in the past year.

We were also curious about the actions survey respondents are taking to support Indigenous reconciliation. There were three obvious standouts:

- Learn about the history of residential schools **75.9%**
- Learn about the traditional territories that comprise the Alberni Valley **72.9%**
- Learn about the history between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people **72.9%**

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