

Introduction:

The first six months of Community Conversations continued to bring together organizations, and service providers to share information, identify emerging needs, and coordinate support as Jasper navigates the second year of recovery following the July 2024 wildfire. Community Conversations remains an important forum for agencies to share what they are hearing from Jasper residents, identify emerging trends, and coordinate programs, services, and community initiatives.

As the community approaches the two-year anniversary of the wildfire, many of the trends identified in previous reports continued to be reflected in community conversations. Many of the broader social, emotional, and community challenges identified following the wildfire continue to be discussed, reinforcing that recovery is ongoing and that coordinated, community-based support remains important.

Since the 1990s, Community Conversations has brought together partners from the public, private, and non-profit sectors to support the wellbeing of Jasper residents. This collaborative approach continues to help the community respond to changing needs, build on local strengths, and foster long-term recovery and resilience.

Membership:

Here is a revised member list as of April 2026. There are 38 member organizations/agencies and 78 individual participants:

- Alberta Health Services – Homecare
- Alpine Summit Seniors' Lodge
- Brain Care Centre
- Community Futures West Yellowhead
- Crisis Team Society Jasper
- Ecole Jasper Elementary School
- Ecole Desroches
- Friends of Jasper National Park
- Grande Yellowhead Public School Division
- Government of Alberta – Alberta Supports
- Hinton Wellness Program
- Jasper Community Habitat for the Arts
- Jasper Community Team Society
- Jasper Employment and Education Centre
- Jasper Minor Sports
- Jasper Municipal Library
- Jasper Museum
- Jasper Recovery Coordination Centre
- Individual Jasperites x 4
- Jasper Seniors' Society
- L'Association Canadienne Française de l'Alberta, Régionale de Jasper
- Jasper Mettra Pharmacy
- Mamowichihitowin (Hinton Wellness Program)
- Municipality of Jasper – CAO Office
- Municipal Council
- Municipality of Jasper – Community Development
- Municipality of Jasper – Fitness and Aquatic Centre
- Municipality of Jasper – Outreach Services
- Municipality of Jasper – Settlement Services
- Parks Canada – Engagement Officer
- Parks Canada – Indigenous Relations & Cultural Heritage
- Pursuit Jasper Banff Collection
- Recovery Alberta – Addictions & Mental Health
- Red Cross
- Service Canada
- Western Alberta Regional Victim Serving Society
- Yellow Emergency Shelter for Women

At Community Conversations, participants identify the changing needs of residents as well as opportunities to take action in response to those needs. A review of all trends and opportunities identified through Conversations from January-June 2026 reveals the following thematic areas:

1. Housing & Interim Housing Stability

- Housing remains the most significant and persistent concern across the community.
- Interim housing demand continues to exceed capacity, with long waitlists impacting families, seniors, newcomers, and workers.
- Residents continue to experience uncertainty related to what happens after interim housing, particularly as recovery timelines extend and long-term housing solutions remain limited at this time.
- Seniors, renters, families, and individuals on fixed incomes are experiencing increased stress related to affordability, downsizing, upsizing, availability of suitable housing, and concerns about remaining connected to the community.
- Housing instability is directly affecting mental health, family wellbeing, workforce recruitment, and decision about whether individuals remain in Jasper.
- There is continued interest in clearer communication regarding housing eligibility, rebuilding timelines, and pathways for displaced residents to return to Jasper.
- Affordable housing, supportive housing, and accessible housing options remain key priorities, particularly for seniors and vulnerable populations.

2. Mental Health, Recovery Fatigue & Emotional Wellbeing

- Mental health remains one of the most significant community concerns, with increasing anxiety, burnout, and emotional exhaustion related to wildfire recovery, housing uncertainty, financial pressures, and ongoing system navigation.
- Many residents are experiencing heightened stress as the two-year anniversary of the wildfire approaches.
- While mental health services remain available, barriers continue to limit access, including stigma, discomfort seeking support in a small community, limited evening/weekend appointment options, childcare needs, lack of private spaces for virtual appointments, and uncertainty about where to begin.
- Support needs are becoming more complex, with individuals requiring assistance navigating insurance, financial systems, legal timelines, and recovery processes.
- There is continued need for low-barrier, trauma-informed, culturally appropriate, and relationship-based supports.
- Seniors, caregivers, families, youth, and individuals experiencing displacement remain particularly impacted.

3. Community Connection, Belonging & Recovery Through Engagement

- Community programming continues to play an important role in rebuilding connection, reducing isolation, and supporting wellbeing.
- Low-barrier activities, social gatherings, recreation, creative programing, and community events continue to experience strong participation.
- Programs focused on connection, wellness, and affordability are especially valued as residents seek opportunities to rebuild routines and relationships.
- Community spaces such as the library, Pop-Up Village, seniors' lounge, and recreation programs continue to function as important gathering places.

3. Community Connection, Belonging & Recovery Through Engagement (continued)

- Interest in recovery-focused programming remains present, although some fire-specific programming is seeing declining participation as community attention shifts toward broader wellbeing, rebuilding, and everyday community life.
- Volunteerism remains strong; however, organizations continue to experience challenges recruiting and retaining volunteers to sustain programs.

4. Youth Mental Health, Child Development & Family Supports

- Youth and children continue to experience increased anxiety, social isolation, bullying, friendship challenges, and difficulty navigating transitions.
- Schools and youth-serving organizations are reporting growing complexity in student needs, including emotional regulation challenges, cyberbullying, substance-related concerns, and increased demand for mental health supports.
- Younger students continue to experience challenges related to peer relationships, belonging, and bullying, while older youth report stress related to graduation, future planning, and adulthood transitions.
- Families are seeking additional support for parenting, neurodivergent children, respite needs, and navigating available services.
- Childcare demand remains high, with long waitlists and limited spaces available for certain age groups and children requiring additional supports.
- Programs supporting social connection, leadership, healthy relationships, digital safety, and peer support continue to be highly valued.

5. Food Security & Financial Pressures

- Food insecurity continues to affect households across the community, particularly families with children.
- While food bank usage has decreased from previous peak levels, many households continue to rely on consistent food supports.
- Programs such as the school breakfast program and community hamper initiatives continue to provide essential support food access, reducing stress and strengthening social connection.
- Rising costs of living, reduced work hours, housing expenses, and delays accessing financial supports continue to impact household stability.

6. Employment, Workforce Development & Economic Recovery

- Workforce shortages continue across sectors, particularly hospitality, kitchen roles, construction, trades, and frontline positions.
- Housing availability remains the primary barrier to recruitment and retention, limiting employers' ability to attract workers from outside the community.
- Temporary Foreign Workers and newcomers continue to face uncertainty related to employment, immigration processes, documentation requirements, and access to training opportunities.
- Employment opportunities exist; however, matching workers with available positions remains challenging due to housing constraints and system barriers.
- Job fairs, employment programs, training opportunities, and settlement supports continue to be important pathways for connecting residents and employers.

7. Seniors' Needs, Aging & Accessibility

- Seniors continue to experience significant challenges related to housing, isolation, healthcare access, transportation, and navigating increasingly digital systems.
- Many displaced seniors remain uncertain about returning to Jasper, while others face affordability challenges related to fixed incomes and rising rental costs.
- Seniors continue to express the need for clearer communication, compassionate engagement, and meaningful inclusion in recovery and rebuilding discussions.
- Demand remains strong for social, wellness, technology support, and connection-based programming.
- Accessible programming, transportation options, supportive housing, and opportunities for intergenerational connection remain important priorities.

8. Newcomer Settlement, Language & Inclusion

- Newcomers continue to face barriers related to housing availability, employment mobility, language access, documentation processes, and navigating community systems.
- Immigration policy changes and delays continue to create uncertainty for newcomer families and temporary workers.
- Families require practical support with school registration, recreation access, healthcare navigation, and understanding local services.
- There is continued interest in culturally appropriate programming, language supports, and opportunities that foster belonging and connection.
- Francophone residents continue to identify a need for accessible French-language mental health supports and community programming.

9. Transportation, Accessibility & Service Navigation

- Transportation remains a barrier affecting access to programs, employment, healthcare, and community activities, particularly for seniors, youth, and families.
- Limited transportation options can prevent participation in recreation, social connection opportunities, and support programs.
- Residents continue to experience challenges navigating complex systems, including insurance, financial supports, recovery programs, immigration processes, and eligibility requirements.
- There is ongoing need for coordinated communication, clear pathways to services, and accessible outreach approaches.

10. Disaster Recovery, Preparedness & Long-Term Resilience

- Wildfire recovery continues to influence many aspects of community life, including housing, mental health, finances, and social connection.
- Residents continue to seek information and support related to rebuilding, insurance timelines, soil remediation, and recovery processes.
- Wildfire preparedness, ecological recovery, emergency planning, and education remain important areas of community interest.
- Nature-based programming, outdoor activities, and environmental education continue to support healing, connection, and community resilience.
- As recovery progresses, community priorities are increasingly shifting from immediate wildfire response toward long-term rebuilding, stability, and strengthening community systems.