



Media Release – For Immediate Release Thursday, October 15, 2020

County of Grande Prairie Evaluating COVID-19 Impacts on Rural Housing

Starting this week, the County of Grande Prairie and partnering municipalities will take part in a collective effort to measure housing instability and service needs across local rural communities.

Family & Community Support Services (FCSS) from the County of Grande Prairie, along with the towns of Beaverlodge, Sexsmith and Wembley, the Village of Hythe, and the City of Grande Prairie will be collecting community feedback from October 16 to November 15. A survey will be administered by social service providers including food banks, FCSS offices and shelters. Across rural Alberta, 26 other communities are also participating in the initiative.

“We learned a tremendous amount about local housing instability from the pilot project, which took place in 2018,” says County FCSS Child, Youth, Family and Community Team Lead Melodie McCracken. “This year, we are eager to understand more about the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on housing security in our rural communities.”

At a local level, the initial estimation in 2018 gathered feedback from 71 individuals living locally in rural communities. Of those, 57 reported that their housing situation was “unstable,” that they could easily lose their housing, or that they were unsure about their housing stability.

Because inequities may be compounded due to COVID-19, resulting in job losses and the risk of evictions, the current project aims to collect much-needed data on the extent of these conditions.

Data collected will help social service providers better understand and address identified gaps within communities. Survey insights will also help identify the demand for housing in local rural communities, including type and quantity, as well as the kinds of services and resources residents need which are not available to them or they are not accessing.

County of Grande Prairie Family & Community Support Services’ participation is funded in part through the Government of Canada’s Reaching Home program and administered through the Alberta Rural Development Network.

To learn more about the project and ways to participate, please contact Melodie McCracken, County of Grande Prairie FCSS at mmccracken@countypg.ab.ca.

For details about the 2018 Rural Homelessness Estimation Project, click the links below:



[Rural Homelessness Estimation Project - 2018 Provincial Report and individual community summaries](#)

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