

Community Insights

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This summary outlines the findings with more than 900 2SLGBTQIA+ Edmontonians from the Beyond Belonging public engagement from March to June and November to December of 2025, and a supplemental literature review conducted by the City of Edmonton. The primary goal of this initiative is to inform a Council-directed Action Plan to address the rising trend of hate-motivated occurrences and to foster a city where all 2SLGBTQIA+ residents feel safe and included.

The Current Context:

- **Rising Hostility:** In 2023, Canada saw a record number of police reported hate crimes targeting sexual orientation (n=860) and a 37 per cent increase in hate crimes (n=123) targeting gender and gender expression, primarily affecting transgender, agender, non-binary and intersex individuals. Edmonton-specific data has seen an upward trend in hate crimes and incidents targeting 2SLGBTQIA+ people between 2020 and 2025, peaking in 2024.
- **Vulnerability:** 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals comprise 25 per cent of homeless youth in Canada. Trans and non-binary residents, particularly those who are Indigenous or BIPOC, face the highest levels of violence and systemic exclusion.
- **Safety Gaps:** 81 per cent of respondents reported negative public interactions. While libraries and homes feel safe, public transit and interactions with law enforcement are cited as the primary sites of insecurity.

Key Engagement Findings:

Participants identified seven core pillars for the City's path forward:

- **Public spaces designed for active safety:** A call for increased visible inclusion measures and dedicated 2SLGBTQIA+ spaces where safety is felt, not just promised.
- **A bold, clear stance against hate:** The City must publicly affirm 2SLGBTQIA+ rights and develop robust, specific responses to hate incidents.
- **Visible support matched by action:** Inclusion must move beyond symbols; City staff, programs and internal culture must consistently reflect these values.
- **The need is not equal:** Safety efforts must center the unique, intersecting experiences of the most marginalized groups within the community.
- **Education, training, and public understanding:** Prioritizing mandatory staff training and public-facing campaigns to dismantle misinformation and promote inclusion.
- **Normalized 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion:** Shifting inclusion from "special events" to everyday life, fostering constant community presence and peer visibility.

- **Voices embedded in leadership:** Ensuring 2SLGBTQIA+ people are directly involved in shaping the policies and programs that affect them.

Strategic Priorities:

- **Institutional Accountability:** Enhancing oversight through formal community collaboration mechanisms and mandatory inclusion training for all municipal staff.
- **Targeted Investment:** Focusing resources and programming in areas with identified gaps in safety and belonging, such as Central and Southwest Edmonton, to reduce social isolation across the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.
- **Community Care:** Sustaining funding for grassroots organizations that provide safety and support outside of traditional municipal structures.

PURPOSE & OBJECTIVE

In recent years, Edmonton has seen a rise in hate-motivated occurrences targeting 2SLGBTQIA+ community members. These events challenge the City's efforts to ensure everyone feels safe, valued and included. This growing trend affects the approximately 2,000 residents who identify as trans women, trans men, Two-Spirit, non-binary or gender-diverse, and the nearly 40,000 residents who identify as part of broader 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. These incidents also influence how Edmontonians experience inclusion and trust in municipal institutions. In response, Council made a series of related motions and the City of Edmonton launched the Beyond Belonging public engagement initiative, a project designed to inform the creation of a Council-directed 2SLGBTQIA+ Safe Spaces Action Plan.

This appendix synthesizes input from the Beyond Belonging public engagement initiative, which is included in Appendix C, alongside community context provided by orders of government across Canada, academic journals, community-based research, local data and a jurisdictional scan, which is included in Appendix B, to inform the objectives in the 2SLGBTQIA+ Safe Spaces Action Plan.

COMMUNITY INSIGHTS AND CONTEXT

Identities Covered in the 2SLGBTQIA+ Acronym

Language around gender identity, sexual orientation and romantic expression is always evolving. The acronym 2SLGBTQIA+ is used in this Action Plan and its appendices to align with the terminology used in Council's initiating motions for the Action Plan. This acronym includes but is not limited to Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual identities. The plus symbol represents the many other identities, expressions and experiences not explicitly named. The City of Edmonton recognizes that no single acronym can fully capture

the complexity and diversity of people's lives. For more on evolving terminology and inclusive language, the Community-Based Research Centre offers helpful resources¹.

Anti-2SLGBTQIA+ Rhetoric, Policy, and Violence in Canada

2SLGBTQIA+ communities have historically faced significant discrimination and oppression, which has negatively impacted their well-being². Homosexuality was illegal in Canada until 1969³, and considered a mental disorder by the American Psychological Association until 1973⁴. Sexual orientation gained protection in Canada in 1996, with gender identity and expression becoming nationally protected in 2017⁵.

Nonetheless, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals in Canada continue to face discrimination, including ongoing conversion practises and police violence⁶. Discrimination in workplaces, schools, healthcare and social services continues to negatively impact 2SLGBTQIA+ well-being⁷. Despite comprising approximately four per cent of the Canadian population over the age of 15⁸, 2SLGBTQIA+ people are overrepresented among the population of people experiencing homelessness, with roughly 13 per cent of adults experiencing homelessness being 2SLGBTQIA+, and 25 per cent of youth experiencing homelessness identifying as 2SLGBTQIA+⁹.

¹ https://www.cbrc.net/general_information

² <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34469283/>;

<https://arrow.tudublin.ie/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1031&context=aaschsslarts>

³ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20390992/>

⁴ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4695779/>

⁵

<https://ccla.org/get-informed/talk-rights/gender-identity-and-the-human-rights-act-former-bill-c-16/>

⁶

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354605886_'It's_easy_to_mistrust_police_when_they_keep_on_killing_us'_A_queer_exploration_of_police_violence_and_LGBTQ_Victimization;
<https://www.cbc.ca/arts/the-fruit-machine-why-every-canadian-should-learn-about-this-country-s-gay-purge-1.4678718>;

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265922874_Consuming_Sexual_Liberation_Gay_Business_Politics_and_Toronto's_Barracks_Bathhouse_Raids;

<https://www.cmaj.ca/content/194/1/e17>

⁷ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36794329/>; <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35285779/>;

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26966853/>; <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35420458/>;

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8727827/>;

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353443837_Manitoba_Two-Spirit_Gay_Bisexual_and_Queer_Men's_Health_Study_Community_Report_Needs_Service_Gaps_and_Recommendations_Winnipeg_MB_University_of_Manitoba;

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09500170211045843>

⁸ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/12-581-x/2023001/sec6-eng.htm>

⁹

<https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/free-to-be-me/federal-action-2slgbtqi-communities/facts-stats.html>; <https://homelesshub.ca/collection/population-groups/2slgbtqi/>

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Colonization continues to systemically erase Indigenous Two-Spirit, trans and non-binary identities¹⁰. It also brought homophobia into Indigenous communities in Canada through the residential school system¹¹. Ongoing impacts of colonization and the unique needs of Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQIA+ people require specific consideration that cannot be generalized to the broader community¹².

Recent research identifies a resurgence in anti-2SLGBTQIA+ hate and misinformation threatens progress made in public discourse on 2SLGBTQIA+ people in Canada¹³. This resurgence appears across education and sports, health care and social services and legislation restricting 2SLGBTQIA+ rights to sexual, reproductive and gender-affirming care¹⁴.

In 2023, Canada saw a record number of police reported hate crimes targeting sexual orientation (n=860) and a 37 per cent increase in hate crimes (up by 123 events) targeting gender and gender expression, primarily affecting transgender, agender, non-binary and intersex individuals¹⁵. Police-reported occurrences motivated by hatred towards sexual orientation across Canada reduced by 26 per cent in 2024, to 658 events¹⁶. National data for 2025 is not yet available. However,

¹⁰ <https://www.mdpi.com/2313-5778/5/3/67>

¹¹

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313830887_Impacts_of_colonization_on_Indigenous_Two-SpiritLGBTQ_Canadians_experiences_of_migration_mobility_and_relationship_violence

¹²

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313830887_Impacts_of_colonization_on_Indigenous_Two-SpiritLGBTQ_Canadians_experiences_of_migration_mobility_and_relationship_violence

¹³

<https://theconversation.com/queerphobic-hate-is-on-the-rise-and-lgbtq-communities-in-canada-need-more-support-214932>

¹⁴

<https://theconversation.com/saskatchewan-naming-and-pronoun-policy-the-best-interests-of-children-must-guide-provincial-parental-consent-rules-212431>;

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jun/14/canada-man-anti-trans-lgbtq-hate-school-sports-ban>;

https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/public-health/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1183284/full?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=23272552553&gbraid=0AAAAAC_sj7msZVWO6egmqSzucbB9fglvo&gclid=CjwKCAiA0eTJBhBaEiwA-Pa-hbvwD4RaCAfU7mciV1-5OgvP36vflhIV2DEDyZqUGlIAAPZvegT4fhoCI58QAvD_BwE; <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/lgbtq/index.html>;

[https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/new-brunswick-lgbtq-rights-schools-1.6854807#:~:text=New%20Brunswick-,Gender%2Dneutral%20washrooms%20under%20microscope%20as%20N.B.%20expands%20school%20policy,addressed%20in%20human%20rights%20law.](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/new-brunswick-lgbtq-rights-schools-1.6854807#:~:text=New%20Brunswick-,Gender%2Dneutral%20washrooms%20under%20microscope%20as%20N.B.%20expands%20school%20policy,addressed%20in%20human%20rights%20law.;);

<https://globalnews.ca/news/9293801/transgender-health-care-canada/>;

<https://theconversation.com/albertas-new-policies-are-not-only-anti-trans-they-are-anti-evidence-222579>;

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/alberta-transgender-women-and-girls-athletes-sports-1.7104116>

¹⁵ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/250325/dq250325a-eng.htm>

¹⁶ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/260330/dq260330a-eng.htm>

this trend is also reflected in local Edmonton data, as the Edmonton Police Service has seen an upward trend in hate crimes and incidents targeting 2SLGBTQIA+ people between 2020 and 2025, peaking in 2024, as seen below in Figure 1.

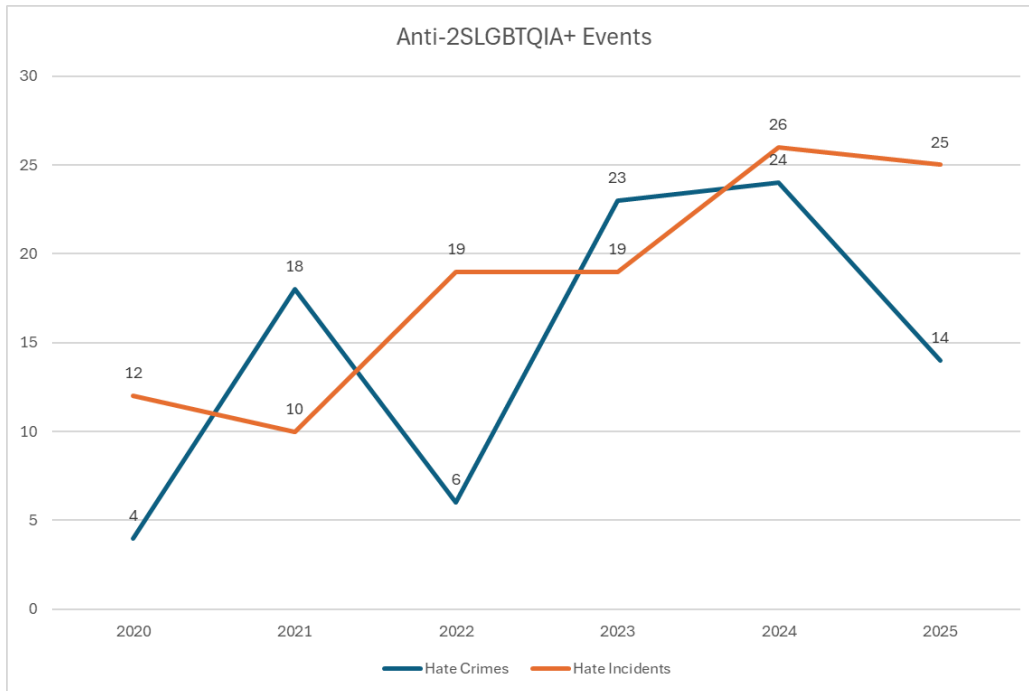


Figure 1. Reported hate crimes and hate incidents targeting 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, Edmonton, 2020–2025. Source: Edmonton Police Service (Hate Crimes Unit data, 2025).

Coupled with underreporting¹⁷ and disproportionate discrimination against trans and non-binary individuals¹⁸, it is possible that the increasing rates of anti-2SLGBTQIA+ hate in Edmonton and Canada may be underestimated.

Impacts of Anti-2SLGBTQIA+ Hate and Discrimination in Canada

Hate crimes have been shown to harm both direct victims and broader communities, and may cause more significant physical, psychological and behavioural impacts than other crime types. These impacts can include post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, panic attacks and loss of confidence¹⁹. Hate crimes also affect individuals who are not directly targeted. Hate crimes against 2SLGBTQIA+ communities can result in fear, hyper-vigilance, reduced

¹⁷ <https://doi.org/10.3138/cjccj.2019-0035>

¹⁸ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2020001/article/00009-eng.htm>

¹⁹ <https://doi.org/10.3138/cjccj.2019-0035>;

<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/edit/10.4324/9780203578988/routledge-international-handbook-hate-crime-nathan-hall-abbee-corb-paul-giannasi-john-grieve>;

<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/edit/10.4324/9780203578988/routledge-international-handbook-hate-crime-nathan-hall-abbee-corb-paul-giannasi-john-grieve>

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disclosure of one's identity, inhibited authentic expression and decreased political involvement²⁰. Anti-2SLGBTQIA+ rhetoric further limits access to support, health care and reporting of hate crimes and gender-based violence²¹. Transphobic online hate can result in substantial harms to mental health and behavioural change²².

Research shows high rates of race-based and gender-based discrimination, particularly for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) trans women. Trans and non-binary people also experience prevalent and impactful online hate, gender-expression discrimination, intimate partner violence and compounded discrimination due to their intersecting identities²³. For trans women, family, social, legislative and structural environments that are isolating and frequently not supportive or safe for them can worsen experiences of hate crimes²⁴.

Researchers have identified links between political discourse and the perpetration of hate crimes²⁵. Further, recent data from the United States indicates that laws restricting the rights of non-binary and transgender people are associated with increases of up to 72 per cent in suicide attempts among transgender and non-binary young people²⁶. Transgender adults from US states with more structural transphobia reported more severe past-month psychological distress and were more likely to endorse past-year and lifetime suicidal thoughts, plans and attempts²⁷. However, support for 2SLGBTQIA+ people in policy can also help reduce anti-2SLGBTQIA+ sentiment; in another American study, state-by-state same-sex marriage legislation was associated with decreases in antigay implicit and explicit bias in those states²⁸. It therefore appears that government policies have life-altering impacts on the wellbeing of 2SLGBTQIA+ people and general public attitudes towards 2SLGBTQIA+ people, supporting the urgent need for 2SLGBTQIA+-supportive policy and action.

²⁰ <https://doi.org/10.1177/0269758011422475>; <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-013-9225-0>;
<https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2019.1605298>

²¹ <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2019.102313>; <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36794329/>;
<https://doi.org/10.3138/cjhs.2022-0035>

²²

<https://www.wisdom2action.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/ODLAN-Navigating-Digital-Harms-Digital-Version.pdf>

²³ https://www.cbrc.net/community_connectedness_and_discrimination;
<https://research-groups.usask.ca/morrison/documents/intersectional-microaggressions-and-social-support-for-lgbtq-persons-of-color.pdf>;
<https://www.wisdom2action.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/ODLAN-Navigating-Digital-Harms-Digital-Version.pdf>

²⁴ <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-013-9225-0>

²⁵

<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/edit/10.4324/9780203578988/routledge-international-handbook-hate-crime-nathan-hall-abee-corb-paul-giannasi-john-grieve>;
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2019.162415>; <https://doi.org/10.33972/jhs.147>

²⁶ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/39327480/>

²⁷ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37165214/>

²⁸ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6500130/>

Studies also identify economic repercussions when 2SLGBTQIA+ rights are limited, including lost labour and productivity²⁹. In Canada, transgender women earn 20.3 per cent less than cisgender men. Cisgender women earn 17.6 per cent less than cisgender men. Transgender men earn 10.1 per cent less than cisgender men, and non-binary individuals earn 5.9 per cent less than cisgender men³⁰. Rights for this community mutually reinforce economic development³¹. Further, 2SLGBTQIA+ travellers spend an average of about \$1800 per trip, which is higher than the Canadian average of \$265 per Statistics Canada's 2018 National Travel Survey³². Being a welcoming city for 2SLGBTQIA+ tourists supports economic growth.

Experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth in Alberta

Trans youth in Alberta face significant challenges, including lower rates of feeling able to live in their felt gender full-time compared to the national average. They also experience high rates of discrimination, sexual harassment and violence, as well as high rates of suicide attempts and self-harm³³. Research identifies a need for increased professional support for families, safer schools, accessible health care and youth involvement in developing solutions.

2SLGBTQIA+ youth in care experience misgendering, discrimination and homelessness, which highlights the need for specific training for employees, gender-affirming care and sexual health information³⁴. Roundtables discussing the needs of young LGBTQ Edmontonians identified barriers such as limited provider competency, cultural factors, system navigation challenges and a lack of coordinated support³⁵. Recommendations include advocacy, inclusive policies, readiness assessment tools, outreach to hard-to-reach youth, training, service coordination and incorporating Indigenous knowledge.

Safety and Needs for 2SLGBTQIA+ Communities in Edmonton

Multiple studies and engagements highlight the experiences and needs of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals in Edmonton. A 2016 study with 2SLGBTQIA+ people in Edmonton identified gaps in services across sectors such as athletics and sports, domestic violence supports, education, the labour market, refugee supports,

²⁹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X19300695>

³⁰ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/91f0015m/91f0015m2025001-eng.htm>

³¹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X19300695>

³² <https://search.open.canada.ca/qpnotes/record/ic%2CTOUR-2023-QP-00035>

³³

https://apsc-saravyc.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2018/04/SARAVYC_Trans-Youth-Health-Report_Alberta-V2-WEB.pdf

³⁴

<https://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/response-to-OCYA-report-speaking-out.pdf>

³⁵

<https://www.ualberta.ca/en/fyrefly-institute/media-library/documents/community/communityreportbbdigitalsinglepages-1.pdf>

seniors housing and support for 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness. The study recommended actions such as inclusive policies, funding, an advisory committee, resource centres and continued research³⁶.

A 2016-2017 survey of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in Edmonton revealed barriers to accessing services, including cost, transportation challenges, sense of intimidation, lacking familial support and lack of awareness³⁷. A 2021 survey from the City of Edmonton Community Safety Team completed by 2SLGBTQIA+ people in Edmonton found 81 per cent, or 107, respondents had experienced negative public interactions due to gender identity or sexual orientation. These interactions were reported most often in downtown, on Whyte Avenue and at transit centres. Participants called for increased visual representation, gender-neutral washrooms, police training and support services to address these issues.

A 2021 survey from the City of Edmonton of 2SLGBTQIA+ people in Edmonton found 81 per cent, or 107 respondents, had experienced negative public interactions due to gender identity or sexual orientation. The City of Edmonton's 2025 Service Satisfaction Survey indicated that 2SLGBTQIA+ respondents experienced more discrimination or racism, at 36 per cent compared to 21 per cent of the overall population and witnessed more discrimination or racism, at 64 per cent compared to 35 per cent of the overall population. A lower proportion of 2SLGBTQIA+ respondents indicated feeling safe (47 per cent compared to 54 per cent of the overall population). Selected subgroup population results were collected to ensure the City heard from many voices, which included those who are racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+, Indigenous, people with disabilities, people in low-income households and people with children in the household.

2SLGBTQIA+ Responses, Resilience, and Community Care

2SLGBTQIA+ communities have a long history of resisting hate and oppression. Community-led responses include caregiving during the HIV/AIDS crisis and Pride as a protest against violence and discrimination³⁸. Legal and human rights challenges, such as those for marriage equality, the 2023 federal ban on conversion practices, and the removal of blood donation bans for men who have sex with men, further demonstrate the resilience of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities³⁹.

³⁶ <https://www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca/>

³⁷ https://mapsab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/RAYE_MAPS-Showcase-2017.pdf

³⁸ <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0260555>;
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379309891_ACTIVISM_INTERSECTIONALITY_AND_COMMUNITY_PSYCHOLOGY_THE_WAY_IN_WHICH_BLACK_LIVES_MATTER_TORONTO_HELPS_US_TO_EXAMINE_WHITE_SUPREMACY_IN_CANADA'S_LGBTQ_COMMUNITY;
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1468-0424.12549>;
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29992054/>;
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3138/9781442677623>

³⁹

https://www.cbrc.net/2_years_after_the_ban_continuing_the_work_to_end_conversion_practi

Survivors of hate crimes, hate incidents, and gender-based violence often turn to informal support from friends, family, social media, mental health services, community organizations and local businesses rather than the police⁴⁰. Individuals who are indirectly affected by hate crimes may become motivated to address harassment and discrimination. They may also show increased empathy, reduced victim blaming and greater motivation to support others⁴¹. During the COVID-19 pandemic, 2SLGBTQIA+ communities faced heightened mental health challenges, including isolation and reduced social support, yet found strength in mutual care⁴².

Highlighting sources of resilience in community-based ways can guide strategies to enhance 2SLGBTQIA+ safety and well-being. Effective approaches must address the limitations of anti-discrimination policies, which can unintentionally perpetuate prejudice if organizational cultures resist change, if intersectional experiences are overlooked or if staff are not adequately trained⁴³. Many initiatives also do not account for the diverse needs of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly at the intersections of race, gender identity and lived experiences⁴⁴. To address these challenges, community-based and public safety approaches informed by intersectional perspectives are essential⁴⁵.

2SLGBTQIA+ Related Programming and Approaches in Edmonton

More than thirty organizations and initiatives serving the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in the Edmonton area were identified in an initial scan. These organizations provide a range of service types, including supports for Two-Spirit people, advocacy, business services, funding, help lines and resource compiling, public-facing government initiatives, public health and education, social services, newcomer services, supports specific to QTBIPOC (Queer, Trans Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) people, recreation, research, seniors services and youth services.

Formal and informal groups serving 2SLGBTQIA+ communities in Edmonton continue to form and evolve, and maintaining a definitive list is challenging. 211 and The Rainbow Pages are two local sources that collect information about these services.

ces_in_canada;

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/blood-ban-health-canada-federal-court-1.6020776>

⁴⁰ <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2019.102313>;

<https://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/criminology/hate/documents/fc-full-report>;

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/02697580261427780>;

<https://doi.org/10.3138/cjhs.2022-0035>

⁴¹ <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2014.957133>;

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0269758011422475>;

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12308031/>

⁴² https://www.cbrc.net/investigaytors_qthc_mental_health

⁴³ <https://doi.org/10.18666/JPRA-2017-V35-I3-7702>

⁴⁴ <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/17/19/7314>

⁴⁵ <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2019.102313>

Scoping of Similar Initiatives in Other Municipalities

A review of practices in other major Canadian cities was conducted to understand their approaches to similar issues. Vancouver, Victoria, Calgary, and Toronto use advisory committees to guide City council and City officials on inclusivity and to address challenges faced by the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and to advance gender equity. Toronto has also created specialized resources, including toolkits, to support this demographic, with one specifically tailored to seniors. In Ottawa, community organizations collaborated to assess service needs, and Montreal contracted a firm to conduct similar engagement work. An overview of related initiatives in Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Montreal and Toronto, as well as initiatives at the federal government, is included in Attachment 3 of this Council Report.

METHODOLOGY

The public engagement consultant Dialogue Partners and City of Edmonton staff carried out engagement in three phases.

- **Phase 1 (February 2025)** focused on consultation with 35 participants from 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations and service providers. These early conversations surfaced valuable insights that supported the development of an inclusive and responsive engagement strategy.
- **Phase 2 (March to June 2025)** engaged with approximately 788 2SLGBTQIA+ community members. Participants shared their experiences, ideas and recommendations on how to create spaces, places, services and programs that are safe, inclusive and welcoming. Engagement activities included a public survey, a service provider survey, an interactive online map, pop-up engagements and conversations hosted by community partners.
- **Phase 3 (November and December 2025)** involved presenting the draft Action Plan to 95 community members and 41 City of Edmonton staff in November and December 2025 through in-person and online advisory workshops, as well as conversations hosted by and with the Alberta 2SLGBTI Chamber of Commerce; Community, Health, Empowerment & Wellness (CHEW) Project; the Edmonton Community Foundation; NorQuest College's Pride Lounge; okimaw kihew mekwanak (OKM); Pride@TheCity and the Women's Advisory Voice of Edmonton.

FINDINGS

Summary of Phase 1 and 2 Engagement

Summarized below are the key learnings and considerations identified through engagement in Phases 1 and 2.

- Participants asked the City to visibly and meaningfully support 2SLGBTQIA+ communities through consistent leadership, public affirmations,

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anti-discrimination stances and year-round actions that demonstrate 2SLGBTQIA+ people are seen, valued and protected.

- Participants asked the City to take a clear stance against hate and to affirm 2SLGBTQIA+ rights based on equity and human rights rather than neutrality.
- Participants spoke about feeling exposed, vulnerable or unsafe when using transit, attending events, or accessing services, particularly when they were visibly 2SLGBTQIA+ or racialized. They called for proactive safety protocols, training for public-facing staff and accountability measures to ensure harm is addressed in real time.
- Participants asked that the City involve 2SLGBTQIA+ communities in shaping policies, programs and Beyond Belonging: The 2SLGBTQIA+ Safe Spaces Action Plan itself.
- Participants identified a need for public campaigns, programs and messaging that counters stigma and misinformation related to 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.
- Participants emphasized that 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion should be integrated into daily life rather than limited to specific events or Pride month. They linked safety to being able to participate fully in public without fear of being othered.

A complete summary of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 engagement input can be found in the What We Heard Report in Attachment 4.

Summary of Phase 3 Engagement

In the conversations held in November and December 2025 to align and confirm the draft Action Plan, participants indicated that the context for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals in Edmonton has shifted since Phase 1 and 2 engagement ended in June 2025. Participants expressed a sense of urgency regarding Beyond Belonging: The 2SLGBTQIA+ Safe Spaces Action Plan. Many observed increasing unease, emboldened anti-2SLGBTQIA+ hate and more concern for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth and people experiencing homelessness. Many felt an increased responsibility to educate others amid misinformation, emphasizing the necessity of governmental action. Participants appreciated the Council's recognition of November 20, 2025 as the Trans Day of Remembrance. They further observed a growth in organizing and advocacy efforts by youth and others, which present greater opportunities for collaboration and visibility, including through the City of Edmonton Beyond Belonging Grant.

Input on the draft Action Plan reflected a great deal of support for the actions in this document, while emphasizing needs for an intersectional approach, ongoing transparency, regular updates on progress of the Action Plan, continued

prioritization of the Action Plan as it moves into implementation, ongoing community collaboration and consultation, accountability, and prioritization of a 2SLGBTQIA+ Council Advisory Committee. This input has informed adjustments to the Action Plan.

Beyond Belonging Community Survey Insights

As part of the Beyond Belonging engagement process, approximately 460 2SLGBTQIA+ Edmontonians shared their experiences through a community survey. The findings provide a snapshot of access, awareness and safety perceptions in the city.

Awareness and Access

- Many survey respondents were aware of City services and programs offered to residents.
- Younger respondents and those with lower incomes indicate difficulty accessing City of Edmonton services, programs, and spaces.

Safety/inclusivity Perceptions Across Spaces

- Safest spaces: The majority of survey respondents rated Arts, Heritage and Nature Experiences (83%) and Civic events and Festivals (72%) as safe. In open-ended comments, respondents mention that one's home, the homes of friends and public libraries are where they feel the most safe.
- Least safe spaces: Transit (24% rated somewhat or very safe), around peace and municipal enforcement officers (32%) and at Council meetings (37%).
- Mixed: Recreation centres were affirming for some but unsafe for others, depending on race, gender expression or visibility.

Disparities Within the Community

- Young people aged 18 to 24 were more likely to report lower safety levels than older age groups.
- Respondents who identify as trans or non-binary described unsafe experiences with law enforcement and on transit in the open-ended survey questions.

What We Heard in People's Words

Participants most often linked feelings of being unsafe to:

- Using the transit system, where many felt exposed or vulnerable to harassment.
- Interactions with law enforcement, which several respondents connected to feeling unsafe.
- Situations involving homelessness, substance use and mental health.

Takeaway

Safety for 2SLGBTQIA+ folks in Edmonton is unevenly experienced. While some find affirming spaces and support, others face daily barriers that affect their sense of belonging in the city.

Overlaying Beyond Belonging and Sense of Community Surveys

To better understand how neighbourhood belonging relates to the safety experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ residents, findings from two City of Edmonton surveys were reviewed: the 2025 Neighbourhood Services Sense of Community Survey and the Beyond Belonging: 2SLGBTQIA+ Safety and Inclusion Survey. Examining the surveys side by side helps identify how broader neighbourhood conditions relate to the lived experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ residents. Respondents to the Beyond Belonging survey identified their general region of the city using categories derived from three-digit postal code areas. These regions provide a broad geographic approximation rather than precise neighbourhood boundaries.

To highlight where factors may overlap across broader regions of the city, a Combined Risk Index was developed. The index identifies areas where lower neighbourhood belonging, lower reported safety among 2SLGBTQIA+ residents and structural vulnerabilities occur together.

The analysis suggests that the Southwest and Central regions show higher concentrations of overlapping pressures while the Northwest region appears more stable overall. In the Southwest, higher combined risk appears associated with lower belonging and safety scores, greater affordability pressures and higher levels of renting and residential mobility. In the Central region, higher combined risk appears linked to identity based vulnerabilities alongside lower belonging and safety scores.

Responses from the Beyond Belonging survey indicate lower perceived safety on public transit and around police and municipal enforcement officers among 2SLGBTQIA+ respondents. These insights may help inform implementation of Beyond Belonging: The 2SLGBTQIA+ Safe Spaces Action Plan by identifying geographic areas and community conditions where targeted actions may have the greatest impact. Potential actions include strengthening neighbourhood belonging through community programming, applying Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and supporting residents facing structural barriers.

This analysis has several limitations. Beyond Belonging survey responses are not population-representative, neighbourhood-level detail is limited, and the Combined Risk Index applies equal weighting across indicators, which may not fully reflect real-world impacts. In addition, only regional comparisons were possible between the two surveys, and findings may be influenced by sentiment expressed in open-ended comments. Lastly, because Beyond Belonging regions are based on self-reported regional categories rather than precise geographic identifiers, findings should be interpreted as broad regional patterns rather than exact spatial measurements.

Internal Analytical Note

The Combined Risk Index is intended as an internal analytical tool to support interpretation of patterns across survey findings. The index combines indicators from the Sense of Community and Beyond Belonging surveys to highlight areas where multiple pressures may overlap. Because the underlying datasets operate at different spatial scales and include self-reported regional categories, the index should be interpreted as an exploratory indicator of broader patterns rather than a precise measurement of neighbourhood risk. The results are best used to inform internal discussion, contextual understanding and future analysis rather than as a definitive ranking of communities.

SYNTHESIS

There is substantial alignment between the literature review, jurisdictional scan, previous Edmonton and Alberta based engagement with 2SLGBTQIA+ people, the Beyond Belonging engagement conducted from March to May of 2025 and other City of Edmonton information. This alignment includes an emphasis on:

- Accessible, gender-neutral and inclusive changeroom and washroom options
- Addressing public forms of hate, including through community approaches
- An intersectional approach that considers experiences of anti-2SLGBTQIA+ hate, racism, disability, poverty, age and ongoing colonialism
- A strengths-based approach that supports queer joy and community-building
- Being informed by Indigenous knowledges and considering the specific needs of Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQIA+ people
- City leadership advocating for and supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion
- Developing accessible, inclusive and safe municipal spaces for 2SLGBTQIA+ people through programming, design, events, signage, public forms, training and investment

Attachment 2

- Ensuring evidence-based practices and ongoing collaboration with 2SLGBTQIA+ people in developing programs and policies impacting them
- Increasing awareness of and access to 2SLGBTQIA+ supports
- Required staff training in municipal services to support 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion
- Sustained investment in community organizations that lower barriers and support 2SLGBTQIA+ people, including supports for refugee claimants, seniors housing, recreation, and supports for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth, including those experiencing homelessness
- Visual representation and signs of acceptance for 2SLGBTQIA+ people
- Working alongside security and law enforcement to ensure effective and informed approaches to 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and communities

The alignment between previous research, contemporary engagement and Edmonton-specific findings provides Council and Administration with a strong evidence-based mandate for the development and implementation of Beyond Belonging: The 2SLGBTQIA+ Safe Spaces Action Plan.