



BUILDING SAFER COMMUNITIES

PROGRAM REPORT

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LAND

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The City of Lethbridge acknowledges that we are gathered on the lands of the Blackfoot people of the Canadian plains and pays respect to the Blackfoot people past, present and future while recognizing and respecting their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationships to the land. The City of Lethbridge is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III.



THANK YOU



The Building Safer Communities program was made possible through the collaborative efforts of dedicated community partners committed to enhancing safety, well-being, and opportunities for youth throughout Lethbridge.

The City of Lethbridge extends its appreciation to the Lethbridge Police Service for its partnership in developing and delivering program initiatives. We also thank both school divisions, youth-serving organizations, and community agencies for their support, which enabled the program to reach youth and their families with meaningful prevention and intervention initiatives. Their commitment strengthened the program's capacity to respond to community needs and foster positive outcomes for youth.

This report reflects a shared commitment to building safer, more resilient communities through collaboration, prevention, and evidence-informed practice. By working together, our partnerships are bridging gaps in services and providing youth with the support they deserve.

Community Partners

- Lethbridge Police Service
- Lethbridge School Division 51
- Holy Spirit Catholic School Division
- Lethbridge Family Services
- Primary Care Alberta School Health and Wellness Team
- 5th on 5th Youth Services
- University of Lethbridge
- Youth One
- Lethbridge Fire and Emergency Medical Services
- Lethbridge Polytech
- Lethbridge Sport Council
- YMCA of Lethbridge

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Building Safer Communities (BSC) program addresses gaps in youth services and prevention in Lethbridge through coordinated, community-based initiatives. Grounded in early intervention and prevention, the program focused on reducing youth risk factors associated with criminal involvement while strengthening community capacity to support the broader youth population.

In 2023, the City of Lethbridge received funding from Public Safety Canada through the Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF) to implement youth-focused prevention initiatives in collaboration with the Lethbridge Police Service (LPS). The BSCF is a federal initiative designed to prevent gun and gang violence by supporting community-led strategies.

The Community Social Development (CSD) department led the implementation of programs in collaboration with the LPS. The program was created using data from a community youth needs assessment conducted by external consultants. The findings enhanced the understanding of factors affecting local youth and guided the creation of community-informed initiatives to support at-risk youth and the broader youth population in Lethbridge.

Through intensive case management, the BSC program achieved reductions in risk for participating youth and increased connections to positive community supports. Complementary educator services enhanced the capacity of schools, families, service providers, and community partners by implementing prevention initiatives that addressed emerging issues. Collectively, BSC program activities reinforced protective factors, improved coordination across systems, and increased access to prevention-focused strategies and resources within the community.

As federal funding concludes on March 31, 2026, program efforts have shifted toward service continuity, knowledge transfer, and the integration of effective prevention approaches within existing systems. Although the BSC program is time-limited, its outcomes demonstrate the value of a coordinated, community-informed approach to reducing youth risk, strengthening community capacity, and informing future youth crime prevention initiatives in Lethbridge.



BACKGROUND

On March 16, 2022, the Minister of Public Safety announced the BSCF, a four-year initiative with a \$250 million budget aimed at preventing gun and gang violence through community-based strategies for youth. This program helps municipalities develop prevention and intervention initiatives, enhances their understanding of local challenges, and creates plans to sustain successful activities beyond the funding period. In December 2022, City Administration applied for BSCF funding in partnership with the LPS.

Council Prior Decisions

- ▶ December 2022, City Administration was directed to complete a grant application to Public Safety Canada for the Building Safer Communities Fund, which was approved in the spring of 2023.
- ▶ July 26, 2023, City Council approved receipt of \$665,618.10 in BSCF funding for the federal fiscal year 2023-2024.
- ▶ January 23, 2024, City Council approved receipt of \$1,045,971.30 in BSCF funding for federal fiscal years 2024-2025 and 2025-2026,
- ▶ July 18, 2024, City Council accepted the information provided in the updated report and attachments.

The Community Social Development (CSD) department, in partnership with the LPS, developed a comprehensive program guided by a Youth Needs Assessment. Based on these findings, a two-year work plan was submitted to Public Safety Canada and approved.

BSC THREE MAIN OBJECTIVES:



**ADDRESS CRITICAL
GAPS IN YOUTH
SERVICES**

through case management for justice-involved youth.



**PROVIDE PREVENTION-
FOCUSED EDUCATION
AND RESOURCES**

for the broader youth population, caregivers, and frontline workers.



**CREATE A
SUSTAINABLE
PLAN**

beyond the funding period.

CONTEXT

At the time of application to the BSCF, Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA) violation rates¹ in Lethbridge were exceeding provincial levels, indicating a comparatively higher concentration of youth justice involvement. While long-term trends show a decline in youth offences across Lethbridge and Alberta, Lethbridge continued to demonstrate higher relative rates.² This pattern reflects a combination of local crime dynamics and the effects of a smaller youth population base. Location quotient analysis further indicates that youth offences in Lethbridge were significantly over-represented relative to Alberta, suggesting a concentration of youth justice involvement beyond what would be expected based on population size alone.

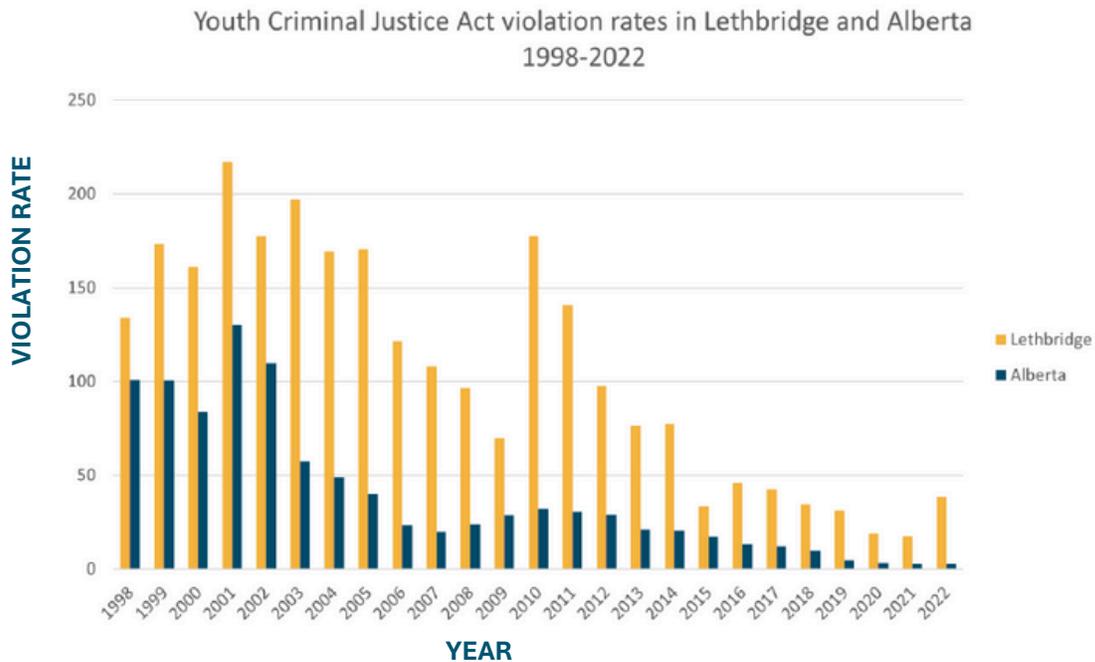


Figure 1: Youth Justice Rates in Lethbridge and Alberta



Criminal Justice Act violation rates are quite high in Lethbridge compared to Alberta. However, these rates have been declining in recent years for both Lethbridge and Alberta. Counts of Youth Criminal Justice Act violations in Lethbridge are still relatively low despite the differences between the province and the city seen here, with a range of incidents from 18-150 and a 25-year average of 86.2 incidents per year.

¹ StrategyCorp. (2024). Statistical analysis of youth crime patterns in Lethbridge. Unpublished report prepared for the City of Lethbridge. See Figure 1.

Table 1: Location quotients by crime type in Lethbridge, Alberta 2018-2022.

	Homicide	Robbery	Assault	Sexual Assault	Weapons	Total Firearms	Theft of Auto	Theft from Auto	Theft	Mischief	BNE	Drugs	Youth Criminal Justice Act
2018	0.00	0.52	1.23	1.00	0.79	0.56	0.42	1.91	1.16	0.56	0.80	2.20	2.34
2019	0.00	0.46	1.16	1.16	0.85	0.32	0.46	1.61	1.43	0.46	0.90	2.63	4.66
2020	0.42	0.47	1.08	1.21	0.75	0.34	0.46	1.70	1.37	0.49	1.09	3.51	4.00
2021	0.26	0.61	1.16	0.93	0.62	0.51	0.60	1.55	1.37	0.58	1.29	4.09	4.67
2022	0.57	0.62	1.36	1.17	0.83	0.38	0.61	1.27	1.41	0.60	1.12	3.09	10.95

Data source: CANSIM, Statistics Canada, 2023.

Location quotient criteria are as follows:

- > 1.30 is a very over-represented area (high crime specialization),
- > 1.10 to 1.30 is moderately over-represented,
- > 0.90 to 1.10 is averagely represented,
- > 0.70 to 0.90 is under-represented, and
- 0.00 to 0.70 is a very under-represented area (low crime specialization).

Figure 2: 2018-2022 Location Quotients

During this period, the LPS Youth Engagement Team experienced reduced capacity due to resource reallocation, leaving only one Youth Engagement Officer(YEU) and one Youth FASD Officer to address youth matters directly. This change limited the capacity for proactive, school-based, and community-led interventions, leading to more reactive responses to emerging risks among youth. Furthermore, gaps were identified in the programming and support available to youth who were involved in, or at risk of involvement in, the justice system. At that time, Lethbridge did not have a dedicated community-based program for justice-involved youth that addressed behaviours beyond minor offences.



Together, these conditions highlighted the need for a coordinated, community-based response and informed the development of the BSC program to address youth justice involvement and broader prevention needs.

2 StrategyCorp. (2024). Statistical analysis of youth crime patterns in Lethbridge. Unpublished report prepared for the City of Lethbridge. See Figure 2.

BUILDING SAFER COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

In response to the conditions and service gaps identified in the community, the BSC program was developed and delivered in phases. These phases represent stages of program planning, implementation, and evaluation, ensuring that activities are responsive to community needs and aligned with the objectives of the BSCF.

01

PHASE ONE

Program Planning & Development

02

PHASE TWO

Program Implementation

03

PHASE THREE

Program Outcomes & Measures

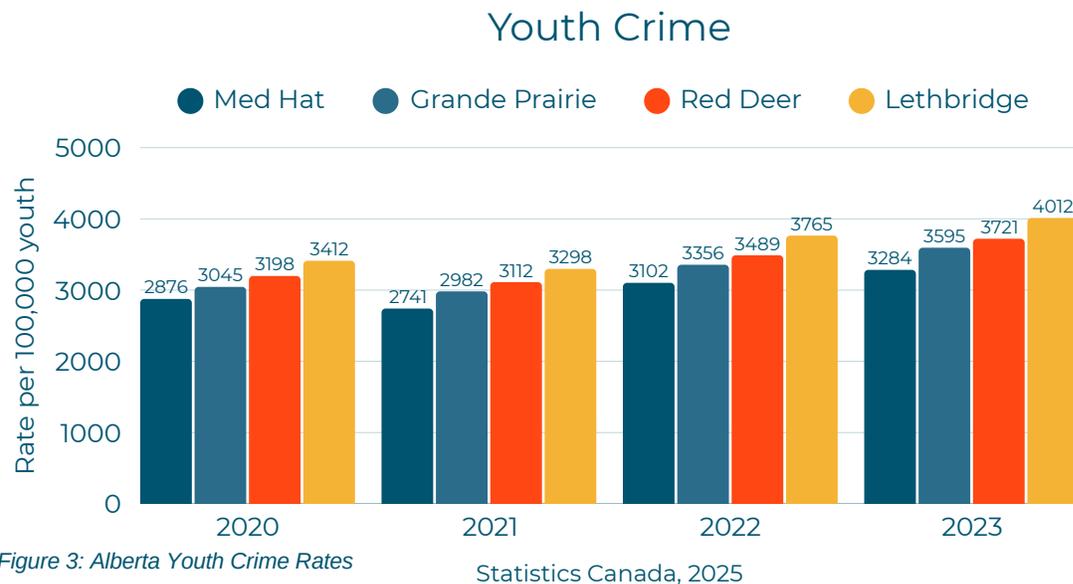


Program Planning & Development

Phase One of the BSC program focused on establishing a community-informed foundation for initiatives. The primary objective was to develop an understanding of local conditions related to youth violence, gang activity, factors contributing to youth justice involvement, and service gaps, ensuring that program strategies were informed by both data and community input. To support this work, external consultants conducted a Youth Needs Assessment that included a statistical analysis of youth crime and violence prevalence, along with community engagement activities from December 2023 to January 2024.

LOCAL CONTEXT

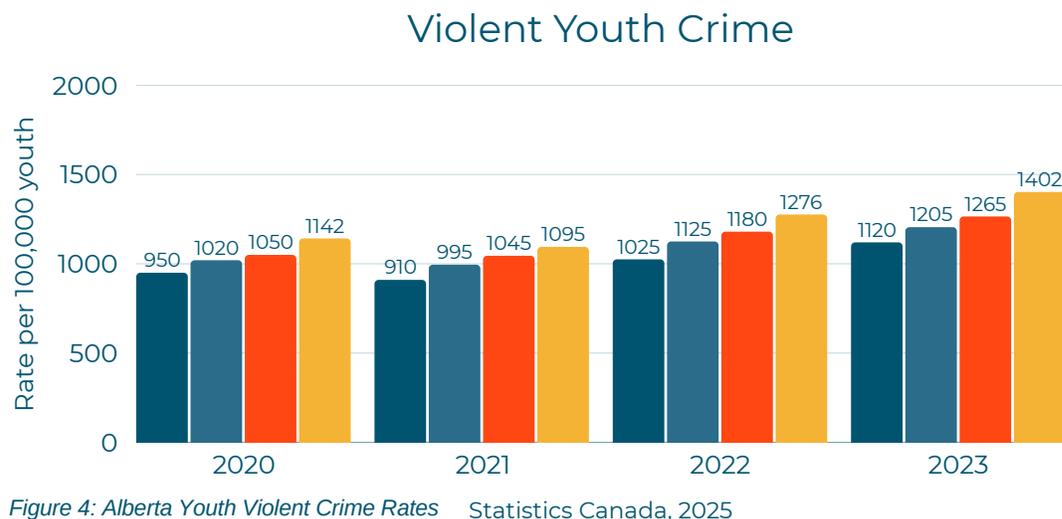
From 2020 to 2023, youth crime increased across mid-sized cities in Alberta. Youth crime in Lethbridge showed a consistent upward trend, surpassing rates in comparable cities such as Medicine Hat, Red Deer, and Grande Prairie. In addition to higher overall crime rates, Lethbridge also had a larger proportion of youth charged with violent offences.



1ST
LETHBRIDGE RANK AMONG COMPARATIVE CITIES IN ALBERTA FOR YOUTH CRIME

18%
NET INCREASE OF GENERAL YOUTH CRIME SINCE 2020

22%
NET INCREASE IN VIOLENT YOUTH CRIME IN LETHBRIDGE SINCE 2020



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement aimed to collect both qualitative and quantitative data to enhance understanding of youth experiences and perspectives within support services. Engagement sessions included representatives from both school divisions, youth justice, administration and frontline workers from youth-serving organizations. These sessions were designed to gather insights into local challenges, identify service gaps, and explore opportunities for coordinated responses. The following section outlines the community engagement strategy used to inform the Youth Needs Assessment.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Conducted 11 one-on-one interviews and 2 focus groups with youth-serving agencies, representatives from both school divisions, and agents from the justice sector.



COMMUNITY POP-UPS

Engaged 50+ community members, including youth and adults. Hosted at the downtown Lethbridge Public Library and YMCA.



YOUTH-SPECIFIC SURVEY

Distributed to all youth-serving agencies and posted on the City's "Get Involved" page. Received 52 targeted responses.

YOUTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT KEY FINDINGS

Based on the data collected through stakeholder engagement and the youth survey, key themes related to youth safety, justice involvement, and service availability in Lethbridge were identified.

GANG LANDSCAPE

- Small peer groups engaged in criminal activities
- Cultural and geographical ties among groups
- Recruitment by older youth or young adults
- Noticeable rise in violent crime among youth
- Social media used to mimic, promote, and normalize violent behaviour

DRIVERS OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

- Limited mental health supports
- Increased use of lethal substances
- Limited opportunities for pro-social activities
- Weak attachment to community; stronger ties to antisocial peers
- Caregivers needing education and resource navigation support
- Youth feel unwelcome in public spaces
- Transportation barriers to services and programs

SERVICE GAPS

- Reduction of Youth Engagement Officers in schools, decreasing trust between youth and law enforcement
- Lack of support and programming for justice-involved youth
- Discontinuation of successful programs due to funding; need for sustainable funding strategies

Local crime statistics, combined with key findings from the Youth Needs Assessment, highlighted the prevalence of youth crime and the complex challenges facing youth in Lethbridge. These findings informed the Youth Needs Assessment Implementation Plan, which identified strategies to strengthen prevention efforts, enhance community engagement, and support youth through community-informed interventions. The BSC program adopted recommendations within its capacity, prioritizing initiatives that addressed critical service gaps and informed the development of core program initiatives.

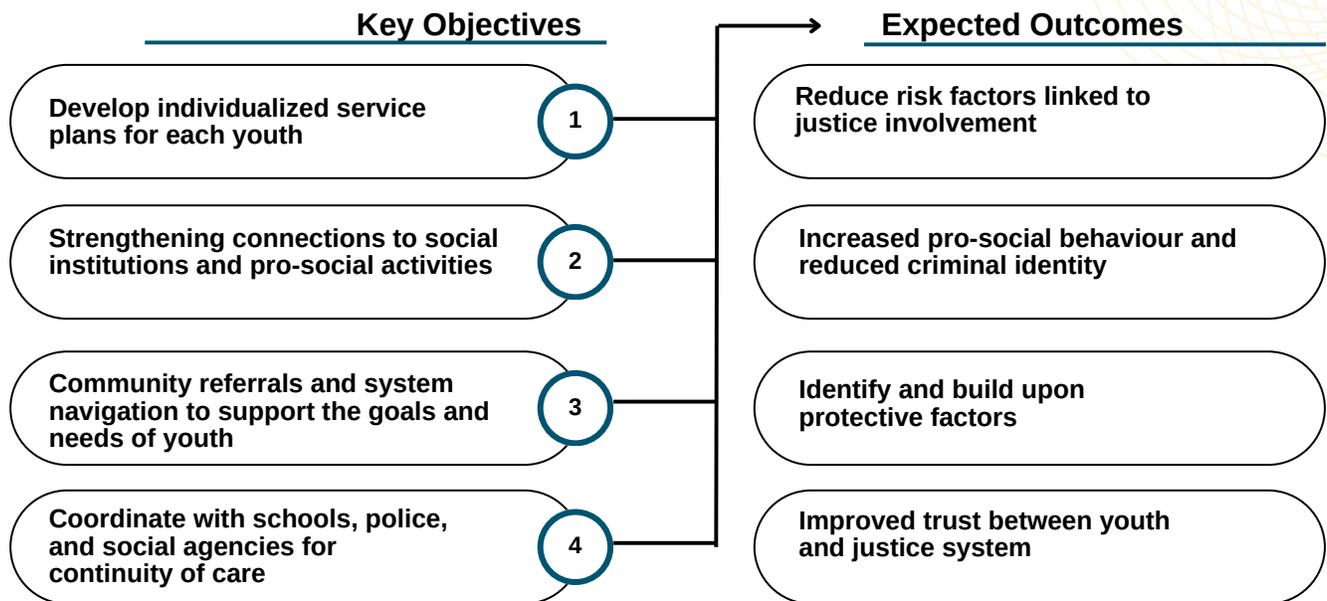
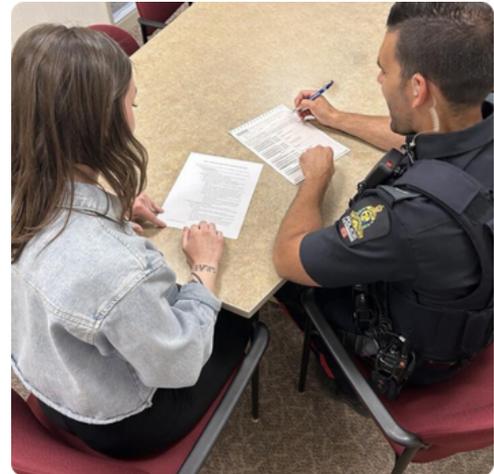
Program Implementation

In January 2024, the City of Lethbridge initiated Phase Two of the BSC program, translating findings from the Youth Needs Assessment into a two-year work plan developed in partnership with the LPS.

Phase Two focused on developing case management and educator services to support a dual-response approach, addressing the needs of justice-involved and high-risk youth while advancing prevention strategies for the broader youth population. Program implementation began in May 2024, alongside additional initiatives such as Off the Record (OTR) and the Online Safety Toolkit. The following section outlines the initiatives implemented during this phase.

CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Case management is a voluntary program that provides a strength-based, person-centered approach for youth aged 12 to 17 who are involved in, or at risk of becoming involved in, the justice system. Case management services were developed to address gaps in crime prevention by reducing the risk factors associated with criminal behaviour and reoffending among young people through intervention and community-based support. Referrals for case management primarily come from the LPS, which consults on additional referrals from probation services and schools



Case Managers help youth develop protective factors across individual, family, peer, school, and community domains. To identify each participant's needs, Case Managers conduct a risk assessment during the initial 30-day period. This assessment establishes a baseline for risk factors and helps in creating individualized goals. Risk factors are reassessed every 90 days to monitor progress and adjust interventions as needed. To ensure continuity of care and integrated service delivery, Case Managers collaborate with schools, justice partners, and community agencies to provide extensive support and effective interventions.

PROGRAM REFERRAL PROCESS

All referrals received by the program are reviewed using a prioritization matrix to assess eligibility and determine priority when demand exceeds capacity. This process ensures that services are directed to youth most aligned with the program's mandate and level of intervention.

The prioritization matrix considers multiple domains, including individual risk factors, school involvement, family circumstances, and community influences. Factors are weighted based on their connection to criminogenic factors; factors that other youth-serving programs can address are weighed differently. This approach supports coordinated service delivery and helps prevent duplication of existing community services.

Youth may be deemed ineligible if their identified needs are not connected to justice involvement or risk of justice involvement, or if their needs fall outside the program's scope. In these cases, referrals are redirected to appropriate community programs or agencies to ensure youth continue to receive relevant support.

RISK ASSESSMENTS

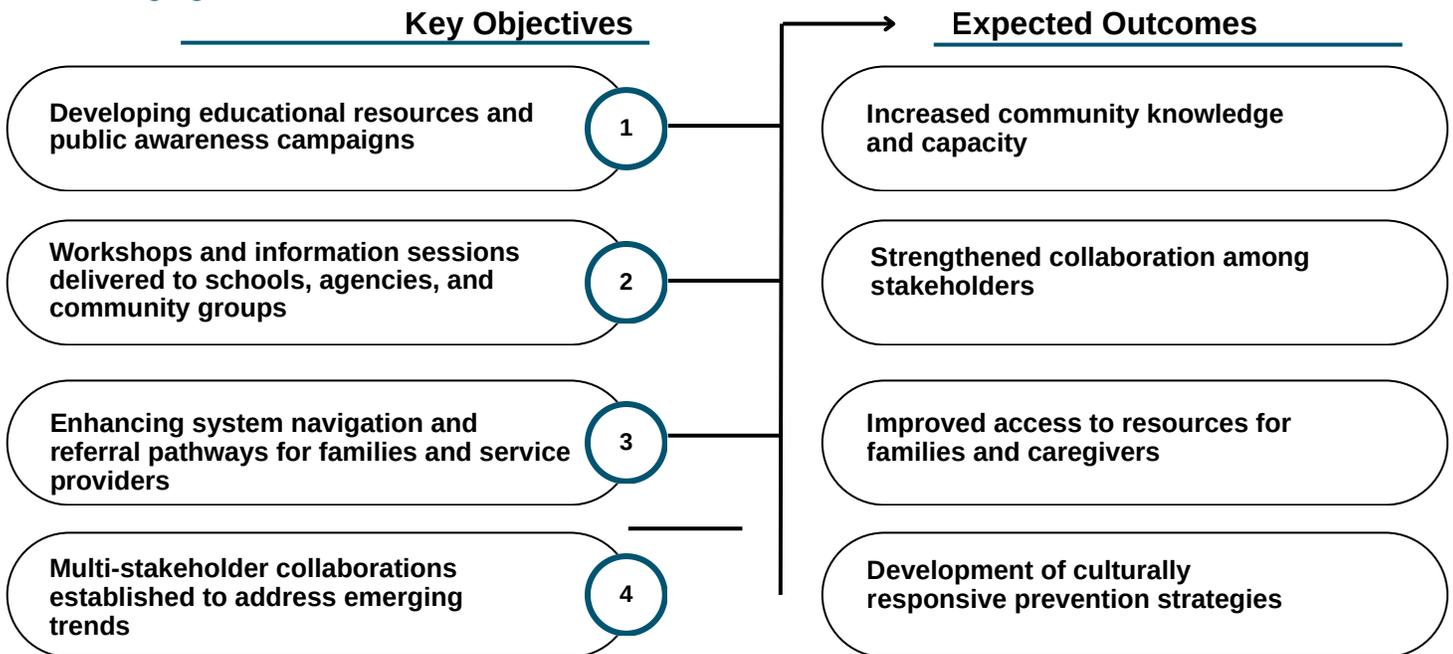
The Youth Level of Service / Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI) is a risk assessment tool that is based on risk, need, and responsivity principles. The tool monitors risk levels related to justice involvement, examining multiple life domains such as education, family and peer relationships, substance use, mental health, and past justice involvement, to identify criminogenic factors and protective strengths.

The YLS/CMI is used to inform service planning, guide case management priorities, and identify areas requiring targeted supports. Initial assessments are completed within the first 30 days of engagement to establish a baseline, with reassessments conducted every 90 days to monitor changes in risk. This approach enables Case Managers to adapt interventions as necessary, assess progress in reducing risk factors, enhancing protective factors, and promoting positive outcomes for youth.

EDUCATOR SERVICES

Educator Services operate at the system level to strengthen prevention, education, and capacity-building support for youth, families, and service providers. These services focus on addressing identified gaps in prevention by increasing awareness, knowledge, and access to resources that support youth safety and well-being. Educator services are delivered in collaboration with parents and caregivers, schools, frontline workers, and community organizations to deliver public awareness campaigns, workshops, and stakeholder engagement activities.

Following Phase One, trends related to youth engagement in online spaces, including the normalization and imitation of gang-related behaviour, violence, hate speech, bullying, and the sharing of high-risk content, were identified. Stakeholders reported that these behaviours posed growing risks within schools and the broader community. In response, Educator services developed targeted prevention initiatives to equip youth, caregivers, and frontline workers with practical tools to navigate online environments safely and respond to emerging risks.



OFF THE RECORD

OTR is a preventive initiative that aims to strengthen relationships between youth and first responders. OTR offers barrier-free access to recreational sports with off-duty LPS officers and Fire/EMS crews in various community areas. This initiative was developed to address the needs and gaps identified in the Youth Needs Assessment, which focuses on enhancing youth's sense of belonging in community spaces, improving trust between youth and first responders, and reducing barriers to youth programming.



ONLINE SAFETY TOOLKIT

The Online Safety Toolkit was created as a primary prevention initiative in response to findings from the Youth Needs Assessment, which identified increases in high-risk behaviours in online spaces and gaps in knowledge and resources for both youth and caregivers. The toolkit is designed to raise awareness, improve digital literacy, and equip families with practical tools to support safe, informed online engagement.

Consultation with stakeholders revealed several key themes regarding online risks. These include the use of social media platforms like Instagram and Snapchat to normalize and promote violent behaviour, the effects of online bullying and harassment on youth mental health, and concerns about the sharing of high-risk content increasing vulnerability to exploitation. In response to these findings, the Online Safety Toolkit includes the following components:

- Trends regarding youth's online activity
- Youth Zone with resources for those engaging in high-risk online behaviour
- Guide for safe online habits, including parental controls and conversation tips
- Information on apps, age requirements, and safety features
- Frauds and scams
- AI, chatbots, and virtual companions
- Legal information on cyberbullying, hate speech, and exploitation
- "In the News" section highlighting current and local online safety risks



Program Outcomes & Measures

Phase Three of the BSC program began in May 2024 with the implementation of core initiatives. This phase focuses on delivering program activities while monitoring progress toward established objectives and outcomes. Program performance was assessed on an ongoing basis, with data used to evaluate outcomes, inform continuous improvement, and ensure alignment with program goals. The following section outlines outcomes achieved across each initiative.

CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Case management activities in Phase Three reflect the transition from program development to active service delivery. Building on the foundational work completed in Phase Two, this phase focuses on delivering individualized support to justice-involved and at-risk youth. Through structured intake processes, individualized service planning, and coordinated engagement with schools, justice partners, and community agencies, Case Managers delivered targeted interventions to help reduce the overall risk of youth.

Program performance and outcomes were assessed using multiple measures, including referrals and intakes, youth needs identified at intake, case management engagement across domains, community referrals, and risk assessments. These measures together provide insights into case management activities, aligning with identified needs and their association with changes in assessed risk over time.

Program Referrals and Intakes

Since the implementation of case management services, the program has received 40 referrals, resulting in 31 completed intakes with youth.



Figure 4: Program Referrals

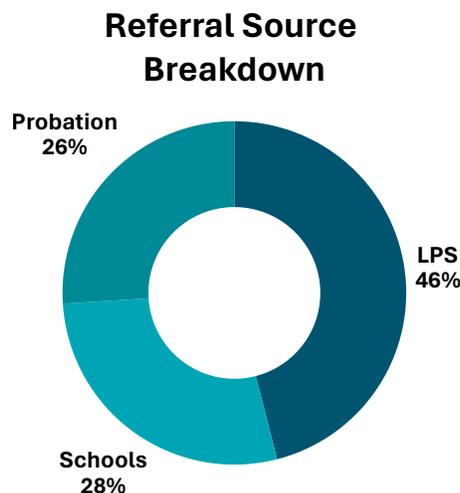


Figure 5: Referral Source

Justice Involvement Upon Intake

More than half of the youth who entered the program had justice involvement, which influenced the focus of case management supports alongside their presenting needs. The data below was collected from the initial 30-day YLS/CMI risk assessment.

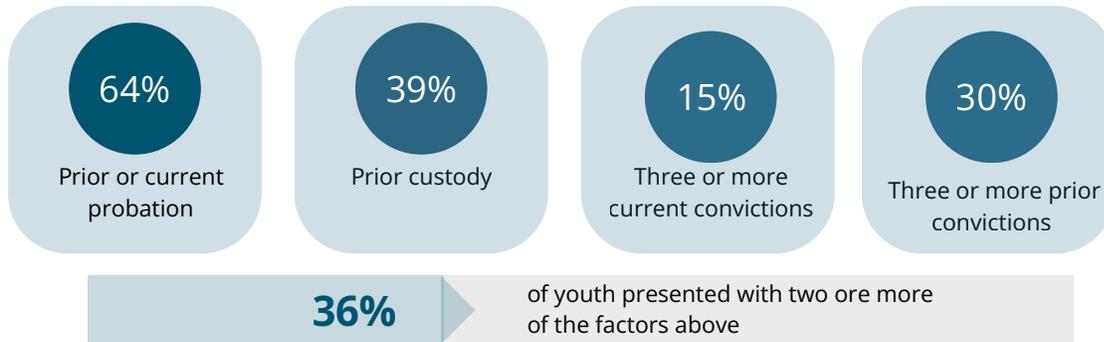


Figure 6: Justice Involvement
Data based upon initial 30-day risk assessment n=31

Youth Needs Upon Intake

The graph below shows the initial presenting needs of 31 youth who completed an intake. Intake data indicated that youth rarely present with a single, isolated need. Instead, the majority of youth needs span multiple domains, most commonly education, justice involvement, mental health, family circumstances, and substance use. This emphasized the need for coordinated case management to enhance outcomes by addressing interconnected needs through a multidisciplinary approach rather than focusing on single-issue interventions.

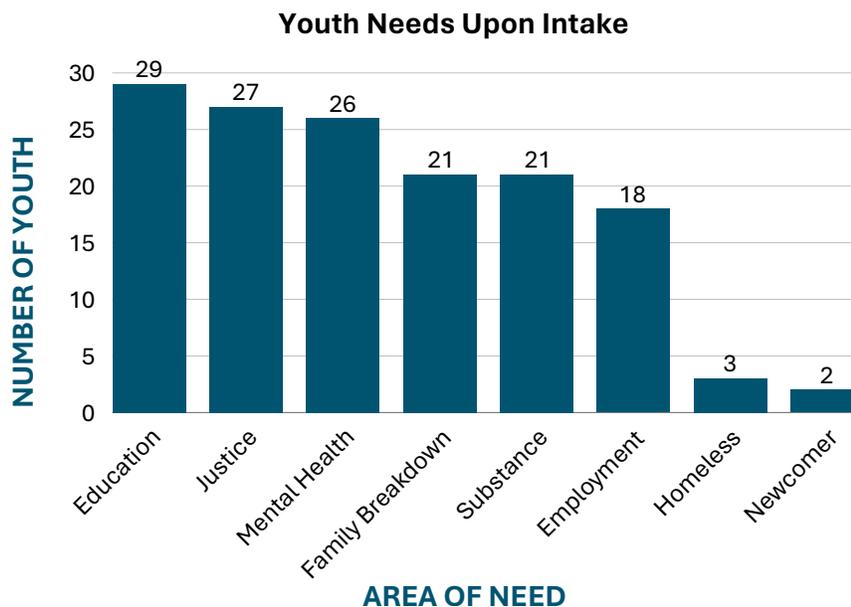


Figure 7: Youth Needs

Case Management Engagement

Recognizing the complexity of youth needs identified during intake, the time and engagement of case management demonstrate a coordinated response in the areas where youth require the most support. Since most youth present with multiple needs, Case Managers allocate their time and effort across various areas of support. As a result, the domains with the highest levels of identified needs also require the most intensive case management time and coordination.

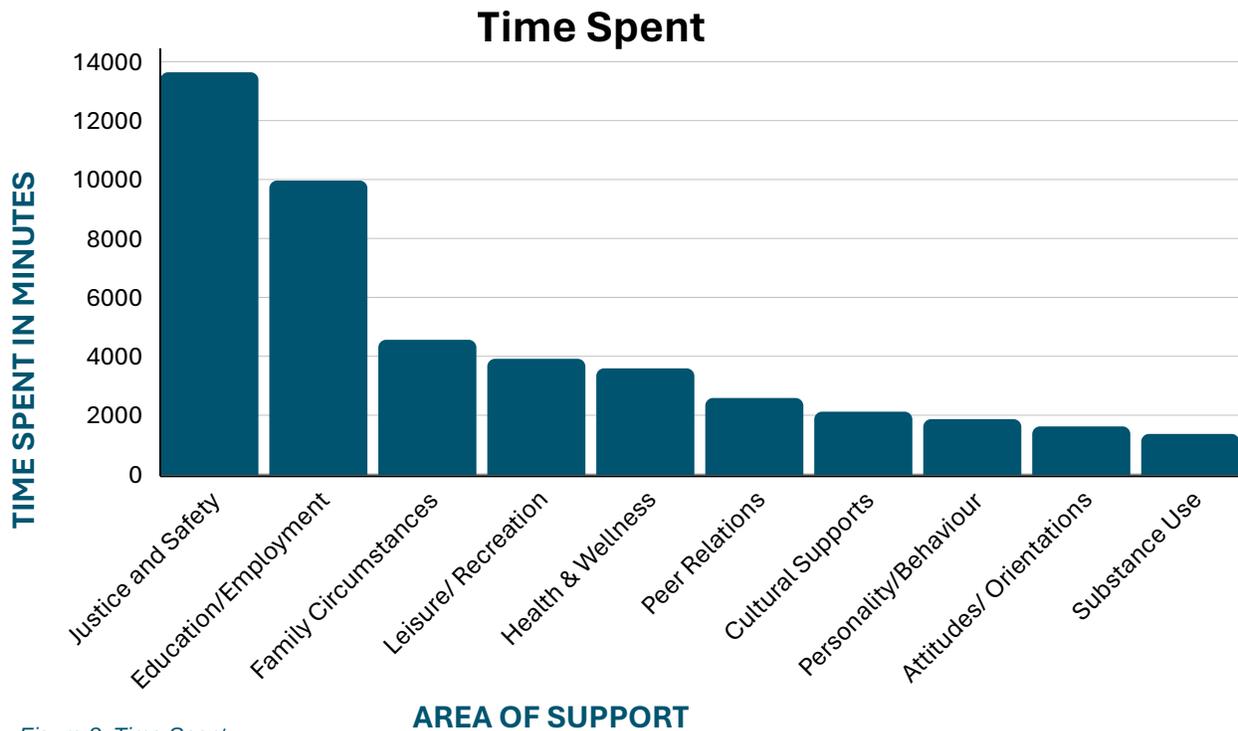


Figure 8: Time Spent

Types of Contact Made

827
Participant

607
Professional

418
Natural Support

Community Referrals

Case Managers made 78 community referrals based on the needs and goals identified by the youth. Many program participants had limited connections to the community and to social institutions, such as schools. Community referrals often emphasized recreation, employment, and education, reflecting efforts to strengthen attachments to pro-social institutions and reduce risk factors.

Limited referrals to health and wellness, including mental health supports, are due to system-level constraints. Although mental health was commonly identified at intake, fewer referrals were made in this area. This pattern does not indicate a lack of need; rather, it highlights the limited availability of accessible, community-based mental health services for youth, along with barriers related to eligibility requirements and prolonged wait times.

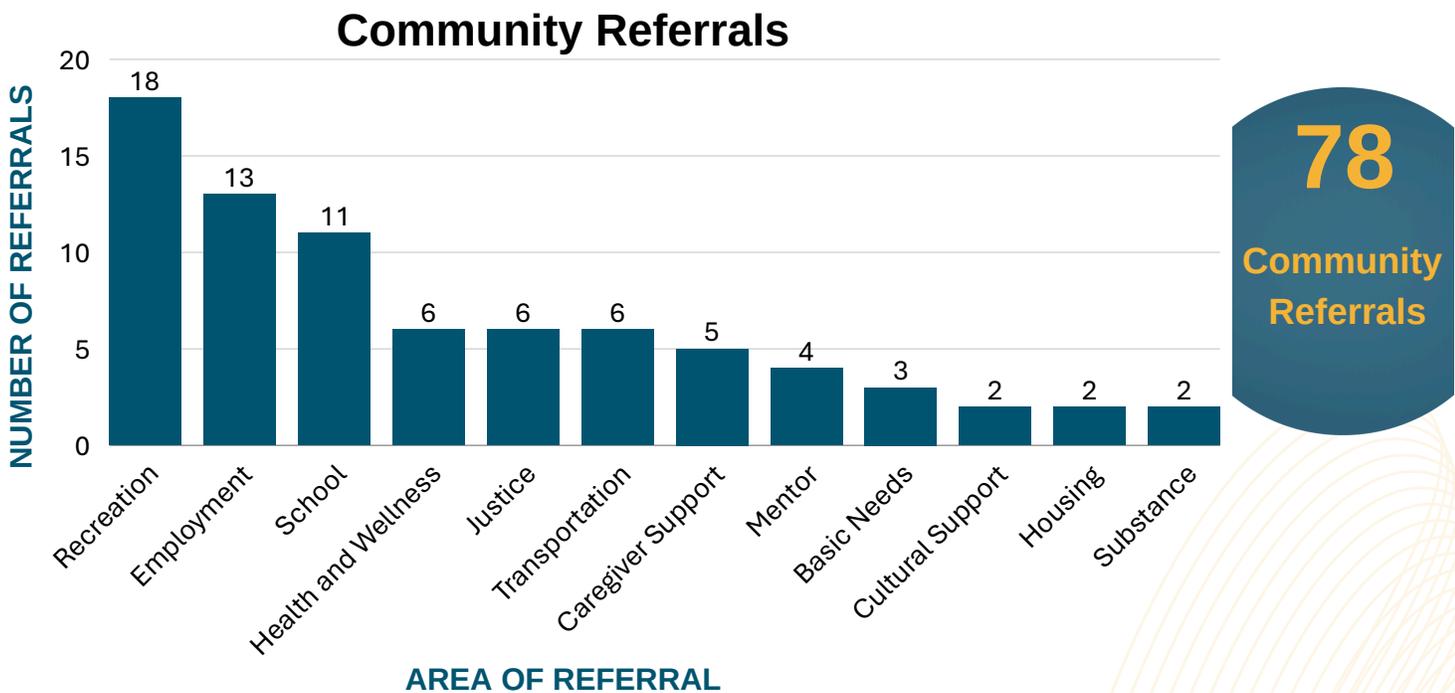


Figure 9: Community Referrals

Risk Assessment Outcomes

YLS/CMI outcomes were analyzed alongside case management engagement data for 23 youth who had multiple assessments for comparison. Results indicate a strong association between the intensity of case management engagement and changes in assessed risk over time. Since the program is voluntary, engagement levels varied based on youth readiness for change, involvement with the justice system, and external factors influencing risk, rather than differences in staff engagement or service delivery.



Figure 10: Risk Assessment Outcomes

At a system level, the program supported movement from higher to lower-risk categories. The proportion of youth assessed as low or moderate risk increased from 26% to 61% between the initial and reassessment. These youth engaged approximately 72% more with the program than those whose risk increased or remained unchanged.

Supplementary Outcome Measure – Police Occurrence Trends

In addition to changes in assessed risk, police occurrence data served as another indicator of the program's impact. Analysis conducted by the LPS revealed that 13 youth experienced a reduction in police occurrences while actively participating in the program, with occurrences declining even further after they exited the program. Furthermore, three youth who had no prior police occurrences but were identified as showing early indicators of potential involvement, continued to not have police involvement throughout their time in the program.

While police occurrence data is not a direct measure of individual risk, these trends align with observed reductions in YLS/CMI scores and suggest that targeted case management support may contribute to decreased justice system contact and the stabilization of at-risk youth.

Note: Risk outcome analysis includes only youth with multiple YLS/CMI assessments. Eight participants were excluded: four had not reached the 90-day reassessment period, and four exited the program prior to reassessment.

FEEDBACK FROM YOUTH

Program feedback was collected from youth to support ongoing program improvement and insight. Below are a few responses capturing the voices of youth.

“What challenges were you facing before joining the program, and has the program helped you overcome them?”

“My mental health and my schooling. They have got me into a program that helps with my schooling I feel accepted...”

“Was going through legal trouble my case manager guided and supported me in making good decisions regarding everyday life and in justice system.”

“Family issues and getting involved in the community...program has helped me and continues to do so.”

“Why do you think programs like this are important for youth in our community?”

“...gives a lotta people an opportunity to they didn't think they had, and supports with a lot of other stuff.”

“...a lot of youth believe that they don't have anyone to go to for help...”

“... help guide youth in the right direction, help youth who are in need of support, someone to talk with, and getting connected to the community.”

CASE MANAGEMENT OUTCOMES SUMMARY

The BSC's case management services are demonstrating measurable, meaningful impacts on reducing youth risk. Through structured intake, individualized service planning, and cross system collaboration, Case Managers support youth in making meaningful changes. This approach has generated strong, quantifiable improvements in risk outcomes. Among youth with multiple YLS/CMI assessments, 61% demonstrated meaningful reductions in risk, with an average decrease of -10.9 points.

-10.9
avg. points



61%

showed reductions in risk factors

Importantly, the data shows that engagement intensity is a key driver of improved outcomes. Youth who reduced their risk scores received, on average, 72% more case management time than youth whose risk increased or stayed the same. As participation in the program is voluntary, engagement naturally varied based on individual circumstances and system factors, underscoring the importance of responsive, individualized case management to produce measurable change.

Additionally, Case Managers strengthened youth connections to community support, completing 78 referrals to education, recreation, employment, and other pro-social resources. These referrals resulted in several youth re-engaging with school, obtaining employment, working on life skills, successfully completing probation requirements, volunteering, and getting supports for addiction and mental health. Through these connections, youth had an increase of protective factors which helped stabilize in areas associated with long-term risk reduction.

78 Community Referrals



EDUCATOR SERVICES



Since the implementation of Educator Services, the program has delivered a range of evidence-informed supports to strengthen community knowledge, improve access to resources for caregivers, and enhance collaboration with community partners. These supports included school-based online safety curriculum, culturally responsive resources for newcomer youth, professional development sessions, and parent and caregiver technology talks.

Together, these initiatives supported a coordinated, tiered prevention approach by ensuring that youth, caregivers, educators, and service providers received consistent and aligned information across multiple settings. Educator Services were designed to address service gaps and emerging needs identified in Phase One and functioned as primary prevention support within schools and community organizations. The following section outlines each service and its outcomes.

School-Based Online Safety Curriculum

In December 2024, the BSC program piloted a school-based Online Safety Curriculum with students in Grades 7–9 (ages 12–14). However, research indicated that primary prevention efforts are most effective when implemented earlier, prompting a shift in focus to students in Grades 5–7 (ages 10–12). The curriculum integrates research-based frameworks from Common Sense Education with locally informed content developed in collaboration with schools, the LPS, and community partners.

Curriculum topics include online privacy and safety, cyberbullying and online harms, and healthy relationships and communication. Grade-specific presentations are aligned with Alberta Education curriculum outcomes and are reviewed consistently to ensure content remains age-appropriate and responsive to emerging trends. Teachers are provided with complementary resources to support continued classroom instruction.

Additionally, select sessions are co-facilitated with the LPS to reinforce prevention messaging, highlight the legal implications of online activity, and support relationship-building between schools and police.

Since January 2024, the Online Safety Curriculum has been delivered to 2,330 students across 57 sessions in Lethbridge schools. For the 2025–2026 school year, five schools have reintroduced the curriculum for a second consecutive year, with additional schools scheduled to participate in early 2026. The following section summarizes post-session survey results collected from students and teachers to assess changes in awareness and understanding of online safety concepts.

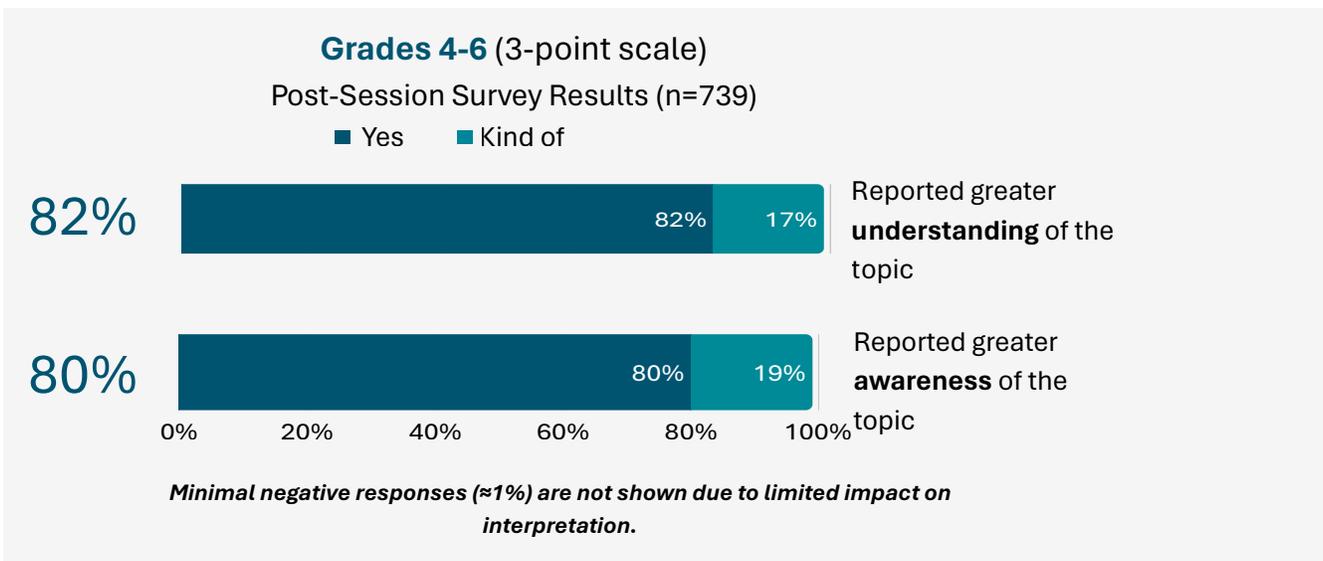


Figure 10: Grade 4-6 Post Survey

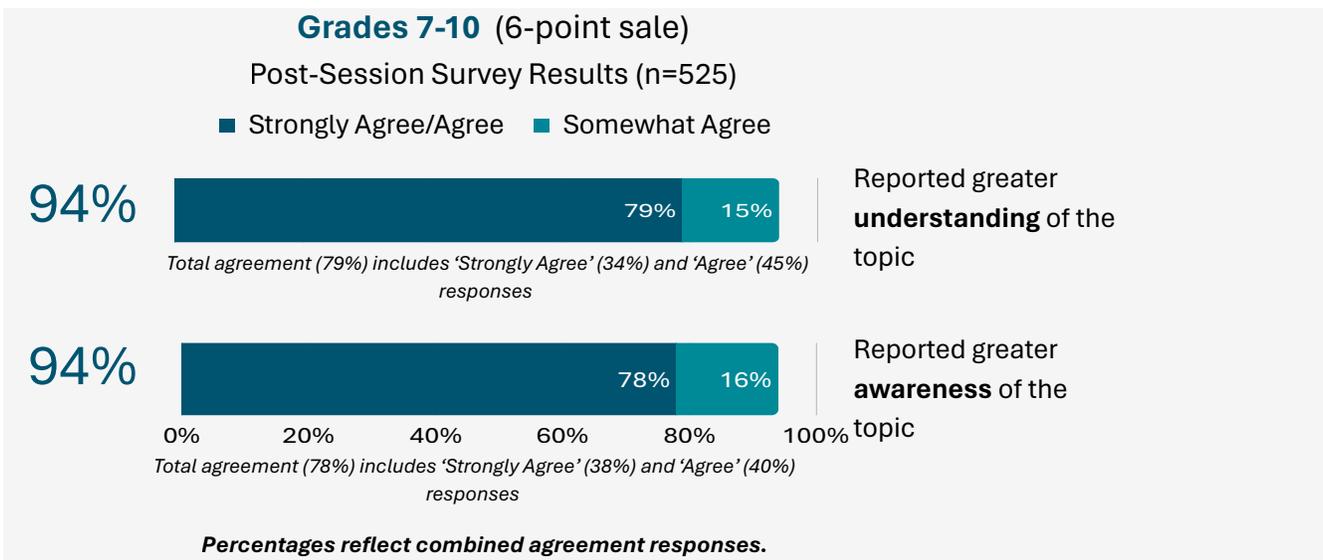


Figure 11: Grade 7-10 Post Survey

Teacher and Administrator Feedback

Following the presentations, teachers were invited to complete a brief survey to evaluate the session content, the impact of having the LPS to co-facilitate, and interest in additional online safety resources. A total of 22 teachers completed the survey.

- 100% would recommend this presentation to other classrooms.
- 100% rated the content a 6/6 on a Likert-type scale stating it was well presented and that having police attend added value.

“*Excellent and engaging presentation!*

Content was very relevant to students! Opportunities to discuss and share responses are valuable. Students need to understand the consequences of their actions while online. While we may talk about what is appropriate/what is not, we don't often have enough info about the 'legal side' of online issues. This definitely filled in some gaps!”

“*Very well delivered information-*

not "another lecture"- but warmly delivered empowerment through relevant information that was age appropriate. The LPS attending session 1 was powerful, and I think two sessions allowed for comfort with students. These women were awesome with the kids. Thank you. Highly recommended.”

“*The presentation covered a lot*

of what our old safety program (the one I couldn't use this year) talked about! It was great for the kids to hear this from community experts rather than their teacher. Thank you for coming!!”

Teaching Resources: Grades K-4 Online Safety

Following the initial development of the Online Safety Curriculum, schools identified a need for age-appropriate resources for younger students. In response, BSC Educators developed teaching materials for Grades K–4 that introduce foundational online safety concepts and are designed for teachers to deliver independently within their classrooms.

The resources developed using evidence-based materials from Common Sense Education closely align with the themes presented in classroom sessions delivered by scaffolding BSC Educators to older students. These materials aim to build fundamental online safety skills that students can further develop as they progress through subsequent grades, promoting a consistent, age-appropriate prevention approach across the school system.



Culturally Responsive

Engagement with community stakeholders identified a gap in access to culturally responsive prevention education for newcomer youth and families. In response, the BSC Educators collaborated with community partners to develop tailored presentations focused on community safety and online safety for newcomer youth and parents from diverse cultural backgrounds. Translation services were incorporated to reduce language barriers and ensure accessibility for all participants.

Two presentations for newcomer youth were delivered, reaching a total of 35 participants. Following the presentations, participants completed a survey assessing changes in awareness and understanding of the topics presented using a Likert-type scale. Survey results indicated strong learning outcomes: 92% of respondents reported increased awareness and improved understanding of the material.



OF POST-SESSION SURVEYS COMPLETED

92%

INDICATED THEY HAD AN INCREASED UNDERSTANDING AND AWARENESS OF THE TOPIC PRESENTED

Professional Learning and Capacity Building



In addition to youth-focused education, the BSC program delivered targeted professional learning sessions to strengthen the capacity of educators, frontline staff, and community partners to respond to emerging safety concerns affecting youth. These sessions focused on increasing awareness of current trends affecting youth safety, enhancing confidence in prevention responses, and supporting coordinated, system-level approaches.

School Staff

As students spend more time in online spaces, schools are seeing an increase in behaviours stemming from digital interactions-including online conflict, exposure to harmful content, and the influence of online trends. To support schools in responding to these challenges, the BSC program developed a professional learning session specifically for school staff.

Sessions provided attendees with an overview of current online trends, associated risks, and the behaviours shaping young people’s digital experiences, while also providing staff with strategies to support students and families. This initiative, delivered in partnership with Primary Care Alberta’s Healthy Schools team, expanded online safety education throughout Southern Alberta, reaching 130 professionals from eight school divisions.

Community Frontline Staff

BSC Educators also partnered with the City of Lethbridge Outreach Team to deliver professional learning for a local nonprofit organization. This session focused on recognizing potential indicators of substance use, identifying early warning behaviours, and applying best practices to support personal and team safety in frontline environments. The training enhanced frontline staff capacity to respond safely and effectively to emerging risks encountered through community-based work.

Parent and Caregiver Tech Talks

Through stakeholder engagement, caregivers were identified as facing significant challenges related to youth online behaviour. These challenges included exposure to online violence, imitation of gang-associated behaviours, radicalization, and other online harms that can negatively impact youths’ safety and well-being.

In response, BSC Educators developed and delivered educational materials in partnership with four community organizations, reaching 135 parents and caregivers. These sessions focused on increasing awareness of online risks, strengthening protective factors, and equipping families with strategies to support safer online engagement.

OF POST-SESSION SURVEYS COMPLETED

97.5%

INDICATED THEY HAD AN INCREASED UNDERSTANDING AND AWARENESS OF THE TOPIC PRESENTED

EDUCATOR SERVICES OUTCOMES SUMMARY

In summary, educator services have delivered prevention-focused, system-level supports to strengthening youth safety and community capacity. Across schools, community organizations, and family settings, these initiatives demonstrate an increased awareness of emerging risks, improved access to practical resources, and reinforced consistent prevention messaging among youth, caregivers, educators, and frontline professionals. By addressing gaps and trends identified in Phase One, Educator services complemented case management efforts by reducing upstream risk factors and supporting a coordinated, tiered prevention approach within the BSC program

SINCE DECEMBER 2024, EDUCATOR SERVICES HAVE DELIVERED:

57

Presentations

17

Co-facilitated with LPS

REACHING

2330
Students



135
Caregivers



150
Front-line



OTHER INITIATIVES

Off the Record

Since the pilot of Off the Record in the summer of 2024, the initiative has completed 18 sessions, engaging over 600 youth and involving more than 42 LPS officers, as well as multiple Lethbridge Fire and Emergency crews. Some sessions included special events, such as two sports camps in partnership with the University of Lethbridge Pronghorns, floor hockey organized by the Lethbridge Sports Council, and International Women and Girls in Sports Day at the YMCA.



BUILDING SAFER COMMUNITIES

CITY OF Lethbridge



To evaluate the initiative's impact, BSC staff began conducting youth surveys in April of 2025. Below are the results. Participation in the survey was optional, and the responses reflect those who chose to complete the survey, not all attendees.



Using a Likert-type scale, youth were asked to describe their interactions with first responders. Out of 82 responses, approximately 96% described their interactions as very positive/positive.



Using a binary question, youth were asked if OTR has helped them feel more connected to their community. Out of 83 responses, 97% of youth responded yes.

The survey results are encouraging, as they indicate that the initiative is meeting its intended purpose. Participants suggest that OTR is fostering a sense of belonging and community engagement among youth, and the positive perception of first responders further suggests that OTR is helping to build trust and respect between youth and public safety personnel. Additionally, the data indicates that OTR may potentially be filling a gap in youth programming, particularly in areas where recreational opportunities are limited, by providing accessible and meaningful engagement for youth who might otherwise lack such resources.



Online Safety Toolkit

Since its launch, the Online Safety Toolkit has become a key resource for families and youth. Between October 2024 and December 2025, it recorded 3,340 views and 2,033 active users, with the most accessed sections covering online gaming and virtual communities, social media and streaming apps and parent/caregiver guide to online safety.



2,033
Active Users

3,340
Views



In May 2025, the toolkit transitioned to the LPS Community Safety page, enabling expanded content and long-term sustainability. It has been endorsed by ALERT, featured in regional resources, and promoted by the City of Lethbridge and the LPS communication teams.

Its relevance was further highlighted in September 2025 when Global News interviewed Safer Communities Educators following a local child-luring incident, showcasing the toolkit as a trusted source for online safety strategies.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The partnership with the LPS is a key feature of the BSC program. While the program is delivered through a community-based approach, the LPS supports with strategic oversight, program direction, and alignment with local conditions and emerging youth trends. The LPS contributes subject-matter expertise to inform program planning and priorities, supports community engagement and promotion of program initiatives, and strengthens referral pathways for justice-involved youth. This integrated approach allows the program to have a dual response when addressing crime prevention and intervention.



More broadly, strong partnerships have been central to the successful implementation and sustainability of the BSC program. Since April 2024, the program has engaged in 67 meetings with 23 partner organizations, including schools, health services, and youth-serving agencies, to identify service gaps, share resources, and align strategies. These collaborative efforts have strengthened community capacity and ensured that program initiatives remain responsive to local needs.



Funding from the federal government for the BSC program concludes on March 31, 2026. As the program approaches the end of the funding period, efforts focus on ensuring a coordinated transition of services, minimizing disruption to participants, and capturing key learnings to inform future prevention and intervention efforts.

Service Transitions and Sustainability

01

CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Case management caseloads will be gradually reduced as youth goals are met, with transitions of active caseloads beginning March 1, 2026. Youth will be connected to available community-based and informal supports to promote continuity of care following program closure.

02

EDUCATOR SERVICES

Educator services will transition by refining and packaging curriculum resources developed through the program. These materials will be provided to schools to support continued use and integration into existing programming, allowing prevention efforts to continue beyond the life of the BSC program.

03

OFF THE RECORD

Continuation of the OTR initiative will be explored through the LPS to support ongoing prevention and community engagement activities.

04

ONLINE SAFETY TOOLKIT

The Online Safety Toolkit has transitioned to the LPS website to ensure continued public access. One additional content update is scheduled for March 2026.

Looking Ahead

Although additional funding applications were not successful, program outcomes and lessons learned will inform future program development, funding advocacy, and community-based responses to youth crime prevention and intervention.

CONCLUSION

The BSC program was created to address gaps in youth crime prevention and intervention in Lethbridge. Program activities and outcomes were aligned with objectives throughout implementation. Case management services provided individualized support for justice-involved and at-risk youth, while Educator Services boosted prevention efforts by enhancing knowledge and capacity in schools, families, and communities. Together, these initiatives addressed needs and service gaps while demonstrating progress in reducing risk and increasing prevention efforts in the community.

As the program concludes, the outcomes achieved and resources developed provide a strong foundation for future youth crime prevention and intervention efforts. While funding limitations impact program continuity, the BSC program demonstrates that evidence-informed planning, sustained engagement, and coordinated community partnerships can meaningfully address both immediate risks and longer-term prevention needs for youth.

