

## **PROVINCIAL NEW: Supporting Communities in Managing Crime, Homelessness, and Property Damage**

### **Issue:**

Communities across Alberta are facing increasing challenges related to crime, homelessness, and property damage, particularly in their business cores. These issues not only threaten the safety and security of residents and business owners but also undermine economic vitality and community cohesion. Addressing these challenges is crucial for ensuring sustainable growth and enhancing the quality of life in rural areas.

### **Background:**

Recent crime statistics indicate fluctuating crime rates in Alberta, with the Crime Severity Index (CSI) showing both improvements and challenges over the past five years. The CSI decreased from 120.14 in 2019 to 103.00 in 2023, indicating a general reduction in crime severity<sup>1</sup>. However, violent crime rates, including assaults and property-related crimes, have shown varying trends. These statistics highlight the need for targeted strategies to address crime and its associated issues in rural communities.

Communities such as Edmonton and Calgary have had investment and focus with task forces established to help address addiction, crime, and social issues with additional funding for mental health and addiction services and combating homelessness. There has also been additional funding for emergency shelter spaces and enforcement resources, leaving many other communities without equivalent or comparable solutions.

In addition, the regulatory environment is often viewed to have loopholes, preventing proper care and enforcement for chronic and repeat offenders, needing a more coordinated approach between Ministries in addressing the complex problems seen in main streets of mid-to large-size communities across Alberta.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Provide dedicated funding to support local needs related to crime, addictions, mental health, and homelessness. This funding should be flexible to address the unique challenges faced by different rural communities.
2. Establish an advisory council with representation from the ministries of Justice, Mental Health & Addictions, Municipal Affairs, Public Safety, Affordability and Utilities, Seniors, Community and Social Services, and Treasury Board and Finance

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.strategiccriminaldefence.com/faq/alberta-crime-rates-statistics/>

3. Allocate equitable funding models to municipalities for law enforcement and community-based solutions on a per capita investment to help address crime, homelessness and property damage issues.
4. Provide tax credits or funding to support businesses in implementing crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) strategies and financial relief through interest free loans or disaster relief style funding for the recovery of property damage and other measures that promote community safety.
5. Ensure that provincial regulations support community efforts around public safety, mental health and addictions, and to minimize repeat offences by aligning goals and outcomes to address local crime and mental health and addictions impacts on local communities.