

SOUTH OKANAGAN | SIMILKAMEEN'S

2023

# VitalSigns®

Tracking trends and changes in the South Okanagan Similkameen.



 **COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**  
south okanagan | similkameen

Informed • Engaged • Community

# Our Thoughts



## Welcome to the South Okanagan Similkameen's 2023 Vital Signs report.

On behalf of the Community Foundation of the South Okanagan Similkameen, we are proud to present our 2023 Vital Signs® report to the community. This marks our sixth report over twelve years, and our most ambitious publication yet.

Our initial participation in the nationwide Vital Signs program was motivated by the desire to learn more about Penticton & area, so that we could better plan our granting and community development strategies. As our Foundation – and the program – grew, our reporting likewise grew, encompassing the entire South Okanagan Similkameen.

In 2015, our report findings pointed us to a glaring need: that of youth mental health. In response, we led a collaborative partners table called the **Youth Engagement Strategy (YES) Project**. This program led to our **first Impact Investment: purchasing and opening the Penticton Youth Centre**. The Centre opened its doors in 2019 and has created a youth services hub with four youth serving agencies all sharing space

and working together to improve the lives of youth in our region.

**We believe that Vital Signs is a powerful tool to identify community strengths, challenges, and needs.**

We know that it is a catalyst for community conversation. We are grateful to the numerous organizations that refer to Vital Signs in their own service delivery, program planning, or funding decisions.

While we hope that this report helps readers understand the most pressing issues in our region, we also invite readers to participate in responding to those issues. This report contains data, but each individual in the South Okanagan Similkameen has unique solutions, relevant lived experience, and the ability to make life better for others. For some ideas to get started, please see page 21.

**Aaron McRann**  
Executive Director

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The Community Foundation of the South Okanagan Similkameen acknowledges that our work takes place on the ancestral lands of the nsyilxcən-speaking people in senq'a?itk<sup>w</sup> (South Okanagan) and sməlqmix (Similkameen) territories.

**We are grateful to the Syilx People for their stewardship of the Land and Waters since time immemorial.**



# What is Vital Signs?



COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATIONS  
OF CANADA

**VitalSigns**

**Vital Signs is a community check-up conducted by community foundations across Canada that measures the vitality of our communities and identifies significant trends in a range of areas critical to quality of life.**

Vital Signs is coordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada. The Vital Signs trademark is used with permission from Community Foundations of Canada.



## Vital Signs in the South Okanagan Similkameen

The Community Foundation of the South Okanagan Similkameen (CFSOS) published its first Vital Signs report in 2011 and has published regularly ever since.

Vital Signs has become a cornerstone document for CFSOS, helping us to understand trends and changes in the South Okanagan Similkameen. It also **helps us amplify our region's assets and identify – and mitigate – our region's challenges**. Stakeholders that rely on Vital Signs include local government, charities and non-profits, other community groups, and residents.

### Geography

In keeping with the CFSOS's granting and community work, the South Okanagan Similkameen is defined as **the City of Penticton, District of Summerland, Towns of Oliver, Osoyoos, and Princeton, Village of Keremeos, Regional District South Okanagan Similkameen's Electoral Areas A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, and I, and nine reserves**.

All efforts have been made to focus on data from this geographic area, but occasionally narrower or broader geographies are measured. The Okanagan Health Service Delivery Area, for example, includes but is not limited to the South Okanagan Similkameen.

The Community Foundation of the South Okanagan Similkameen acknowledges that our work takes place on the ancestral lands of the nsyilxcən-speaking people in senq'a?itk<sup>w</sup> (South Okanagan) and sməlqmix (Similkameen) territories. We are grateful to the Syilx People for their stewardship of the Land and Waters since time immemorial and we will continue to work towards building relationships with the Syilx People based on a foundation of trust and respect.

## Sources of Information

### Indicators

This Vital Signs report is comprised of 11 issue areas, ranging from Arts & Culture to Work & Economy. Each issue area holds 4 or more indicators within, and most indicators have been included in our previous reports. In some instances, indicators have been dropped because of the lack of recent or updated data. In other instances, indicators have been added to reflect changes within an issue area. Sources for the indicator data are available on page 23.

### Community Stories

Local charities and non-profits are working every day to make positive change in our region. One organization is highlighted in each issue area. We regret that we could not highlight more of the incredible work happening in the South Okanagan Similkameen.

### Community Survey (Survey Says)

From March-May 2023, we ran a survey that queried topics including community belonging and participation, housing, safety, and quality of life in the South Okanagan Similkameen. The survey was open to all South Okanagan Similkameen residents and was promoted in the newspaper, by email, on social media, and on our website. In total, it garnered 893 responses. Given a population size of 90,178, the number of responses provides a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 4%. **Survey responses are reported under the heading of "Survey Says" and are not used as indicator data.**

### Sustainable Development Goals

As interest in using the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) grows at both the local and global level we have chosen to include the goals in this report. For more information see page 20.

# Report Highlights



Neighbourhood Small Grant skatepark project Princeton

“It is becoming increasingly expensive for youth and young families to move and live in the Okanagan.”

~Anonymous comment by survey respondent

## Arts & Culture

Employment in cultural occupations (art, culture, recreation, and sport) grew by **19.8%** between 2016 and 2021. Though a small sector, it was the fastest growing in the time period.

## Belonging & Participation

South Okanagan Similkameen residents care about each other, as evidenced by the growing number of registered charities and total charitable donations that have increased each year for the last three years.

## Environment

Our survey responses indicate that residents of the region are more concerned about the impact of climate change on the community than on their own health and safety.

## Getting Around

Most residents commute to work in a vehicle. Not every South Okanagan Similkameen community has designated bike lanes, and public transit routes are less comprehensive in our smaller and more rural communities.

## Health & Wellness

Smoking, heavy drinking, and per capita alcohol sales in the South Okanagan Similkameen are all higher than our provincial counterparts. Nearly **1 in 5** survey respondents does not have a family doctor but would like one.

## Housing

Home prices and assessed values continue to rise, making home ownership more difficult for first-time buyers. Home ownership is less financially compromising than renting, though: just over **1 in 10** homeowners spend **30%** or more of their income on housing, compared to **4 in 10** renters.

## Income Gap

Keremeos and Rural Keremeos/Hedley have the highest poverty rates in the region, and report some of the lowest after-tax incomes. Skaha West/Kaleden/Apex and Okanagan Lake/West Bench report the highest after-tax incomes. There is a spread of \$37,000/year.

## Getting Started

Nearly half of the region's immigrants live in Penticton. Across the South Okanagan Similkameen, recent immigrants frequently arrive to Canada from India, the Philippines, the United States of America, South Africa, and South Korea.

## Learning

School District #67 (Okanagan Skaha) reports the highest rates of high school completion for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the region. The proportion of the population with post-secondary education varies across the region, from **42.4%** in Cawston to **64.1%** in Naramata.

## Safety

Compared to five years ago, Penticton has seen a spike in overall crime and violent crime. Violent crime is also trending upwards in Keremeos and Summerland.

## Work & Economy

Compared to the larger Okanagan, the South Okanagan has a lower labour force participation rate (the percentage of the population that is either working or actively looking for work) and thus lower employment and unemployment rates.

“I feel more connected to my community than I ever did living in a big city, it's a nice feeling. And the natural surroundings bring me a lot of enjoyment and peace.”

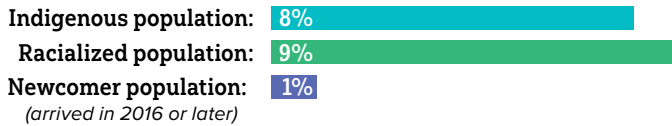
~Anonymous comment by survey respondent

# South Okanagan Similkameen at a Glance

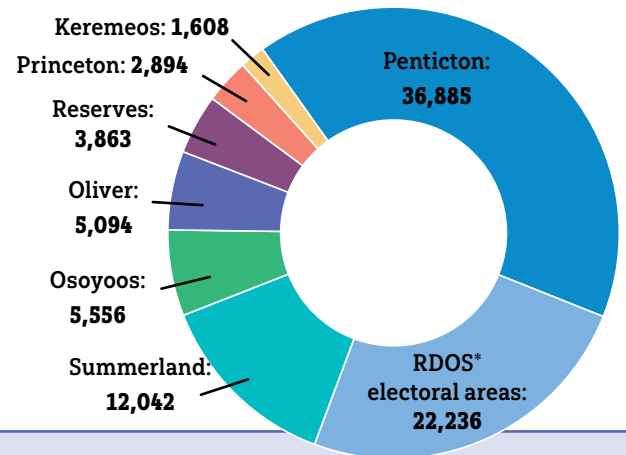
## 90,178<sup>1</sup>

### Population

Our region's population grew by **8.6%** between 2016 and 2021. This is on par with the North Okanagan, which also grew by **8.6%** in the same timeframe.<sup>2</sup> Neighbouring Central Okanagan grew by **14.0%** in the same timeframe.<sup>3</sup>



### Population by community:<sup>1</sup>



### Population by age:<sup>1</sup>

Children and youth (0-19)	15%
Adults (20-44)	23%
Older adults (45-64)	29%
Seniors (65 and greater)	33%

Median age: 56.0 years

### Languages spoken most often at home:<sup>1</sup>

English	83,080
Punjabi	2,225
French	390
Spanish	305
Portuguese	235

### Gender:<sup>1</sup>

**Women+:**  
52%

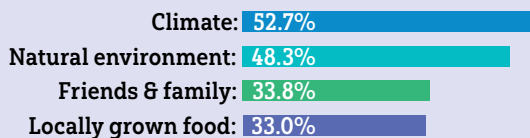
**Men+:**  
48%

The Census now reports gender as Men+ and Women+, recognizing the spectrum of gender. Non-binary and gender non-conforming people are equally distributed amongst these categories and are denoted by the "+" symbol.



## Survey Says:<sup>8</sup>

We asked survey respondents to identify the best things about living in the South Okanagan Similkameen:



"Although the population is growing, I appreciate living in an area where there are still working farms and there are still wild areas nearby."

*~Anonymous comment by survey respondent*

## \$71,000<sup>1</sup>

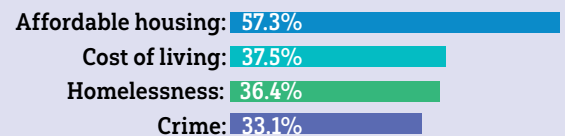
### Median total household income

(all households)

## 48%<sup>1</sup>

### South Okanagan Employment Rate

Then, we asked respondents to identify the most important issues facing the region. Most frequently chosen responses focused on housing and cost of living:



"I... am a low income disabled senior who is "stuck" living in the apartment building I'm presently in due to the extremely high rents in this city, which are unaffordable for me... It has become increasingly difficult to buy healthy food since inflation is so high over the past two years. As a low-income senior, I apply and sometimes am accepted to receive Farmer's Market coupons from June until September for which I am extremely grateful..."

*~Anonymous comment by survey respondent*

# Arts & Culture



Neighbourhood Small Grant  
Glen Place neighbours project Pentiction

## Survey Says:<sup>8</sup>

We asked South Okanagan Similkameen residents how they had participated in arts and culture activities in the last year. What they said:

- **6 in 10** visited a local library and/or community centre
- **3 in 10** visited a local museum and/or participated in an event about the South Okanagan's heritage
- **3 in 10** attended an event put on by an Indigenous group
- **1 in 20** hadn't participated in any arts and culture activities in the last year

Percentage of survey respondents who reported that the following would be very easy to do, considering available resources (money and time):

- Engage in informal leisure activities: **64.9%**
- Learn about the South Okanagan Similkameen's heritage: **31.0%**
- Engage in arts and culture activities: **31.6%**
- Learn about the Indigenous history of the area: **24.7%**
- Engage in formal recreation activities: **26.0%**

## Community Story:

To preserve and pass on the traditional skills and practices of its community to future generations, the [NK'MIP Desert Cultural Centre](#) is building an **archival facility which will become home to artwork, archives, and other cultural pieces that will be repatriated from across the province.**

"We've been working a lot with the youth in our community, providing cultural education that they might not have the opportunity to learn on their own." said Jenna Bower, Manager at the Centre. The Centre offers a wide variety of cultural programming, including traditional Okanagan dance, Indigenous language education, and food preparation techniques such as how to properly fillet a fish!

# 798,826

## Number of items borrowed<sup>4</sup>

In 2022, **416,936** items were borrowed from the South Okanagan branches of the Okanagan Regional Library. Of these, **280,185** were physical items (books, magazines, etc.) and **136,751** were digital (e-books, e-magazines, e-audiobooks). In 2022, the Penticton Public Library loaned **323,736** physical items and **58,154** digital.

# 2.6%

## Employment in cultural occupations<sup>1</sup>

In the South Okanagan Similkameen in 2021, **2.5%** of the workforce reported occupations in art, culture, recreation, and sport, for a total of **1,060** jobs. This is an increase of **191** jobs in this sector since 2016. Across the Okanagan, **3.0%** of the workforce reported work in this sector.

# \$165,579

## Canada Council for the Arts grant funding<sup>5</sup>

In 2021-22, one organization in the South Okanagan Similkameen received funding from the Canada Council for the Arts: Theytus Books, Ltd., a publisher focused on Indigenous voices. Three individual artists also received funding. In total in 2021-22, the Okanagan received **\$1,117,229**.

# 20

## Arts and Culture facilities<sup>6</sup>

In the South Okanagan Similkameen, there are **20** key publicly funded arts and culture facilities, including libraries, museums, theatres, and public art galleries.

# 10,062

## Number of Museum visits<sup>7</sup>

The Penticton Museum and Archives reported **10,062** visitors in 2022, an increase over **7,959** in 2021 and **3,261** in 2020.

# Belonging & Participation

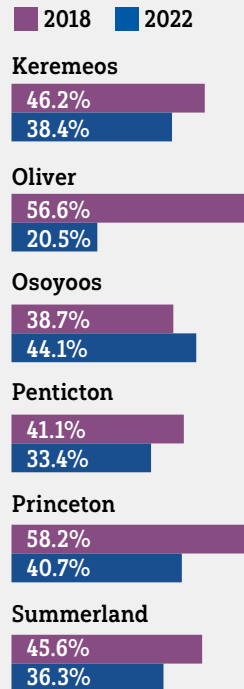


## 56%

### Voter turnout 2020 provincial election<sup>13</sup>

In each of the South Okanagan Similkameen's provincial electoral districts, voter turnout was about **56%** (For Boundary-Similkameen, **56.8%**, and for Penticton, **56.0%**). Across the province, **53.9%** of registered voters participated in the election.

### Voter turnout, municipal election<sup>12</sup>



## 65%

### Voter turnout 2021 federal election<sup>14</sup>

Canada's most recent federal election, in 2021, saw a national voter turnout rate of **62.6%**. The Central Okanagan-Similkameen-Nicola federal electoral district saw a voter turnout rate of **64.5%**, and South Okanagan-West Kootenay similarly saw **65.1%**. Both electoral districts reported voter turnout rates of **68%** in the 2019 federal election.

## 68%

### Sense of community belonging<sup>11</sup>

In the Okanagan Health Services Delivery Area, which includes the South Okanagan Similkameen, **68.0%** of residents **12** years and older reported a somewhat or very strong sense of belonging to their local community in 2019-2020. This is on par with the provincial rate of **69.5%**.

## 235

### Registered charities<sup>9</sup>

There are **235** registered charities across the South Okanagan Similkameen. Of these, **17** were registered within the last **5** years.

## \$14,005,000

### Total charitable donations<sup>10</sup>

In 2021, Penticton residents made received charitable donations to the tune of **\$14,005,000**. In total, **6,350** residents made a received donation, or **16.8%** of all Penticton tax filers. This is the largest total charitable donations reported in the last decade.

### Community Story:

With a **Neighbourhood Small Grant**, Deer Ridge neighbours hosted a pancake breakfast to welcome a family from Ukraine that has settled here thanks to the support and generosity of a host family.

The Ukrainian family shared their poignant journey of escaping from occupied Melitopol. The story was an impactful reminder that cultivated empathy and understanding for all in attendance. Neighbours presented gifts to the couple, toys for their young son, and flowers to express their gratitude to the host family.

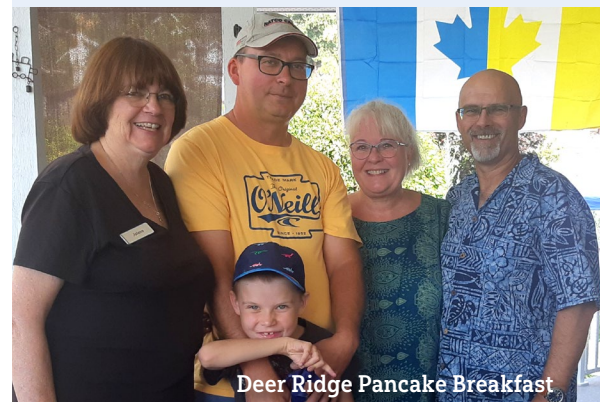
One neighbour from Poland that speaks fluent Ukrainian, made an immediate connection with the family – exchanging contact information while engaging in meaningful conversation.

An invitation to another Ukrainian couple who have established a Ukrainian bakery cafe in Summerland helped to foster more personal connections. **Looking back on the day, we're reminded of the power of community, empathy, and shared experiences to bring people closer together.**

### Survey Says:<sup>8</sup>

#### Survey respondents reported that in the last 12 months, they have:

- Attended a faith-based service/activity: **18.5%**
- Attended a neighbourhood or community meeting: **40.6%**
- Participated in an informal neighbourhood activity, like a little free library or food shed: **29.2%**
- Participated in neighbourhood or community projects (i.e. neighbourhood cleanup): **20.7%**
- Provided unpaid help to a non-family member (informal service): **40.5%**



Deer Ridge Pancake Breakfast

# Environment



Photo Credit: Jesse MacDonald

## 675 liters

### Average daily residential water usage<sup>16</sup>

Across the Okanagan Basin, residential water use averages **675** liters/day – **150** liters for indoor residential use, and **525** for outdoor residential landscaping, which spikes in the summer. In British Columbia, average daily residential water usage is **490** liters.

## 6.3<sup>17</sup>

### Air quality: Average PM<sub>2.5</sub>

Throughout 2022, the average particulate matter micrograms (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) reading at the Penticton Industrial Place weather station was 6.3 PM<sub>2.5</sub>. This is the only station reporting on PM<sub>2.5</sub> daily in the region. **For public health, the optimal reading is 6 PM<sub>2.5</sub> or lower.**

## 56

### Species at risk<sup>18</sup>

There are **56** unique animal species at risk in the South Okanagan Similkameen. Animal species at risk include fish, a variety of birds including the Spotted Owl, many types of shrews, and the and American badgers. All of these species are rated “Red” on the BC List, meaning they are extirpated, endangered, or threatened.

## 7,582

### Tonnes of waste<sup>19,15</sup>

In Penticton in 2022, **7,582** tonnes of waste collected. Of those, **4,242** were garbage, **1,458** were recyclables, and **1,882** were yard waste.

Given a population of **36,885**, **205.6** kilograms of waste were collected per capita.

In 2021, a total of **8,112** tonnes were collected, and in 2020, **8,263**.

## 224,688 hectares

### ALR Lands<sup>20</sup>

Within the entire Okanagan, there are **224,688** hectares in the Agricultural Land Reserve. This represents **5%** of the total lands in the Okanagan. Overall, the Okanagan’s total ALR decreased by **16.4** hectares between 2021 and 2022.



“Agriculture is one of the main industries here (wine and food). **Unpredictable weather will make these industries more unstable, which affects food security as well. Wildfires are awful and will impact tourism.**”

~Anonymous comment by survey respondent

## Community Story:

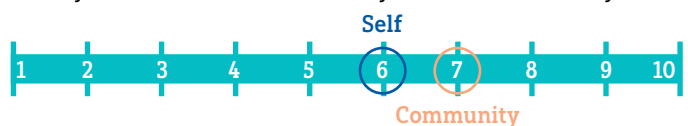
With a grant from the Community Foundation, [Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship Society](#) held several educational opportunities to engage schools, community organizations, and the wider public to deepen their learning around environmental conservation. A planting event was held at Sun-Oka for students from Summerland Secondary School’s Environmental Science class and they assisted with the planting of nearly 150 plants in the park. An archaeologist and a Traditional Ecological Knowledge keeper of the Syilx Okanagan Nation were present to witness the work and offer wisdom surrounding Indigenous land stewardship.

The Society also held several planting events at Skaha Lake Park, including participants from Skaha Lake Middle School, Dragonfly Pond Family Society, and the Penticton Centre for Exceptional Learning.

## Survey Says:<sup>8</sup>

**Our survey sought to understand the degree to which South Okanagan Similkameen residents think climate change threatens health and safety – both their own, and that of their community.**

On a scale of 1 - 10 survey respondents ranked climate change threats to their own health and safety and the health and safety of their community:



“This is a pretty serious point for me. I make my living in agriculture. **Climate change isn’t a theory or a threat – it’s very real and it’s here right now.**”

~Anonymous comment by survey respondent



# Getting Around



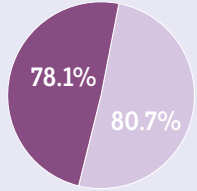
## 54.2%

### Commuting time of 15 minutes or less<sup>1</sup>

More than half of the workforce in the South Okanagan Similkameen has a commute time of **15** minutes or less. Exceptions are found in Okanagan Falls, Kaleden, Apex, Naramata, and rural Princeton, whose residents are more likely to spend **15** to **29** minutes commuting to work.

### Mode of transit to work<sup>1</sup>

**Driver - Car, truck, or van**



- South Okanagan Similkameen
- Okanagan

**Passenger - Car, truck, or van**



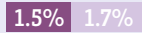
**Public transit**



**Walked**



**Bicycle**



**Other**



## 16

### Number of public transit routes<sup>21</sup>

BC Transit operates **16** bus routes on the South Okanagan Similkameen Transit System, which spans the region.

## 358,000

### Public transit ridership<sup>22</sup>

In 2021, public transit ridership was approximately 358,000 across the South Okanagan-Similkameen Transit System. The most popular route was Route 5 Main Street, which saw an average of 399 daily boardings in fall 2021. Currently, the South Okanagan-Similkameen Transit System offers 38,000 annual service hours.

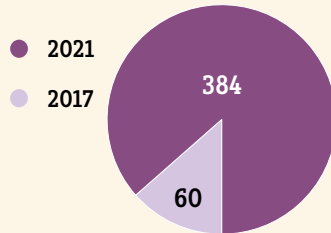
## 4.1+

### KMs of bike lanes<sup>23</sup>

In 2022, Penticton had **4.1** kilometres of dedicated bike lanes. Summerland has painted bike lanes on **3** key streets. No other communities in the South Okanagan Similkameen have dedicated bike lanes.

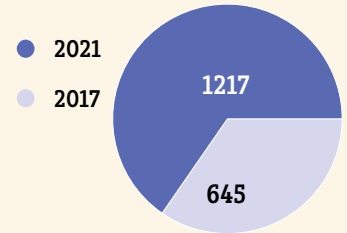
### Number of electric vehicles, South Okanagan Similkameen<sup>24, 25</sup>

**Electric Vehicles**



540% ↑ increase

**Hybrid Vehicles**



89% ↑ increase

### Community Story:

[Cycling Without Age Penticton](#) offers free rides to the elderly using specialized bikes. More than 30 highly-trained volunteers provide daily rides to dozens of seniors every week using specially designed electric, three-wheeled bikes called trishaws. The volunteers complete a rigorous training program to become “pilots” and many of them report as much value in giving the rides as there is in receiving them!

The Penticton chapter of Cycling Without Age is one of more than 3000 in 39 countries around the world. Local volunteers are very proud to give more rides than any other chapter in North America!

**About 40 riders per week look forward to a social outing, fresh air, camaraderie, and of course, the familiar thrill of riding a bike!**

# Health & Wellness



Canadian Alcohol Use Disorder Society, team photo

## Life Expectancy in years<sup>26</sup>

Princeton: 78

Keremeos, Penticton, Oliver, Osoyoos: 80

Summerland: 82

Okanagan (all): 82

British Columbia: 83

## 47

## Toxic drug poisoning deaths<sup>29</sup>

In 2022, there were **47** deaths attributed to toxic drug poisoning in the South Okanagan Similkameen (**29** in Penticton, **9** in Oliver/Osoyoos, and the remainder in Keremeos, Princeton, and Summerland). This is an increase over **36** toxic drug poisoning deaths in 2021. Across the Okanagan, the rate of toxic drug poisoning death was **46.9** per 100,000 in 2022, compared to **44.0** across British Columbia.

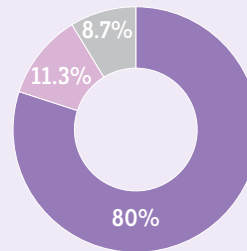
## 14%

## Smoking rate<sup>26</sup>

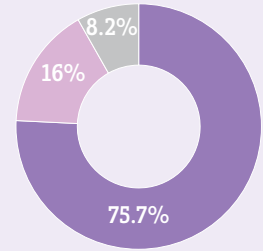
In the South Okanagan Similkameen, **14.0%** of people ages 12 years and older report daily or occasional smoking. This is on par with Interior Health, but above the provincial rate of **11.0%**.

## Survey Says:<sup>8</sup>

“In general, I am physically healthy.”



“In general, I am mentally healthy.”



- Strongly Agree and agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree and strongly disagree

“I try to take care of myself because it seems more and more that my access to medical care will be difficult or impossible. I’ve been almost 3 ½ years without a physician and I’ve basically given up on the idea that will change.”

~Anonymous comment by survey respondent

## Do you have a family doctor?

**80%** of survey respondents have a family doctor

**18%** of survey respondents do not have a family doctor, but would like to find one

**2%** of survey respondents do not have a family doctor and don’t want one

*Approximately 9,000 residents are looking for a family doctor in the South Okanagan Similkameen, reported by [South Okanagan Similkameen Division of Family Practice](#).*

“I am lucky to have a family physician but I don’t have to see her regularly and I doubt whether I could see her more often even if I needed to.”

~Anonymous comment by survey respondent



# 23%

## Heavy drinking<sup>26</sup>

The rate of heavy drinking in the Okanagan is **23.0%**, which is five percentage points higher than the **18.0%** reported across British Columbia.

*Note: Heavy drinking refers to males who reported having 5 or more drinks, or women who have reported having 4 or more drinks, on one occasion, at least once a month in the past year.*

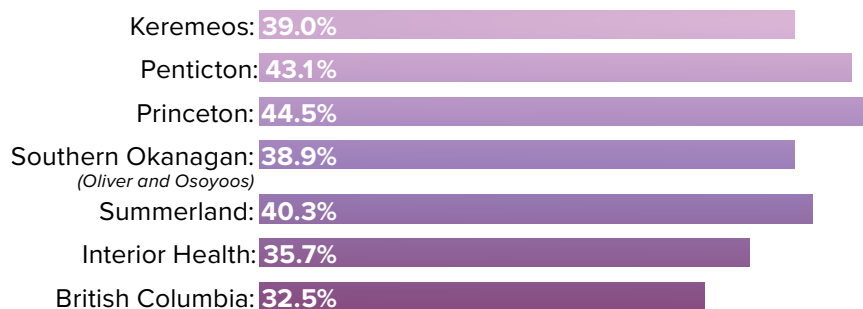
## Alcohol sales<sup>27</sup>

### In 2021-22, per capita alcohol sales were as follows:

- **Southern Okanagan (Oliver and Osoyoos):** 1,501 standard drinks
- **Penticton:** 1,070 standard drinks
- **Princeton:** 1,025 standard drinks
- **Summerland:** 855 standard drinks
- **Interior Health:** 786 standard drinks
- **Keremeos:** 781 standard drinks
- **British Columbia:** 534 standard drinks

*Note: 1 standard drink = 12 oz serving of a 5% beer, cider, or cooler, 5 oz serving of 12% wine, 1.5 oz serving of 40% spirits.*

## Prevalence of mood or anxiety disorder<sup>26</sup>



## Growth to senior population<sup>26</sup>

Between 2021-2026, the senior population in South Okanagan Similkameen communities is expected to grow by:

	Keremeos	Penticton	Princeton	South Okanagan	Summerland
All Ages	7%	6%	3%	3%	4%
65+	17%	16%	21%	16%	21%
75+	35%	17%	37%	32%	33%
85+	32%	11%	51%	31%	15%

## Community Story:

Approximately **18%** of the population will suffer from Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) in their lifetime and virtually every Canadian will know somebody who struggles with alcohol. The costs to society and to human lives is enormous, but there is a solution! The [Canadian Alcohol Use Disorder Society](#) (CAUDS) has partnered with the Community Foundation to raise awareness about a group of medications that are scientifically proven to help heal the brain, reduce cravings, and ease withdrawal symptoms for just about everyone. AUD contributes to more than **2,700** deaths in BC and more than **\$2.8** billion in total economic costs, including healthcare, criminal justice and lost productivity (more than **160%** higher impact than opioid use). Inexpensive, non-addictive medications are available to reduce suffering and help people keep their jobs, homes and families and CAUDS is making it happen.

## Foundry Penticton Usage<sup>28</sup>

(Youth Mental Health Centre)

### Between April 2022 & March 2023:

- **839** unique youth served
- **4,142** total visits for service
- **5,110** services administered, the most popular of which were physical health services (**26.3%** of services), walk-in counselling (**18.6%**), youth peer support (**15.9%**), and other groups (**15.2%**)

## Assisted living, Long-term Care, and Short Stay beds<sup>26</sup>

Across the South Okanagan Similkameen in 2021-22, there are **377** assisted living, long-term care, and short term stay beds per **1,000** people ages **75** and greater.

- **Keremeos:** 57
- **Penticton:** 96
- **Princeton:** 52
- **South Okanagan:** 81
- **Summerland:** 91

In 2019-2020, there were **409** such beds per **1,000** people ages **75** and greater. *There are **13,075** people **75** and greater in the South Okanagan Similkameen.*

# Housing



## \$735,000

### Median home price<sup>30</sup>

In July 2023, the median sale price of a single-family home in the South Okanagan Similkameen was **\$735,000**.

### 2022-2023 Typical Assessed Value<sup>31</sup>

#### Keremeos

2022: \$449,000

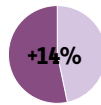
2023: \$505,000



#### Penticton

2022: \$637,000

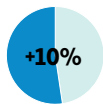
2023: \$727,000



#### Oliver

2022: \$555,000

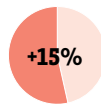
2023: \$610,000



#### Princeton

2022: \$338,000

2023: \$389,000



#### Osoyoos

2022: \$601,000

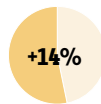
2023: \$685,000



#### Summerland

2022: \$694,000

2023: \$790,000



### 75% homes owned; 25% rented

#### Proportion of homes owned vs. rented<sup>1</sup>

Across the South Okanagan Similkameen, **75%** of homes are owner occupied and **25%** are rented. (Notable exceptions are Penticton, where **63%** of homes are owner occupied and **37%** are rented, and Rural Summerland, where **94%** of homes are owner occupied and **6%** are rented.) Across British Columbia, **66.8%** of homes are owner occupied and **32.8%** are rented.

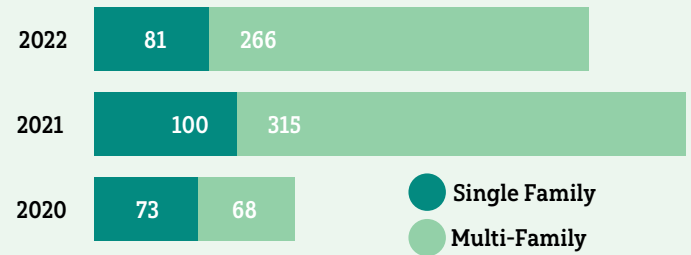
### 13.6% owners; 42.1% renters

#### Percent spending 30%+ on housing<sup>1</sup>

While the price of housing impacts both owners and renters, renters are hit harder. Households spending **30%** or more of their income on shelter are considered insecurely housed. In the South Okanagan Similkameen, **13.6%** of owner-occupied households spend **30%** or more, while **42.1%** of renter households spend **30%** or more.

### New housing starts, Penticton and area<sup>32</sup>

Private developers have built the following new units:



\*Penticton and area is defined as Princeton, RDOS Electoral Area D (Skaha East/Okanagan Falls), and RDOS Electoral Area F (Okanagan Lake West/West Bench)

### \$1,160 owners; \$1,258 renters

#### Average monthly shelter costs<sup>1</sup>

In the South Okanagan Similkameen, renters are paying slightly more for monthly shelter costs than owners, at **\$1,258** for renters and **\$1,160** for owners. The highest rents in the region can be found in Summerland, with average monthly shelter costs of **\$1,364**, and Penticton, at **\$1,328**.

## 5,455

#### Absentee ownership<sup>1</sup>

Of the **46,436** private residences in the South Okanagan Similkameen, **5,455**, or **11.7%**, are not occupied by usual residents. Across British Columbia, **7.7%** of private residences are not occupied by usual residents.

## 945

#### Multigenerational housing<sup>1</sup>

In the South Okanagan Similkameen, there are **945** multigenerational households, or “households where there is at least one person who is both the grandparent of a person in the household and the parent of another person in the same household.” Multigenerational households account for **2.3%** of households in the region, of households in the region, compared to 3.7% across the province.

## 1.1%

#### Rental vacancy rate<sup>36</sup>

The rental vacancy rate is measured in Penticton but not in any other South Okanagan Similkameen communities. The Penticton rental vacancy rate remained stable at **1.1%** in both 2021 and 2022. Across the Okanagan, the rental vacancy rate has been similarly stable: **1.5%** in 2020 and **1.2%** in 2021.

*A balanced rental vacancy rate is widely accepted as **3%**, meaning that of every **100** rental units, three are unoccupied and available for immediate rental.*

# \$500

## Shelter allowance<sup>34</sup>

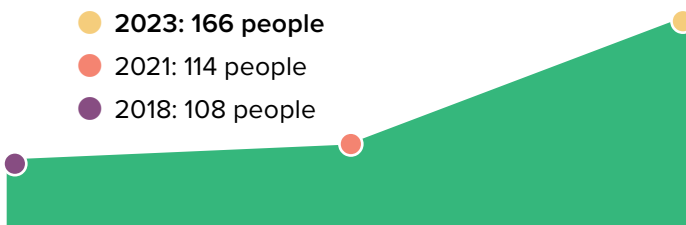
Residents receiving Income Assistance have seen an increase in the shelter rate, or the maximum amount that can be spent on rent. The rate was **\$375/month** (for single people) and had not been increased since 2007, but was increased to **\$500/month** (for single people) in 2023.

# 905

## Non-market housing units<sup>35</sup>

In Penticton in 2022, there were **905** non-market housing units (supportive seniors housing, housing for people with special needs, housing for women and children fleeing violence, housing for low-income families, and housing for independent seniors), compared to **895** in 2020. In 2022, **620** households received rent assistance in the private market, compared to **671** in 2020.

## Homeless count, Penticton<sup>33</sup>



## Community Story:

The [Lower Similkameen Community Services Society \(LSCSS\)](#) has taken a leading role in addressing the need for affordable housing. Over the past five years, they have successfully created three new housing communities, resulting in **62 new homes**.

The Ambrosia building, was completed in October 2022 and offers **43 units of mixed-use affordable housing tailored for low-to-moderate-income households**. This three-story, elevator-serviced structure is designed to cater to individuals and families at various stages of life. Residents occupy suites on the second and third floors, while the building also houses the offices of LSCSS, promoting accessibility and community engagement.

Cactus Court, a **16-unit row-style townhouse community for low-to-moderate-income individuals** has been fully occupied since January 2023 and similarly, Quail Crossing, an **8-unit one-bedroom building**, welcomed its first residents in July 2023.

Through these initiatives, LSCSS is making significant strides in providing affordable housing options for the community.

## Survey Says:<sup>8</sup>

**“There is affordable housing for people of all income levels in my community.”**

- Strongly agree and agree: **10.1%**
- Disagree and strongly disagree: **78.9%**

**“My community takes appropriate action to decrease homelessness.”**

- Strongly agree and agree: **16.4%**
- Disagree and strongly disagree: **53.6%**

**In the last four years, has anyone you cared about had to leave the South Okanagan because of the cost and/or availability of housing?**

- Yes – Cost: **14.2%**
- Yes – Availability: **8.7%**
- Yes – Cost and availability: **30.4%**
- No – **36.8%**

**Survey respondents wrote thoughtful comments about the impact that the cost of housing has on individuals, families, and the community at large. A couple of examples:**

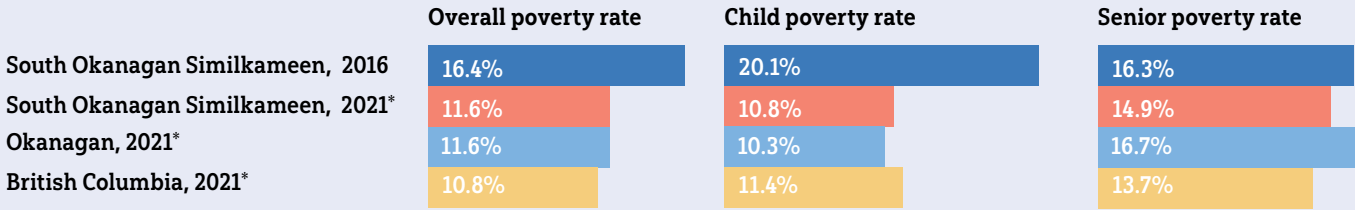
“We are fortunate enough to have purchased our house for a quarter of what its current assessment is at. As a family of five we would struggle immensely to find affordable housing now. **We currently pay less than the rent for a one bedroom apartment.**”

“We need more rental apartments available for young people of working age. **The lack of housing makes it very difficult for local businesses to employ the quantity and/or quality of people they need.**”

# Income Gap



## Poverty rates<sup>1</sup>



While poverty rates are similar across most South Okanagan Similkameen communities, there are two exceptions: **Keremeos** and **Rural Keremeos/Hedley**. These communities have overall poverty rates of **17.8%** and **20.0%**, child poverty rates of **18.0%** and **25.0%**, and senior poverty rates of **24.0%** and **21.0%**, respectively.

\*Note that COVID-19 emergency and recovery benefits were still available, artificially inflating income and decreasing poverty rates. In the South Okanagan Similkameen, 21.7% of residents ages 15 years and older received these benefits, compared to 26.4% of British Columbians 15 years and older.

## \$1,264

### Monthly cost of healthy food<sup>37</sup>

Recent data (2022) from the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control estimates the monthly cost of healthy food for a family of four at **\$1,264** in the Okanagan, an increase over the **\$1,020** reported in 2017.

### Food bank usage in 2022<sup>38</sup>

Food banks in the region report clients increasing by 20-100% between 2021 and 2022, and no relief is on the horizon. Rapidly rising food costs, interest rates, and rental rates are leaving residents feeling squeezed.

“Food affordability is affecting our household for the first time in decades.”

~Anonymous comment by survey respondent

## Survey Says:<sup>8</sup>

### Can your household afford an adequate amount of healthy food?

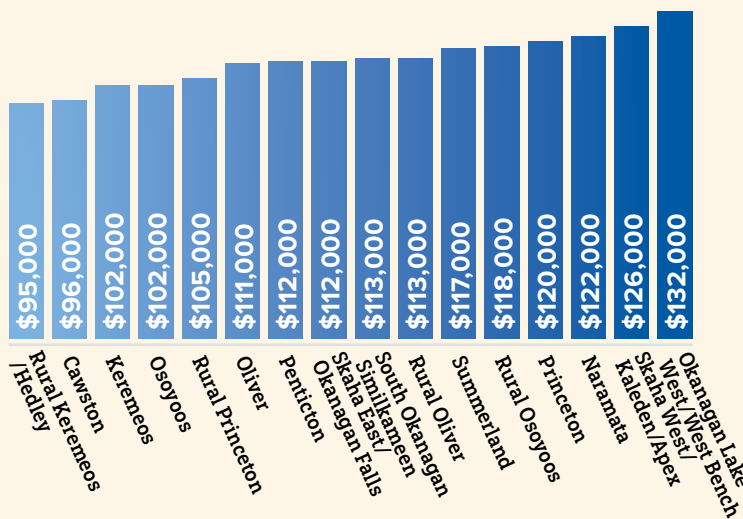
- Yes, all of the time: **51.2%**
- Yes, most of the time: **30.6%**
- Yes, some of the time: **14.8%**
- Rarely/never: **3.4%**

“I make \$27.00 per hour and need to work more than one full-time job to be able to afford the luxury of eating healthy.”

~Anonymous comment by survey respondent

## Median after-tax income<sup>1</sup>

Couple-with-children economic families in 2020



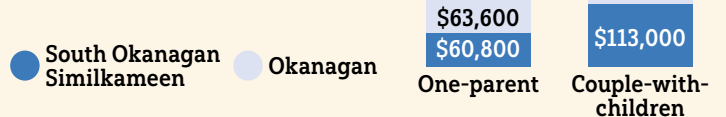
## Income groups after-tax

Households in 2020<sup>1</sup>

	South Okanagan	Okanagan	British Columbia
\$0-\$19,999	4.8%	4.6%	5.5%
\$20,000-\$39,999	20.9%	17.6%	15.7%
\$40,000-\$59,999	20.1%	18.1%	16.6%
\$60,000-\$79,999	16.9%	16.4%	15.1%
\$80,000-\$99,999	12.6%	13.0%	12.7%
\$100,000+	24.6%	30.3%	34.4%

## Median after-tax income<sup>1</sup>

Economic families in 2020



# Getting Started

## 14.4%

### Proportion of immigrants<sup>1</sup>

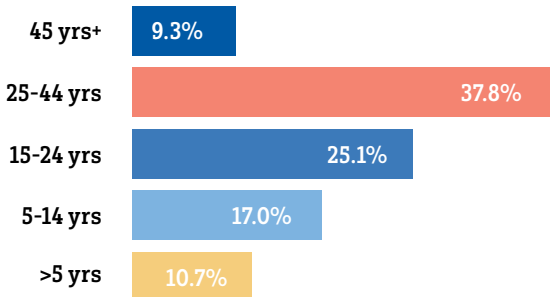
The South Okanagan Similkameen includes **12,625** immigrants, who have come to Canada from another country. Nearly half of the region's immigrants live in Penticton. Immigrants comprise **14.4%** of the population in the South Okanagan Similkameen – on par with the region's 2016 rate of 14.8% – compared to **10.8%** in the North Okanagan (Vernon and area).

## 17 countries

### Place of birth<sup>1</sup>

Recent immigrants (those who have arrived in the South Okanagan Similkameen in the last 5 years) represent at least **17** countries, with the largest recent immigrant populations moving from India, the Philippines, the United States of America, South Africa, and South Korea.

### Age at immigration<sup>1</sup>

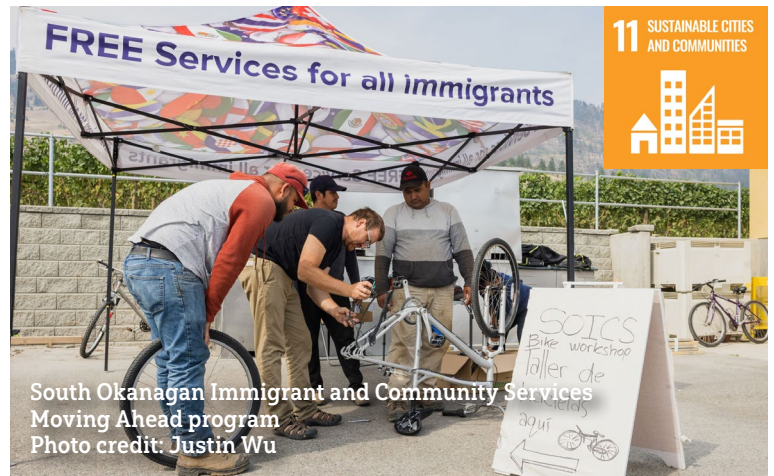


### Community Story:

It can take as many as 15 years for newcomers to settle in Canada. The move can be even more challenging for those living in small rural and remote communities due to added social, physical and economic barriers. [South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services](#) (SOICS) is working to change that.

Through its Moving Ahead program, **SOICS is improving access to transportation so newcomers can be better connected to their community. It provides bicycles to seasonal agricultural workers and newcomers, teaches them how to ride, and offers orientations on road safety.** Additionally, the program offers support for newcomers to obtain a driver's license through driving lessons and financial aid.

Moving Ahead is one of nine projects funded by Kia in 2022 in partnership with Community Foundations of Canada as part of Kia Communities in Motion. The program was delivered in partnership with five community foundations across Canada, including the Community Foundation of the South Okanagan Similkameen.



## 45

### Languages spoken<sup>1,48</sup>

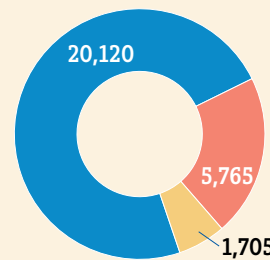
South Okanagan Similkameen residents report speaking **45** different languages at home. While English is the most frequently spoken, other popular languages spoken at home include Punjabi (**2,225** speakers), French (**390** speakers), Spanish (**305** speakers), and Portuguese (**235** speakers).

For Syilx Peoples in the Okanagan, community-based language revitalization strategies, including immersion schools, language nests, curriculum development, web-based tools, and books, play a significant role in integrating the Syilx language, nsyilxcən, into the educational curriculum. Even though **145** people report speaking the language, there are fewer than **40** fluent elders.

### Number of migrants<sup>1</sup>

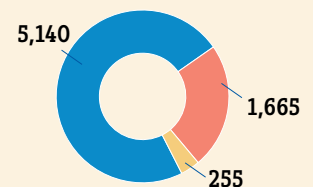
- Intraprovincial migrants
- Interprovincial migrants
- External migrants

2016-2021



Total # of migrants — 27,590

2020-2021



Total # of migrants — 7,055

Note: A migrant is defined as anyone with a change of address except for those whose move was in the same census subdivision.

### Survey Says:<sup>8</sup>

**36.3%** of survey respondents reported attending an event put on by a cultural group different than their own within the last 12 months.

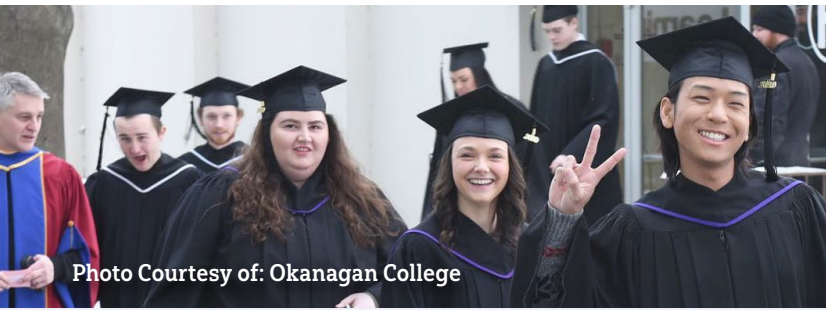


Photo Courtesy of: Okanagan College

## 33.4%

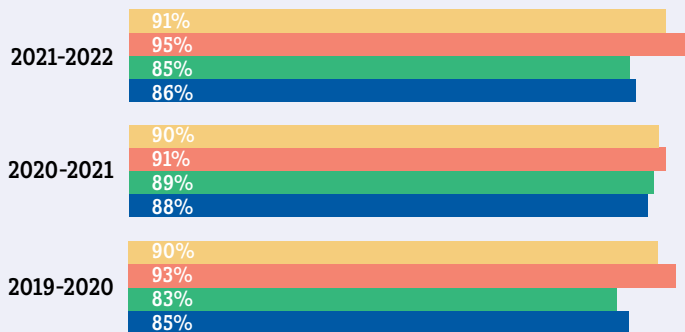
### Early Development Instrument (EDI) Vulnerability Rate<sup>39</sup>

The EDI vulnerability rate measures vulnerability of children in five domains (physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, communication skills and general knowledge) in Kindergarten.

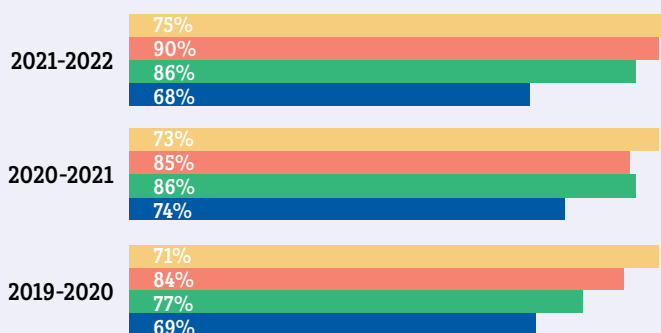
- **40.0%** - SD53 Okanagan Similkameen (Keremeos, Oliver, Osoyoos, Cawston, Hedley)
- **29.0%** - SD58 Nicola-Similkameen (Princeton)
- **34.0%** - SD67 Okanagan Skaha (Penticton, Summerland, Cawston, Naramata)
- **33.4%** - British Columbia

### High School Completion<sup>41</sup>

(Excludes international students)



### High School Completion, Indigenous Students<sup>41</sup>



● British Columbia ● SD67 ● SD58 ● SD53

## 51.1%

### Population 15+ with post-secondary<sup>1</sup>

Just over half of South Okanagan Similkameen residents ages 15 years and older have a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree. This compares to **54.5%** across the Okanagan, and **57.1%** in British Columbia. The most and least formally educated communities in the South Okanagan Similkameen are Naramata (at **64.1%**) and Cawston and Rural Keremeos (at **42.4%** and **42.6%**, respectively).

### Academic self-concept<sup>40</sup>

Through the Middle Years Development Instrument, Grade 8 students are asked to rate their academic self-concept, including their academic ability, their perceptions of themselves as students, and how interested and confident they feel in school. Here is the proportion of students who gave themselves a high rating in this category:

SD53 Okanagan Similkameen: **64%**

SD58 Nicola-Similkameen: **Did not participate**

SD67 Okanagan Skaha: **58%**

### Transition to post-secondary<sup>41</sup>

In SD53 (Okanagan Similkameen), **50.4%** of students who had started Grade 8 in 2011-2012 and had graduated by 2017-2018 had continued on to a B.C. post-secondary institution. The same is true of **44.7%** of SD58 (Nicola-Similkameen) students and **45.9%** of SD67 (Okanagan Skaha) students. During the same timeframe, the provincial rate was **56.1%**.

### Community Story:

Going back to school while juggling the demands of a job and raising two young children can be extremely difficult. Just ask Andréanne Beaumier-Fortin, a working single mother who is currently pursuing her studies in Practical Nursing.

“Between work, kids and school, it sometimes can get overwhelming,” says Andréanne. “Having extra financial support helps to relieve some of the stress and keeps me afloat.”

The extra financial support Andréanne mentions was received through the [Community Foundation, which assists students of all ages with bursaries to help them achieve their educational goals.](#)

Andréanne’s bursary has been important to her success as a student. “It has been an intense journey so far in the Practical Nursing Program but lots of positive experiences and achievements are coming out of it,” she says. “The support of the Foundation helps make succeeding for students like me possible.”



# Safety

## 4

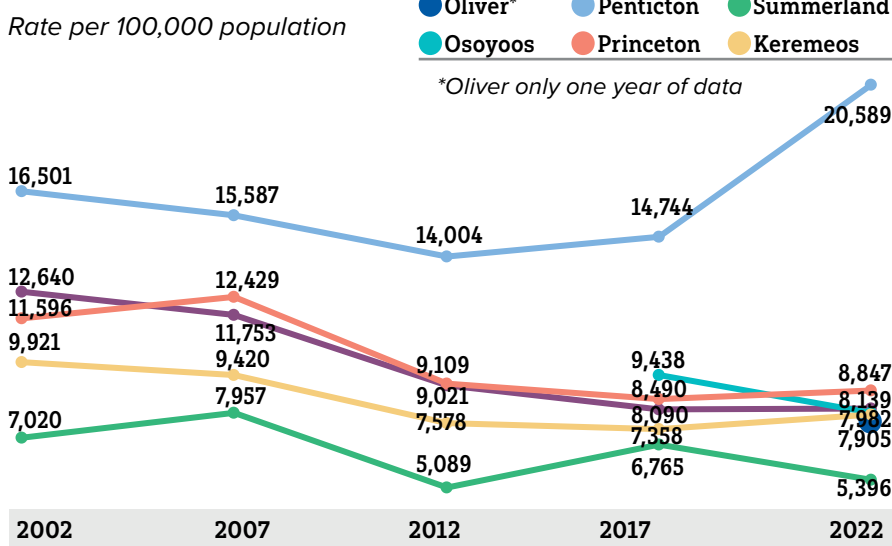
### Number of women's transition houses<sup>42</sup>

There are **4** women's shelters/transition houses in the South Okanagan Similkameen: Two in Penticton (one operated by the South Okanagan Women in Need Society and the other by the Okanagan Nation and Family Intervention and Services Society), the Cindy Taylor Safe Home, in Oliver, and the Cindy Parolin Safe Homes in Princeton.

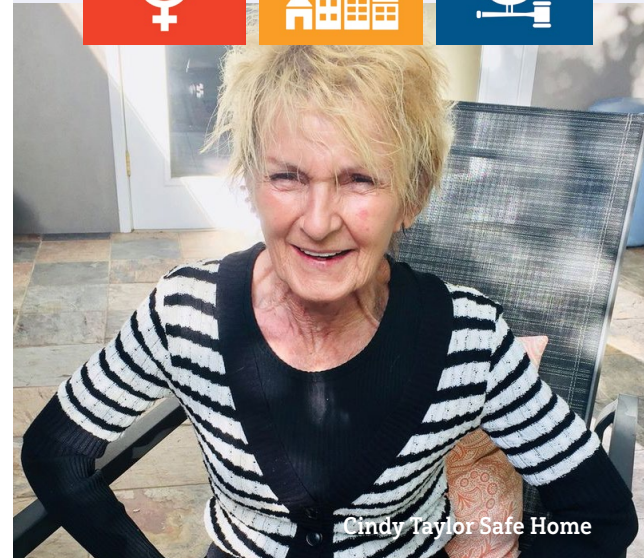
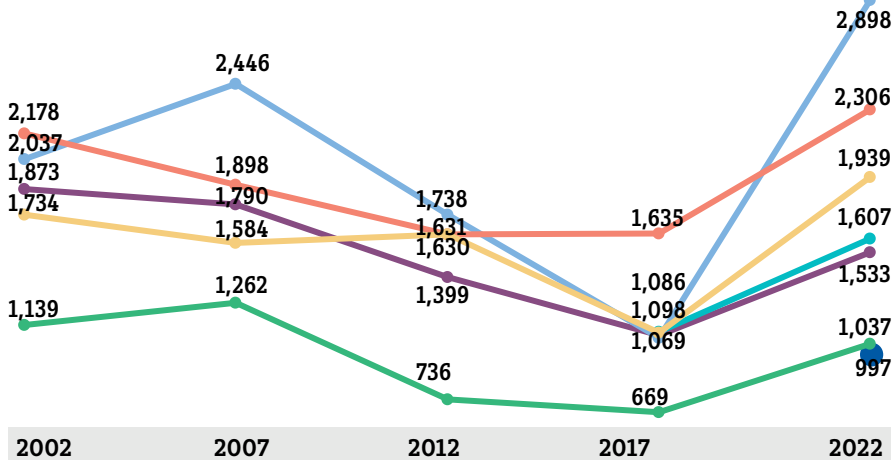
### Sexual assault rate<sup>43</sup> *Rate per 100,000 population*

	2002	2007	2012	2017	2022
Oliver	-	-	-	-	53.4
Osoyoos	-	-	-	57.0	71.5
Penticton	67.9	54.6	45.3	36.7	119.5
Princeton	19.3	19.0	0	110.3	136.6
Summerland	53.4	62.7	0	8.3	15.5
Keremeos	87.8	0.00	63.5	40.7	56.5

### Overall crime rate<sup>43</sup> *Rate per 100,000 population*



### Violent crime rate<sup>43</sup> *Rate per 100,000 population*



### Community Story:

**Cindy Taylor Safe Home** is named after a beloved former staff member of South Okanagan Integrated Services Society who passed away in 2020. The home provides short-term shelter and support to women and children fleeing abusive situations. Necessities are supplied to clients free of charge, and help is available to connect women escaping violence with legal and financial resources and referrals. The safe home's operations and programming are supported by a multi-year operational grant from the Foundation.

Marieze Tarr, Executive Director of the Society, recalls a client who self-referred to them for help. Staff slowly built trust with her, following her lead with respect to the services she was prepared to access. Supportive conversations slowly led to counseling and finally, a nine-month residency in the Cindy Taylor Safe Home. Now, she has moved into her own residence, has reconnected with one of her daughters and is volunteering at the safe home.

**"The women seeking our services come to us completely broken, and with no self-confidence," explains Marieze. "It's extremely gratifying to see them emerge from the safe home with the ability to find employment and live independently."**

### Survey Says:<sup>8</sup>

**"I feel safe in my neighbourhood."**

- Strongly agree and agree: **68.9%**
- Neither agree nor disagree: **13.4%**
- Disagree and strongly disagree: **17.7%**

# Work & Economy



Penticton and Area Cooperative Enterprises (PACE)  
Photo credit: Justin Wu

## \$57,600

### Median earnings for full-year, full-time worker<sup>1</sup>

The median income reported for South Okanagan Similkameen labour force members who worked full-year, full-time in 2020 was **\$57,600**. This is slightly below the Okanagan median of **\$60,000**, and below the provincial median of **\$66,000**.

Between 2016 and 2021, median earnings for full-year, full-time workers in the South Okanagan Similkameen increased from **\$47,885** to **\$57,600**, or **18.4%**.

### South Okanagan Labour Force Participation<sup>1</sup>

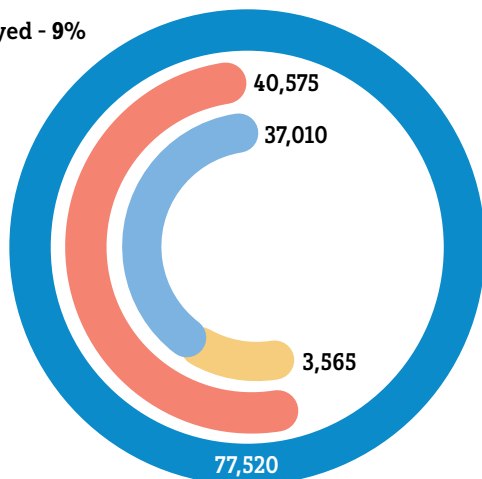
● Eligible for labour force - 77,520

(Population 15 years and over)

● In the labour force - 52.3%

● Employed - 91%

● Unemployed - 9%



### Employment by industry<sup>1</sup>

Sales and service

27.2% | 27.0%

Trades, transport and equipment operators

19.5% | 19.4%

Business, finance, and administration

14.5% | 15.3%

Education, law and social, community and government services

9.3% | 10.0%

Health occupations

9.1% | 9.0%

Natural resources, agriculture, and related production occupation

6.5% | 4.2%

Natural and applied sciences

4.4% | 5.8%

Manufacturing and utilities

4.0% | 3.5%

Art, culture, recreation, and sport

2.6% | 2.9%

Legislative and senior management occupations

0.9% | 1.1%

● South Okanagan Similkameen  
● Okanagan

## 8.6%

### Living here, working elsewhere<sup>1</sup>

Of the South Okanagan Similkameen residents who commute to work, **91.4%** commute within the region. Another **7.1%** commute outside of the South Okanagan Similkameen, but within the province, and a final **1.5%** commute outside of the province or country.

## 20.2%

### Proportion self-employed<sup>1</sup>

One in five members of the South Okanagan Similkameen labour force is self-employed, a slight increase from the **17.4%** reported in 2016. Similarly, **19.4%** of Okanagan labour force participants are self-employed.

## 16.5%

### Working from home<sup>1</sup>

In 2021, **16.5%** of the South Okanagan Similkameen's labour force worked from home, an increase of **5.5** percentage points from 2016 when **11.0%** of labour force members worked from home. Across the Okanagan, the same increase has been observed: **9.8%** of the Okanagan labour force worked from home in 2016, and **18.2%** did in 2021.



## Business bankruptcies<sup>44</sup>

In the Thompson-Okanagan economic region, which includes the South Okanagan Similkameen, **48** businesses filed an insolvency claim (bankruptcy or proposal) in 2021, an increase of **269.2%** over 2020's 13.

## Community Story:

**Penticton and Area Cooperative Enterprises (PACE)** is a social enterprise that creates opportunities through recycling projects for people facing barriers to employment. They've run a successful Mattress Recycling Program in Penticton for over 15 years, and now they're encouraging other communities to follow suit.

The **Mattress Recycling Program manages problematic items in our landfills while also creating jobs and an inclusive work environment for marginalized people.** PACE takes an outside-of-the-box approach towards traditional employment and adapts the work conditions to the worker by offering flexible hours and job-sharing.

"There's still so many generalizations around addictions and homelessness," said Stacey Regin, Operations Manager at PACE. "But I work with some of the hardest working people ever and every single day, I see these people living with barriers thriving and overcoming them."

In the past year alone, PACE's crew members disassembled over 7,000 mattresses. And through the support of a KIA in Motion grant administered by the Community Foundation, PACE has created a manual that provides a blueprint for communities looking to start up their own mattress recycling program.

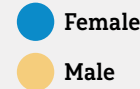
"Our crew members are quietly making a huge environmental impact," said Regin. "We need more people to know the benefits of social enterprises like ours and how important they are to their communities."

1,231

## Farms in the South Okanagan Similkameen<sup>45</sup>

This is down from **1,506** farms in 2011.

Farm operators:



Median age: 59.0

## Childcare spaces<sup>46, 47</sup>

	Number of Spaces
Keremeos	42
Oliver	326
Osoyoos	<i>data unavailable</i>
Penticton	719
Princeton	57
Summerland	220
Unincorporated Electoral Areas	122
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,486</b>

## Survey Says<sup>8</sup>

### We asked survey respondents about local training and educational opportunities to support residents in reaching their career goals.

- **29.1%** strongly agree or agree that opportunities are sufficient in quantity and quality, as opposed to the **25.7%** who disagree or strongly disagree
- Only **20.9%** of respondents believe that local training and education opportunities are affordable, versus **26.8%** who disagree or strongly disagree
- Nearly one-third (**30.2%**) strongly agree or agree that these opportunities are accessible, compared to **21.8%** who disagree or strongly disagree

“The ease of a remote work lifestyle is impacting our community in a negative way as more and more families relocate to the region to escape higher costs elsewhere. This contributes to the housing and medical crises.”

~Anonymous comment by survey respondent

“I work remotely already and can advance my career by working remotely. I would have a hard time advancing my career if I was trying to find a local job.”

~Anonymous comment by survey respondent

# What are the Sustainable Development Goals?<sup>49</sup>

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent the world's collective vision for a thriving and sustainable planet. Canada is one of **193 countries** participating in this United Nations initiative. The **SDGs are universal and apply to all people and communities everywhere**. Within the 17 SDGs, there are 169 targets. Canada has signed on to achieving these goals at home and abroad. At the community level, the SDGs are an opportunity to focus and coordinate collective efforts to address problems beyond the community scale, such as climate change, which can only be addressed if communities and cities unite in common action.

**Find these icons on pages 6-19 to learn which SDGs relate to the Vital Signs key issues in the South Okanagan Similkameen.**

SDG	PAGE	SUMMARY	SDG	PAGE	SUMMARY
	12, 13, 14, 18, 19	<b>GOAL 1</b> End poverty in all its forms everywhere.		10, 11, 16	<b>GOAL 10</b> Reduce inequality within and among countries.
	14	<b>GOAL 2</b> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.		6, 7, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19	<b>GOAL 11</b> Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
	8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13	<b>GOAL 3</b> Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.		8	<b>GOAL 12</b> Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
	6, 16	<b>GOAL 4</b> Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.		8	<b>GOAL 13</b> Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
	17, 18, 19	<b>GOAL 5</b> Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.		8	<b>GOAL 14</b> Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
	8	<b>GOAL 6</b> Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.		8	<b>GOAL 15</b> Protect, restore and promote terrestrial ecosystems, forests, land, and biodiversity.
	N/A	<b>GOAL 7</b> Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.		7, 17	<b>GOAL 16</b> Promote peaceful societies, accountable institutions, and access to justice for all.
	6, 18, 19	<b>GOAL 8</b> Promote sustained, inclusive economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.		N/A	<b>GOAL 17</b> Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.
	9	<b>GOAL 9</b> Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.			

# Where Do We Go From Here?

## START CONVERSATIONS. TAKE ACTION.

We hope that after reading this report, you have a deeper understanding of the South Okanagan Similkameen. Like any other community, ours has strengths and challenges.

**PASS IT ON.** Share the report with your friends, colleagues, employees, students, neighbours, library, community center or an elected/public official at any level.

**TALK ABOUT ISSUES.** Is there a particular issue or indicator that you could tackle with someone you shared the report with? Are there synergies between the work you do and other issue areas or needs? Do you see an opportunity to leverage a local strength to mitigate a challenge?

**TAKE ACTION.** There is much that can be done at the individual level to strengthen our region. Brainstorm some ideas and take action! Some examples:

- Learn about the Indigenous history of the South Okanagan Similkameen
- Commit to volunteering for a local organization (even an hour a year!)
- Drive less and walk, bike, or carpool more
- Divert recycling and organics from the landfill
- Donate excess food and household items to organizations that help women and children, the unhoused, and the food insecure
- Support local – arts and cultural events, artists, businesses and food producers

**LEARN MORE.** If you are interested in learning more about the charities and non-profits working in a specific area, we can help. Reach out to our office for key organizations and contacts.

**GET INVOLVED.** Get involved with the Community Foundation of the South Okanagan Similkameen. There are many ways to work with us, including:

- **Apply for funding.** We offer a variety of grants to non-profit organizations, including project grants and multi-year operating grants. We also offer scholarships to high school and post-secondary students. To find out if you are eligible, visit [www.cfso.net/funding](http://www.cfso.net/funding)
- **Follow us.** Subscribe to our newsletter and follow us on social media. We use these tools to share information about available grant funding, updates about funded projects, and relevant community news.

**DONATE.** There are a variety of ways to give back to your community. We'll work with you to find the right fit to support the causes you care about, for the long-term or for immediate impact. Connect with us to learn more about your giving choices:

- Contribute to one of the Foundation's many Endowment Funds or start your own
- Give where you live by donating to a Community Fund
- Become a monthly donor
- Give an unrestricted gift that can be directed to immediate needs
- Join the 100 Women Who Care and 100 Men Who Care giving circles
- Consider leaving a legacy gift



Neighbourhood Small Grants,  
Princeton skatepark group

If we can assist you in taking action, please contact us at [info@cfso.net](mailto:info@cfso.net) or 250-493-9311.

**The Community Foundation of the South Okanagan Similkameen was created in 1991. We began as the Penticton & District Foundation, and our founding donors were the Penticton Rotary Club, City of Penticton, HSBC, and Vancouver Foundation.**

Today, we are one of more than two hundred community foundations in Canada, all of which are charitable organizations dedicated to improving communities in specific geographic areas. One way Community Foundations achieve their mission is by pooling the charitable gifts of donors to create endowment funds and using the investment income to make grants and impact investments. Our community foundations also provide community leadership – monitoring our area’s quality of life and convening people, ideas, and resources to help build stronger and more resilient communities.

In our 30 years of service, we have made more than **2,800 grants** to local projects totaling more than **\$9.3 million**. We also hold two local real estate investments that made possible services for youth and women at risk that would otherwise not be available in our region. As we have evolved our services we have grown to manage more than **\$17.5 million** dollars in total assets. We are continually adding new ways for individuals and organizations to support their community, finding new ways to fund projects, programs, and events that help make our South Okanagan Similkameen communities better places to live.

**We work towards an ambitious vision and mission:**

**Our vision:** We envision healthy, vibrant and inclusive communities across the South Okanagan Similkameen.

**Our mission:** We lead by connecting ideas, time, and resources with community needs and opportunities.

**Our domains of service:**

- As Brokers, we achieve our goals through supporting others to achieve their goals
- As Catalysts, we lead and engage in social change
- As Facilitators, we encourage and challenge others to collaborate to achieve community impact

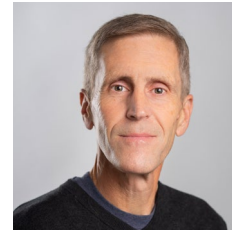
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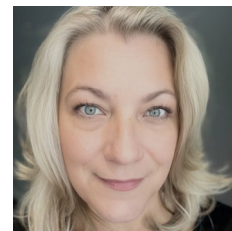
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Finnerty Cleanup, Neighbourhood Small Grants Penticton

# SOUTH OKANAGAN | SIMILKAMEEN'S **VitalSigns.**

## Thank you to our generous sponsors!

**This report is put together by a team of  
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Our sponsors help us gather the financial resources needed to assemble and present this information in a format that is accessible to a variety of local community members and organizations. We are grateful for your support and generosity.

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How To Use This Report:

## **START CONVERSATIONS. TAKE ACTION.**

**PASS IT ON.** Share the report with your friends, colleagues, employees, students, neighbours, library, community center or an elected/public official at any level.

**FIND OUT MORE.** Learn about the many organizations working to improve our community and how you can get involved, too.

**CONTACT US.** We know about the issues of our community and the organizations working to improve them. If you would like to make a difference, we can help and guide you.

**If you or your organization is moved  
or motivated by what you read, use  
this report as a starting point for  
positive action.**

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