

**ASSESSMENT REPORT**

# **Bow Valley Inclusion Project**





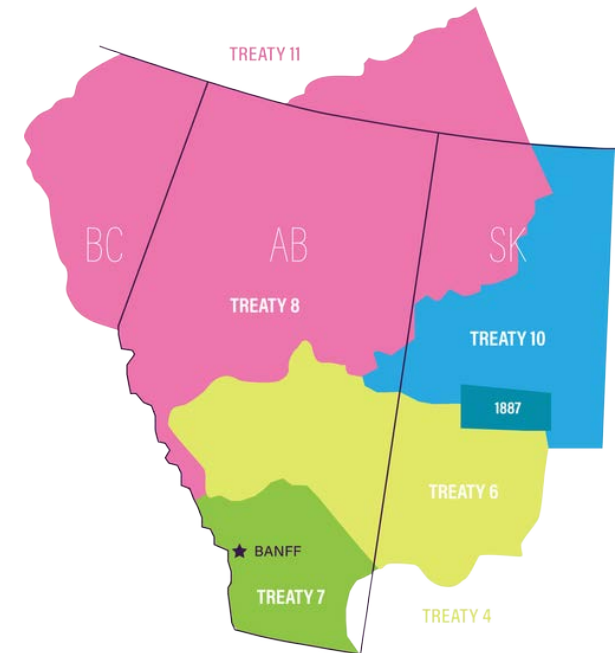
# Land Acknowledgement

## TREATY 7 TERRITORY

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We live, create, love and build together on Treaty 7 territory the ancestral and traditional territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy including the Kainai, Piikani and Siksika as well as the Tsuu T'ina First Nation and Stoney Nakoda First Nation.

We acknowledge the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders of all First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples who have gone before us and those working in community today. We recognize the land not as a formality but as a commitment to living the opportunities for reconciliation in our everyday and committing to a practice of gratitude and authentic allyship with the indigenous people whose territory we reside on.



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# 1

## Project Overview

- Background
- Objectives
- Role Holders

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# Project Background

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

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The Bow Valley is a special place where the power of nature intertwines with the warmth of community. We attract visitors from far and wide, drawn by the beauty of its landscape and the hospitality of our residents. As international travellers connect with locals, bonds are forged, stories are shared, and our community grows stronger.

In recent years, our pride network has grown enormously with Canmore Pride and Banff Pride helping to champion inclusion and acceptance. These organizations work steadfastly to make the Bow Valley a truly special place to live where 2SLGBTQIA+ people feel safe, supported, and included.

Our community has faced significant challenges and changes in the past five years. Adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic and the disruption of the global tourism industry necessitated new digital solutions to maintain community, which presented new opportunities and obstacles.

The resumption of international travel, mass gatherings, and pre-COVID socialization patterns has once again forced the queer community to adapt.

In many ways, the queer community was changed significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic, but also by three major developments in this era:

- First the opening of The Radiant in Banff, offered a dedicated queer-friendly space in the Bow Valley and helped develop connections between community members.
- Second the growing social and community role played by the Banff Pride Society continued to expand avenues for queer life.
- Third, the creation of the Canmore Pride Society created a new vital resource for the eastern Bow Valley

**“ We hope to continue this trend of positive change with this research project, learning about emerging needs for the queer community and creating positive change to help address them. ”**



# Project Background

## COMMUNITY CONTEXT

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Studying queer life in the Bow Valley offers several unique challenges. There are numerous distinct population centres separated by significant geographical distances (Banff, Canmore, Lake Louise, Morley) and dozens of scattered isolated resorts and lodges that are even more remote.

In addition to the geographical challenges, there are population dynamics that must be considered when analyzing the Bow Valley, including significant swings in short-term seasonal employees (both for the summer and winter), with folks coming from all over the world and enriching our community's diversity. With this dynamic comes learning and sharing of cultures that can take time to get right.

There is immense impact from summer and winter tourists in public spaces. The Bow Valley hosts 4+ million domestic and international visitors annually, directly driving and supporting the local economy. But this influx of visitors can create challenges for long-term Bow Valley residents, with highly differentiated employment and living situations. The town's need to reside provisions work to protect residents, but the region is still a challenging environment to find reliable housing.

**The complexity of the Bow Valley is unique, with opportunities, successes, and challenges all influencing daily life. Our goal is to always be learning: to better understand how our community succeeds, where**



# Goals & Objectives

- To conduct a comprehensive 2SLGBTQIA+ diversity, equity, and inclusion assessment in the communities of Banff, Canmore and the surrounding Bow Valley.
- To create a data-supported snapshot of the Bow Valley community, assessing strengths and opportunities through the intersectional lens of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- Develop an actionable community impact strategy and training opportunities/programs to directly benefit the residents of this vibrant community.





# Role Holders



## **Banff Pride**

The local pride organization for Banff, spearheading this project

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## **Canmore Pride**

The local pride organization for Canmore, supporting this project

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## **Canadian Equality Consulting (CEC)**

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion consulting firm conducting the research, analysis, reporting and strategy development for the project

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## **Government of Canada**

This project was funded by the Government of Canada's Community Services Recovery Fund

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## **Community Members**

The local Bow Valley community, employees of local businesses and various national pride organizations are all participants in our research



# 2

## Assessment Report Overview

- Research Methodology
- Analysis Process
- Reading This Report
  - Starting From a Place of Belief
  - Reviewing the Findings
  - Key Definitions

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# Research Methodology

## SURVEYS

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A queer community member survey was launched on September 19 2023, inquiring about elements of life in the Bow Valley and experiences with the Queer community. A business survey was launched on January 3, 2024 to examine local businesses and their inclusion journey thus far and goals for the future of 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion at their organizations. Both surveys asked demographic information, quantitative sentiment questions along a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree), and open-ended qualitative questions. Both surveys were closed on Feb 7, 2024.

## FOCUS GROUPS

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To enrich our qualitative survey data and provide enhanced local context, two community focus groups were held in January - one in Canmore, and one in Banff. These focus groups were 2-3 hours in length and explored elements of life in the Bow Valley including safety, queer community connection, healthcare, tourism impacts, housing, social life, and more.

## INTERVIEWS

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The qualitative method of 1-on-1 interviews were also used for key groups to ensure their perspectives were captured in this research in rich detail. These groups included:

- **Business leaders and HR professionals from local businesses:** solicitation to local contacts for 30-minute interviews to examine their perspective on inclusion work in their business. 8 interviews in total.
- **Morley community members:** hour-long interviews using an open discussion model. Suggested topics included: work, safety, healthcare, the intersectionality of queerness and Indigeneity in the Bow Valley, and more.
- **Pride organizations within Canada:** 45-minute interviews with pride organizations in smaller and/or tourism-based municipalities to learn more about their operations and current challenges.





# Analysis Process

## QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The quantitative data from the survey was summarized and analyzed using Top 2 Box scoring (Strongly Agree + Agree %). Top 2 Box percentages were assessed at the overall level and at the sub-group level. The Chi-Square inferential statistics testing method was used to compare the sub-groups and to understand whether there are statistically meaningful differences between two different sub-group. Differences recognized for key groups are highlighted in this report based on their statistical significance. Statistically significant scores in this report can be reviewed with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, the gold standard for statistical analysis.

## QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

A thematic analysis was conducted on the qualitative feedback from the focus groups, interviews, and the open-ended questions in the survey. The process involved an inductive approach, wherein the data/feedback determined the codes and subsequent themes and organized by their frequency in the data. The qualitative findings do not represent individual experiences but rather a collection of sentiments from individuals who brought forth a common concern, experience, or idea.

## RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

With all research, there are limitations. Key limitations in this research include:

- Limited quantitative data from locations outside of Banff and Canmore to restrict quantitative reporting
- This data limitation is particularly challenging when considering the Indigenous perspective, with limited quantitative data on the community members in Morley, only qualitative interviews
- The scope of our research did not prioritize seasonal workers/temporary workers, whose presence in the Bow Valley greatly influences the community





# Reading This Report

## STARTING FROM A PLACE OF BELIEF

**This report will outline strengths and opportunities within each survey category along with aggregate scores, as well as statistically significant scores for equity-deserving groups.**

The goal of each of these sections is to highlight strengths and opportunities from all respondents but to also highlight which groups require additional support to achieve an equity of experience.

Among all the themes that surfaced, there are almost always conflicting experiences. Several people can experience one dimension as a strength, while others can still be struggling along the same dimension.

To understand the queer community experience, we must receive the information provided to us with an open mind and from a place of belief. Your personal experience can be entirely different from others. This practice must also be considered through the lens of intersectionality: the idea that differing parts of our identities can influence our oppression and marginalization in different ways. Queer communities come with many intersections, and we must recognize and honour these.

When we read this report from a place of belief, we can focus on the objective of this work: to understand the overall experience of community members, businesses, and pride organizations. From this information, we can establish procedures and processes for bringing equity and inclusion into the community and work towards consistency of experience for everyone.

## REVIEWING THE FINDINGS

**For the community section of this report, it is recommended to use a 75% benchmark to determine areas of focus and dimensions to prioritize.**

A score above 75% is considered an area of strength and a score below 75% is considered an area of opportunity/growth that we can investigate to learn more about.

For the business it is recommended to use a 70% benchmark to determine areas of focus and dimensions to prioritize. This is due to a smaller sample size in the business survey, creating a wider range when reviewing quantitative scores.

When reviewing differences between groups in this report, know that inclusion in this report is a representation of a statistically significant difference that is worth noting from a research perspective.

Within the report takeaways, quantitative scoring is shared when it is available. Findings that do not contain quantitative scoring are representative of qualitative findings that aggregate from open-ended survey questions, interviews, and focus groups.

Both quantitative and qualitative takeaways should be received with equal merit and importance when reading this report.



# Key Definitions

**THE BOW VALLEY:** A collection of communities located along the upper Bow River in Alberta, Canada. Communities within the “Bow Valley” label often include Banff, Canmore, Kananaskis, and the hamlets of Dead Man’s Flats, Exshaw, Harvie Heights, Lac des Arcs, and Lake Louise.

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**DIVERSITY:** The presence of “difference” within a given setting. It refers to the differences in the identities and lived experiences of people including gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, ancestry, place of origin, political beliefs, religion, marital status, family status, physical disability, mental disability, age, and socio-economic conditions, as examples.

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**EQUITY:** Equity involves addressing historical and systemic disparities that might affect certain groups to ensure that individuals are provided what they need to have access to opportunities and resources to participate fully.

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**INCLUSION:** Inclusion is the intentional effort to create a culture where all individuals feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued. It goes beyond just having diverse individuals but involves fostering a sense of belonging for everyone.

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**EQUITY-DESERVING GROUPS:** Communities or groups of people that experience significant collective barriers in participating in society. These groups are systemically excluded, often through attitudinal, historic, social, and environmental barriers. In this report, equity-deserving groups includes BIPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+, and people with disabilities.

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**INTERSECTIONALITY:** The sociological framework used to examine the ways in which systems of oppression and discrimination “intersect” to create unique dynamics and effects. Some intersecting identities include gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, class, and more. Systems and forms of inequality are mutually reinforcing and must therefore be analyzed and addressed together to understand the reality of an individual’s experience.

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**2SLGBTQIA+:** This is a broad category of gender and sexually diverse individuals. The acronym stands for Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual people- among additional gender identities and sexual orientations. In this report 2SLGBTQIA+ and Queer are often used interchangeably.

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**GENDERS BEYOND THE BINARY:** The gender binary is the idea that gender is organized into only two distinct (binary) forms: man and woman. In reality, many gender-expansive identities exist either between or outside of this binary. Some of these identities include: Genderfluid, genderqueer, non-binary, agender, and more. Genders beyond the binary are those identities that exist beyond just man and woman.

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**BIPOC:** This term encompasses all Black people, Indigenous Peoples, and other people of colour, used to acknowledge the shared experiences of oppression under white supremacy due to race.

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**TWO-SPIRIT (2S):** A modern Indigenous umbrella term used to describe Indigenous people who fulfill and embody a traditional third-gender role in their cultural context.

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**INDIGIQUEER:** This term is a pan-Indigenous term that individuals from various Indigenous backgrounds can and will use, and is a unique identity separate from Two Spirit and being 2SLGBTQIA+. The term Indigiqueer honors someone’s sexual and romantic orientation as well as their gender, as they both relate to one’s indigeneity (ways someone is Indigenous).

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# 3

## Community Learnings

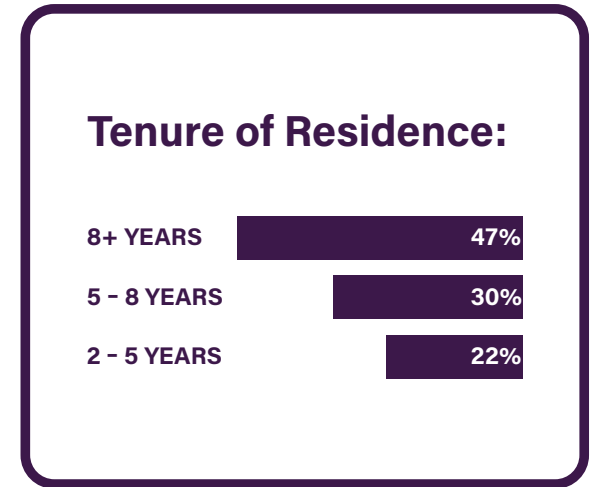
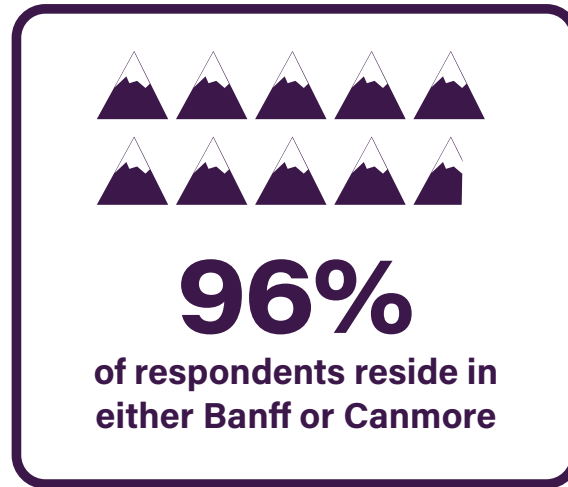
- Participant Overview
- Within the Queer Community
- The Wider Community
- Within the Workplace
- Safety & Healthcare
- Housing

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# Participant Overview

**241**  
TOTAL  
RESPONDENTS



# Participant Overview



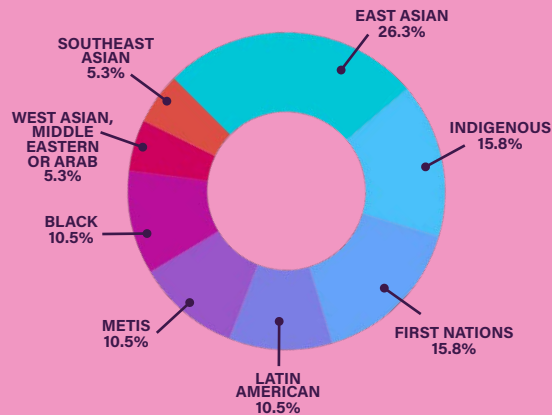
## GENERATION

Millenials make up the highest proportion of respondents



## RACE & ETHNICITY

18% of respondents are BIPOC



## GENDER & SEXUALITY



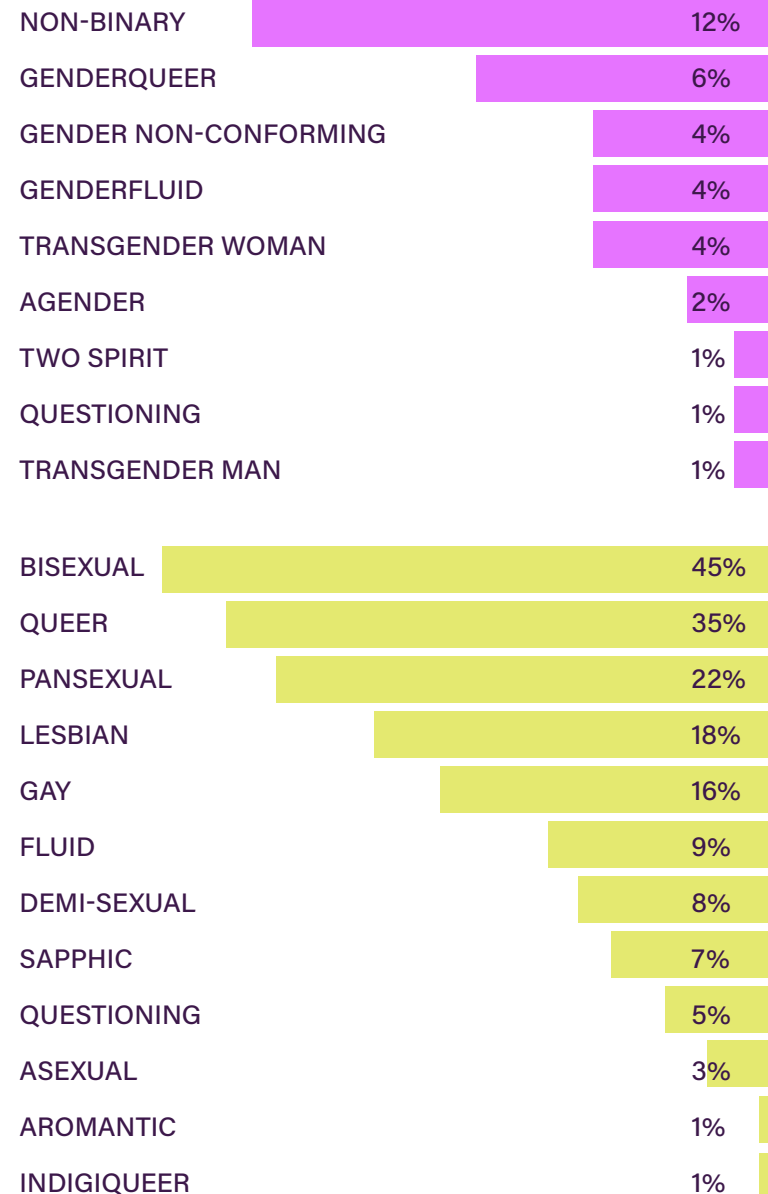
**59%**  
Cisgender Women



**29%**  
People Beyond the Gender Binary



**12%**  
Cisgender Men

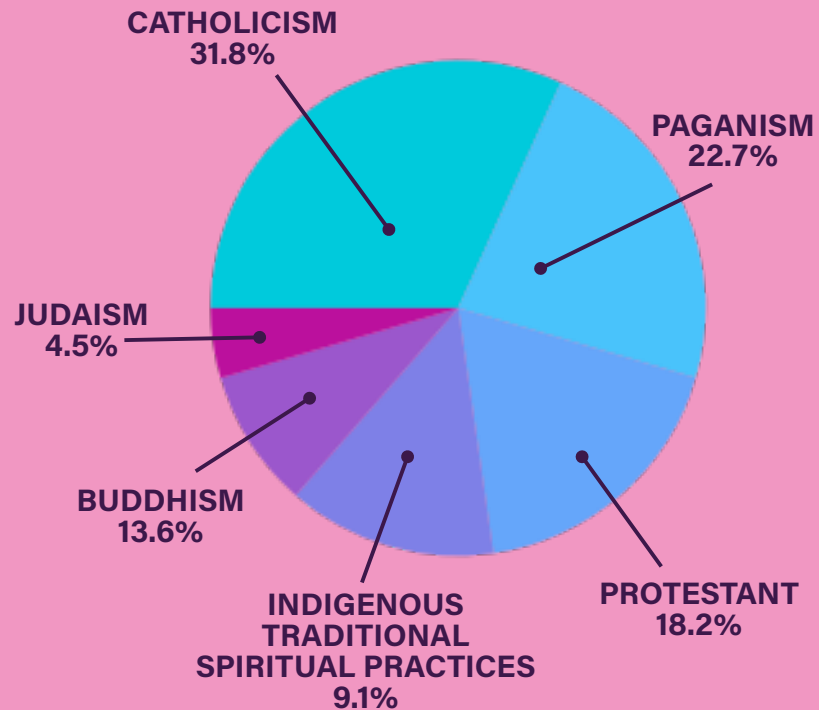




# Participant Overview

## RELIGION

21% of respondents consider themselves to be religious, capturing a variety of practices.



## LANGUAGES SPOKEN

The five most-spoken languages other than English are French, German, Spanish, Mandarin & Czech

FRENCH	17%
GERMAN	3%
SPANISH	3%
MANDARIN	2%
CZECH	1%



# Participant Overview

## DISABILITY

66% respondents identify with some form of disability

- 49% PSYCHOLOGICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION
- 34% NEURODIVERGENCE
- 18% CHRONIC ILLNESS OR MEDICAL CONDITION
- 11% ADDICTION
- 4% SENSORY DIFFERENCES
- 3% MOBILITY/DEXTERITY/COORDINATION IMPAIRMENT

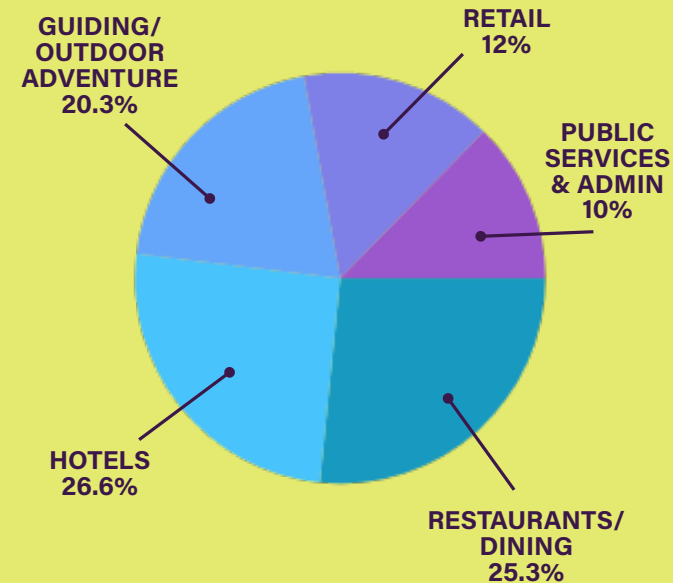
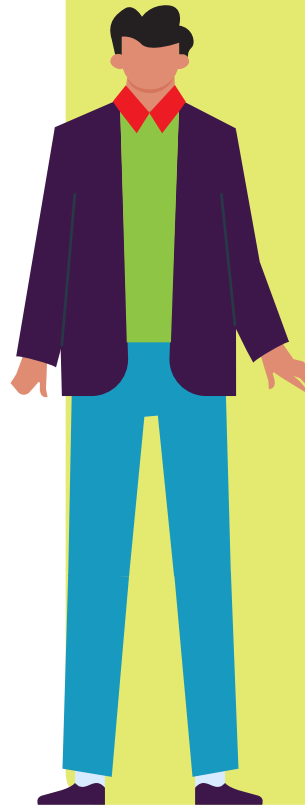


## CAREGIVING

17% of respondents have caregiving obligations for human dependents (not pets)

## EMPLOYMENT

The majority of respondents work in Banff & Canmore. Only 15% work outside of these two areas.



**71%**  
of respondents earn \$70,000 or less annually



# Within the Queer Community: Strengths

INSIGHTS FROM THE BOW VALLEY QUEER COMMUNITY

## Respect & Support

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There is an overall feeling of respect and support within local queer communities, particularly along the lines one's sexuality and gender identity. Many also feel that there is limited tolerance for harassment and discrimination within the Bow Valley Queer community.

*I feel that my sexual orientation is respected in my local queer community - 82%*

*I feel that my gender identity is respected in my local queer community - 82%*

*My local queer community does not tolerate discrimination - 83%*

*My local queer community does not tolerate harassment - 82%*

## Community Progress

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Many respondents reported feelings of safety in the Bow Valley when it comes to expression of elements of their identities, acknowledging the social progress made over the last number of years. The progress made by and success of local Pride organizations was also highlighted. For many, these organizations function as main source of information and connection to queer life in the Bow Valley and their work has generated meaningful positive sentiment in the community.

**The 2SLGBTQIA+ community in the Bow Valley can appear cliquey and hard to break into.**

**The local queer community is lacking racial diversity. It is not a topic that is discussed & most people are not aware of the lack of racial diversity.**

# Within the Queer Community: Opportunities

INSIGHTS FROM THE BOW VALLEY QUEER COMMUNITY

## Belonging & Intersectionality

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Not everyone is feeling a sense of belonging within the queer community, with only 51% of respondents feeling favourably. Combined with elements of racial and ethnic identity, there is more work to be done to ensure everyone in the queer community feels a sense of belonging.

*I find belonging in my local queer community - 51%*

*I feel that my racial or ethnic background is respected in my local queer community - 74%*

## Support for BIPOC

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For many BIPOC-identified respondents, racial diversity continues to be an under-recognized issue in the Bow Valley Queer Community. Along with these sentiments, some of these respondents shared experiences of racist micro-aggressions within the Bow Valley Queer Community. Local Pride organizations were also highlighted. For many, these organizations function as main source of information and connection to queer life in the Bow Valley and their work has generated meaningful positive sentiment in the community.

**“Banff is made up of very segregated social bubbles which makes finding new friends, particularly Queer friends challenging.”**



# Within the Queer Community: Opportunities

INSIGHTS FROM THE BOW VALLEY QUEER COMMUNITY

## Community & Connection

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*If I desire, I have frequent opportunities to connect with others in my queer community - 55%*

*If I desire, I have frequent opportunities to meet new people in my local queer community - 47%*

Many respondents are feeling a lack of connection within the Bow Valley Queer Community; some say this is exacerbated by a lack of frequent social events in the community, limiting their opportunities to facilitate this connection. Newcomers to the Bow Valley especially are finding it difficult to “find” their community and form rich and meaningful connections.

## Inconsistent Experiences

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There is a wide spectrum of experience for those in the Bow Valley Queer Community. Some feel very positively about their strong and vibrant social network in Bow Valley. In opposition, others have not found this community and report feelings of loneliness and disconnection.

For those missing connection, reasons shared include: a lack of information about events, feeling excluded from events due to age, a lack of established meaningful relationships, financial barriers, and alcohol consumption.



# The Wider Community: Strengths

INSIGHTS FROM THE BOW VALLEY QUEER COMMUNITY

## Progress & Contentment

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*I believe a diverse population has a positive impact on our community - 94%*

*I enjoy living in the Bow Valley - 92%*

The vast majority of respondents believe that diversity has a positive impact on the community; respondents also expressed their overall contentment about being in the community and their enjoyment living in the Bow Valley.

Incidents with coworkers and tourists impacted these positive feelings at times.

**“I’m so honoured to live in a community where the wider community stands in solidarity with queer community when hate is expressed by nominal groups.”**





# The Wider Community: Opportunities

INSIGHTS FROM THE BOW VALLEY QUEER COMMUNITY

## Belonging

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*If I desire them, there are enough activities in the wider Bow Valley for me to have a fulfilling social life - 68%*

*I feel a sense of belonging within the wider Bow Valley community - 65%*

Respondents are often feeling disconnected from activities and a fulfilling social life in in the wider Bow Valley community. Many also do not feel a strong sense of belonging within the wider community.

## Safety

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*If I desire to be out, I feel safe being out in the wider community - 66%*

*If I want to discuss them, I feel safe discussing 2SLGBTQIA+ issues in my wider community - 63%*

Belonging is often impacted by safety, which was a theme present for many respondents. Not all respondents feel comfortable being out and vocal about their sexual identity in the wider community. Even fewer respondents feel confident and safe discussing 2SLGBTQIA+ issues in the wider community.

“Community support exists, but community education opportunities are very low. There’s a broad misunderstanding of many queer issues amongst the community, but the people of the community are generally very accepting.”

“It is not safe if I am out. Even though I look queer, as long as I pretend to fit in, then there is no problem. If not, my safety will be at stake.”

# The Wider Community: Opportunities

INSIGHTS FROM THE BOW VALLEY QUEER COMMUNITY

## Harrassment & Discrimination

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*The wider community does not tolerate discrimination - 59%*

*The wider community does not tolerate harassment - 61%*

When interacting with the wider community, many feel that incidents of harassment and discrimination still happen quite frequently. Some shared sentiments that a lack of education and understanding is responsible, but others sensed it came from a place of bigotry and rejecting societal progress.

A number of respondents expressed stress and anxiety when interacting with domestic tourists from Canada – both in the general public and when interacting with these groups in workplace settings.

“It feels like there’s a considerable community in relation to the size of the valley however as a community we’re not often very seen. I’m surrounded by good people in the community which has been amazing but meeting and connecting with the wider community is often difficult.”

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“I do not feel safe in Banff on Fri/Sat nights due to out of town crowd.”

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# Within the Workplace: Strengths

INSIGHTS FROM BOW VALLEY QUEER COMMUNITY MEMBERS

## Respect At Work

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*I feel respected in my workplace - 86%*

*In my workplace, my opinions are valued - 81%*

The majority of respondents feel a sense of respect at work, and feel that their opinions are valued in their workplaces. Many shared the good intentions of their workplaces, along with a general sense that their employers wanted to “do the right thing” with inclusion work.

## Opportunity for Advancement

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*I believe 2SLGBTQIA+ staff have opportunities for advancement at my workplace - 75%*

Respondents feel, for the most part, that there is equitable opportunities for advancement for 2SLGBTQIA+ staff at their workplaces.



# Within the Workplace: Opportunities

INSIGHTS FROM BOW VALLEY QUEER COMMUNITY MEMBERS

## Belonging At Work

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*I feel comfortable being my true self in my workplace (e.g., including my partner/family in events, speaking about my partner) - 71%*

Fewer respondents feel a sense of belonging at work and the ability and comfort to be their “true selves” in the workplace. This includes sharing all elements of their identity, being out and open at work, and speaking openly about their family life.

## Objective Feedback

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*I feel my job performance is evaluated based on objective feedback (e.g., my work products, deliverables, etc.) and not personal characteristics (e.g., my identity, my communication style, etc. ) - 70%*

At work, not everyone feels that the feedback they receive from their leaders is objective and fair; some respondents believe that this feedback is often influenced by elements of their identity, as opposed to an objective evaluation of their work.

“Many workplaces say they support 2SLGBTQIA+, but do not have specific policies or promote this inclusivity in daily work.”

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“My workplace does not discriminate however it takes no steps to be part of or actively support the queer community... I wouldn't feel comfortable outing myself to my boss just yet.”

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# Within the Workplace: Opportunities

INSIGHTS FROM BOW VALLEY QUEER COMMUNITY MEMBERS

## Genuine Queer Inclusion

*I feel that my workplace has policies that support 2SLGBTQIA+ staff - 63%*

*I feel that my workplace is making meaningful connections with the queer community - 44%*

Many respondents feel their workplaces are falling short when it comes to genuine queer inclusion, including explicit policies to support 2SLGBTQIA+ staff, and building meaningful connections with the queer community.

While good intentions were noted, an emerging theme was that of commitment and deeper understanding of the issues. Many respondents feel their workplaces are comfortable with “surface-level” and performative inclusion efforts instead of the sustained resources and commitment it takes to drive real cultural change that creates safe workplaces for queer staff.

## Managerial Consistency

Another prominent theme was that of disparate experiences and managerial power, especially for staff working in customer-facing roles.

Even when an organization has progressive policies, each manager chooses how these are enforced on their teams. A supportive manager can be life-changing, but a non-inclusive leader can use their passivity to contribute to harmful and unsafe environments for queer people at work.

**“My workplace has a DEI program that is strongly supported by senior leaders in principle. The execution doesn’t follow through and I am not comfortable being an out gay male even though I am myself part of leadership.”**

# Safety & Healthcare

INSIGHTS FROM BOW VALLEY QUEER COMMUNITY MEMBERS

## STRENGTHS

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### Safety

*When accessing healthcare in the Bow Valley, I feel safe - 76%*

Respondents often felt safe when accessing healthcare, but did consistently note the need for more health services in the Bow Valley, especially access to hormone replacement therapy (HRT), gender affirming care, and queer-competent counselling.

**“ I do not feel safe sharing my sexuality or gender expression with health care providers in Banff. There is a lack of support for the queer community by health care providers and a lack of knowledge for what we need. I fear unnecessary judgment if I had to out myself to a doctor. ”**

## OPPORTUNITIES

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### Access & Respect

*I have sufficient access to gender and sexually affirming healthcare in the Bow Valley - 37%*

*When accessing healthcare in the Bow Valley, I feel respected - 70%*

Not everyone feels respected when accessing healthcare in the Bow Valley, but the vast majority of respondents identified access as their number one healthcare issue. Many feel baseline access to a medical provider is often challenging, but it is exceedingly difficult to access a provider that understands queer identity and 2SLGBTQIA+ healthcare needs.

### Key areas of concern were identified:

- Access to queer affirming primary care
- Access to gender affirming care including HRT
- Access to queer affirming therapy and counselling services
- Creation of 2S-affirming resource centre providing counselling and addiction services

**“ Two-Spirit often battle addiction and need more support. Often lack family support ... the 2S population is growing and need their own centre for support. ”**



# Housing

INSIGHTS FROM BOW VALLEY QUEER COMMUNITY MEMBERS

## STRENGTHS

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### Safety

*I consider my housing/living arrangement to be:*

*Reliable and safe - 80%*

*Unreliable and safe - 15%*

*Unreliable and unsafe - 4%*

*Reliable and unsafe - 1%*

While many respondents reported feeling safe in their housing, unreliability of housing was a significant concern.

### Variety of Arrangements

Respondents have a rich variety of living arrangements, with most living with their spouse or partner.

*I live with my partner/spouse - 42%*

*I live with more than one roommate - 19%*

*I live with my family - 18%*

*I live with a roommate - 15%*

*I live in staff accommodation - 14%*

*I live alone - 10%*

“There can be challenges with ‘shared accommodations’ among colleagues.”

## OPPORTUNITIES

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### Lack of Control Over Living Situation

Most issues with housing and safety concerned shared accommodations, especially those within an employment context.

This has at times created unsafe living situations in which housemates have made queer residents feel unsafe, or that they need to hide parts of their identity.

Specifically, some respondents identified a need for a grace period when leaving staff housing, as not cause further harm for those who are already vulnerable.

“There’s a connection between housing and workplaces. Individuals don’t report issues, because being fired means losing your home.”

“We really need a grace period when leaving staff housing.”



# 4

## Group Learnings

- Genders Beyond The Binary
- BIPOC Respondents
- Disabled Respondents





# Genders Beyond the Binary

When compared with their cisgender peers, respondents with genders beyond the binary are feeling significantly less positive about safety, healthcare, and comfortably being themselves.

This group feels less belonging and social connection with the wider Bow Valley community, and feel less safety discussing 2SLGBTQIA+ issues.

People with genders beyond the binary feel less respected in the workplaces, and are less likely to be their “true” selves at work.

This group also feels notably less positive about sufficient access to gender and sexually affirming healthcare availability.

*I feel a sense of belonging within the wider Bow Valley community - 52%*

*If I desire them, there are enough activities in the wider Bow Valley for me to have a fulfilling social life - 54%*

*If I want to discuss them, I feel safe discussing 2SLGBTQIA+ issues in my wider community - 48%*

*I feel comfortable being my true self in my workplace (e.g., including my partner/family in events, speaking about my partner) - 52%*

*I feel respected in my workplace - 75%*

*I have sufficient access to gender and sexually affirming healthcare in the Bow Valley - 20%*



# BIPOC Respondents

*In my workplace, my opinions are valued - 67%*

*I believe 2SLGBTQIA+ staff have opportunities for advancement at my workplace - 52%*

*I feel that my racial or ethnic background is respected in my local queer community - 61%*

In comparison with white respondents, BIPOC respondents feel significantly less belonging in the queer community and less equity at work.

BIPOC respondents are less likely to believe their opinions are valued in the workplace, and less likely to believe that 2SLGBTQIA+ staff have equitable opportunities for advancement.

Within the queer community, BIPOC respondents feel significantly less confident that their racial and/or ethnic background is respected.

# Disabled Respondents

*I feel comfortable being my true self in my workplace (e.g., including my partner/family in events, speaking about my partner) - 65%*

*In my workplace, my opinions are valued - 77%*

When we compare respondents with disabilities to those without disabilities, there are significant differences around elements of work.

In the workplace, disabled respondents feel significantly less confident that their opinions are valued.

This group also feels less comfortable being their true self in their workplace.



A scenic view of a mountain town street, likely in Banff or Canmore, Canada. The street is paved and lined with tall evergreen trees. In the background, there are large, multi-story buildings with stone and wood accents, typical of mountain resort architecture. A large green circular graphic with the number '5' is overlaid on the left side of the image. A dark green overlay covers the bottom left portion of the image, containing the title and list. A 'MAXIMUM 30' speed limit sign is visible on the right side of the street.

# 5

## Regional Learnings

- Banff
- Canmore
- Mîni Thnî

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# Regional Learnings: Banff

## REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

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### Healthcare Access

When compared with their counterparts in other locations, Banff residents are scoring significantly lower when it comes to healthcare issues of respect and access. Those in Banff are feeling less satisfaction around sufficient access to care, and feeling safe and respected when accessing this care.

*I have sufficient access to gender and sexually affirming healthcare in the Bow Valley - 34%*

*When accessing healthcare in the Bow Valley, I feel safe - 77%*

*When accessing healthcare in the Bow Valley, I feel respected - 66%*

### Community Connection

Respondents consistently mentioned being unsure how to access the queer community in Banff, specifically about knowing what activities are happening in Banff and the Bow Valley and challenges integrating new Banff community members into existing events and programs. Many expressed a desire for a central resource for information on events, programs, services, and social activities.

### Challenges at Work

Many respondents shared challenges about western Canadian tourists and the difficulty in balancing customer service and their own personal dignity and safety. Others shared the difficulty with the “action gap” at work - when organizational policies to support and protect 2SLGBTQIA+ staff exist, but are not always enforced by leaders in daily working life.

**“'Queer Stuff' is not interconnected with activities for newcomers. Settlement Services, BanffLife.”**

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**“For newcomers your circle of friends initially is within the workplace, so it's challenging to be out or connect with other Queers outside of work.”**

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**“[You'd have] no idea anyone Queer lives here. We need a central resource.”**

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# Regional Learnings: Canmore

## REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

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### Advancement At Work

Canmore residents are scoring significantly lower when it comes to opportunity at work; they believe less often that 2SLGBTQIA+ staff have opportunities for advancement at their workplaces.

*I believe 2SLGBTQIA+ staff have opportunities for advancement at my workplace - 66%*

### Queer Community Support

*If I desire, I have frequent opportunities to meet new people in my local queer community - 39%*

*I feel that my racial or ethnic background is respected in my local queer community - 69%*

Canmore respondents are feeling less connection to their queer community, and less supported, especially when it comes to their unique racial and/or ethnic backgrounds. Many identified a lack of events and opportunities to connect, and a need for resources to support these efforts – there's an especially strong need for supportive and welcoming queer-specific spaces.

**I would like more queer focused events throughout the year besides pride events. Or maybe have a queer coffee shop or a queer business people can hangout at.**

### Community Acceptance & Belonging

*If I want to discuss them, I feel safe discussing 2SLGBTQIA+ issues in my wider community - 55%*

*The wider community does not tolerate discrimination - 56%*

*I feel a sense of belonging within the wider Bow Valley community - 58%*

Respondents from Canmore are feeling less positive about their belonging in the wider community, feeling less safe to discuss 2SLGBTQIA+ issues, and feeling that discrimination is more easily tolerated. Many would like to see more educational support and training for the wider community to help grow acceptance.

**I feel that businesses want their queers to be palatable.**

**It's problematic if you don't put the training behind... the sticker.**

**Homophobic & transphobic Graffiti and posts on social media from the wider community make me feel unsafe.**

# Regional Learnings: Mîni Thnî

## REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

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The intersectionality of Indigeneity and queerness plays a strong role in creating unique conditions within the community around Mîni Thnî.

### Uncertainty in the Wider Community

Acceptance for Indiqueer and Two-Spirit (2S) individuals outside of their home area is mixed and many respondents reported issues around safety and respect when traveling outside of their community.

### Education for the Wider Community

Participants would like to see more opportunities and resources to educate the wider Bow Valley public and the Bow Valley Queer Community on Two Spirit identities and their cultural role. Many would also like to see more 2S-welcoming pride events.

### Unique Systemic Issues

The impact of colonization and the loss of cultural teachings and social standing of Two-Spirited individuals was noted as a particular challenge. Recovering these lessons and status were primary concerns for those who participated in our research. The majority of participants identified an urgent need for additional resources to support Two-Spirit youth, specifically addiction counselling and healthcare resources.

**“It has been difficult on the reserve. Colonization is a part of that. Dates back to Residential Schools. That’s where the culture got lost. 2S were equal in the community before. 2S people weren’t othered because of this. It was normalized. After Residential Schools it was frown upon and these teachings were lost. It is slowly getting better, but until recently did not feel safe in the community.”**

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**“In Mîni Thnî, we need more clinics for 2SLGBTQIA+ people. Doctors who are knowledgeable and trained. Better to have in Mîni Thnî instead of having to travel to the city. Transportation is a big barrier.”**

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6

## Business Learnings

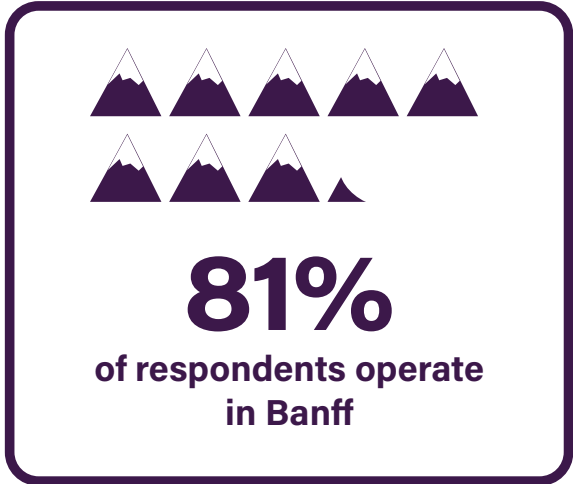
- Participant Overview
- Current Landscape
- Challenges
- Future Goals

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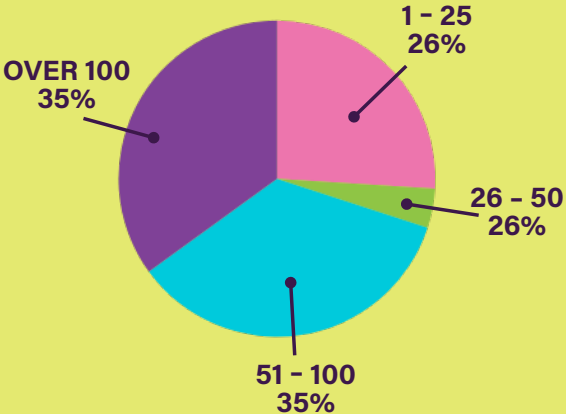




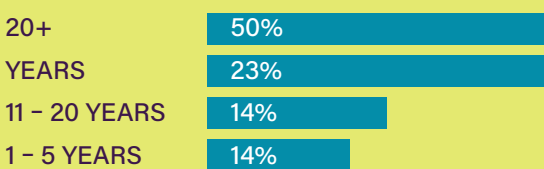
# Business Survey & Interviews



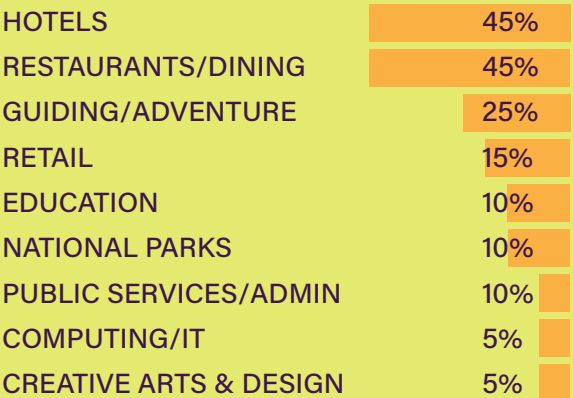
## SIZE OF BUSINESS



## YEARS IN BUSINESS



## INDUSTRY





# Business Learnings

## CURRENT INCLUSION LANDSCAPE

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### Perception of Support

*I believe that my workplace actively supports 2SLGBTQIA+ employees - 76%*

*In my organization, there is training in place to help customer-facing staff engage respectfully with a diverse customer base (race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, etc.) - 71%*

*In my organization, there is training in place to support customer-facing staff in managing customer conflict - 71%*

Many respondents to the business survey feel their organizations actively support 2SLGBTQIA+ employees, including training for customer diversity and managing conflict.

**“We have formed a committee and are trying to share what we have learned to date.”**

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**“Our objective is to not only provide support but to empower 2SLGBTQIA+ employees to thrive within our company.”**

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### Inclusive Values & Positive Intentions

*My organization has values/mission statements that support equity and inclusion for all - 71%*

*My organization regularly makes business decisions that align with our organizational values - 76%*

Respondents also feel that their organizations generally have inclusive values that support 2SLGBTQIA+ employees, and that these organizations regularly make decisions that align with these inclusive values.

The majority of respondents shared their perceptions about the good intentions of staff and managers. There was a common theme of the business community wanting to be inclusive, but having uncertainty on how to begin and how to develop capacity and resources for this work. Many respondents also mentioned the future-focused perspective of DEI work, understanding how this work will help businesses be resilient, support our changing communities, and directly support the region's 10-Year Vision for Tourism.

# Business Learnings

## CHALLENGES

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### Inclusive Policy Work

*My organization has explicitly considered 2SLGBTQIA+ identity in our code of conduct/employee handbook/policy guide - 47%*

*My organization has explicitly considered 2SLGBTQIA+ identity in our health benefits plan - 24%*

*My organization has established procedures to support gender-diverse people in dealing with identification/legal forms - 35%*

While the majority of respondents recognized the “soft” support of their organizations (feelings of goodwill and wanting to help), many also identified the lack of explicit support for 2SLGBTQIA+ staff in terms of organizational policies and benefit programs.

**“We certainly have room to grow but I’m excited to help aid that growth.”**

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**“We would like to support but do not know where to start.”**

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### Support & Education

*My organization has provided some level of inclusion training/education to all levels of staff- 65%*

*My organization prominently displays 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusive messages in easily visible locations - 65%*

When it comes to training and education, only some organizations indicated that some level of inclusion training had been provided. Others shared that their organization did not display any symbols or messages in support of 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion.

### Behind on Progress

Many participants acknowledged being “behind” in their inclusion work and not as explicitly supportive as they know they could be. Some identified resistance from leaders, in terms of both ideology and willingness to invest resources. Others shared the challenges in “enforcing” certain policies around language choices and harmful comments, and uncertainty around creating meaningful cultural change.

**“Our workplace has talked about this a lot. We want to support everyone we can, but we are a small organization with limited budgets.”**



# Business Learnings

## FUTURE GOALS

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### Education & Training Opportunities

Many respondents identified the need for further education at their workplaces. Education was proposed as solution to help address common issues like:

- Members of leadership not understanding the importance of inclusion work
- Staff members not understanding the inequities and barriers disproportionately faced by equity-deserving groups.
- The gap between intention and action for inclusion work

### Top Requests for Education:

- Harassment and Discrimination Equity & Inclusion at Work Indigeneity in the Bow Valley Inclusive Policies and Organizational Change
- Understanding the needs of the 2SLGBTQIA+ traveler
- Inclusive Leadership

**“We have many goals. I would like us to visibly support the community through social [media]. To allow HR to set up the appropriate policies. I would like the owners to complete DEI training.”**

### Resources & Support

When it comes to finding resources and support, many respondents strongly desired a more clear way to access resources for their staff. Many mentioned webinars and/or seminars, along with self-serve resources they could provide to staff for additional learning.

Many are also seeking support for implementation and bringing learning to life within an organization. There is curiosity about how organizations can measure progress from this work, how inclusive changes can be made to internal policies, and how to help increase empathy and understanding for inclusion work with resistant decision-makers.

**“We would like to know where we can resource facilitators and training.”**

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**“If there are any webinars or in person that they can attend to so we can let them know via email or our communication platforms.”**

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A large, diverse crowd of people is gathered outdoors for a Pride event. Many individuals are holding small rainbow flags, and a large, brown bear mascot is prominently featured in the foreground. A banner with the 'BANFF PRIDE' logo and a rainbow bear is held across the front. The background shows trees with autumn foliage and a building.

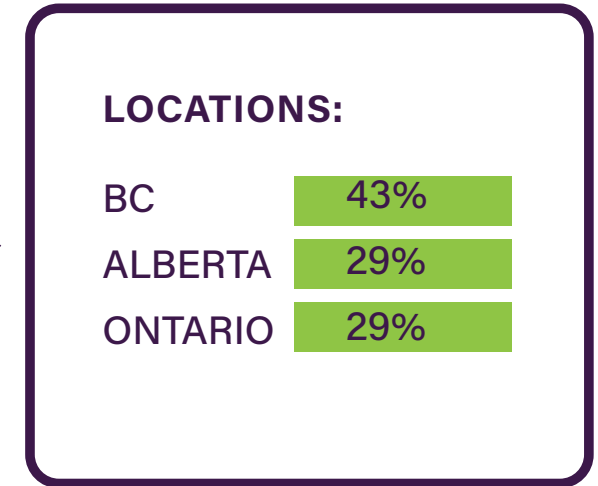
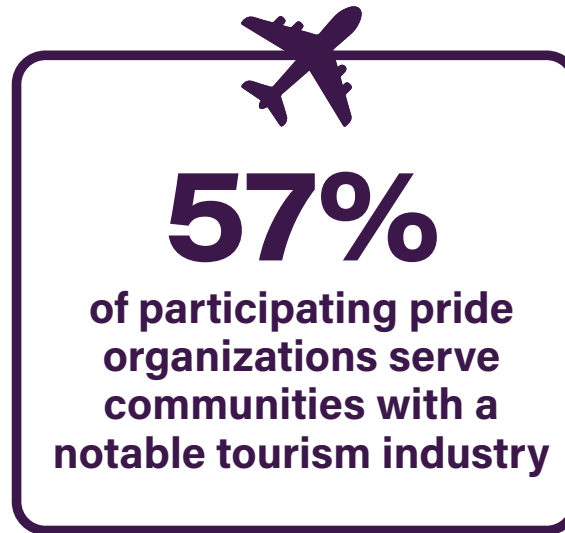
# 7

## Pride Organization Learnings

- Participant Overview
- Current Landscape
- Common Challenges
- Future Goals



# Canadian Pride Organizations



**6000**

The smallest population supported by a participating pride organization

**~1.5M**

The largest population supported by a participating pride organization

# Pride Organization Learnings

## CURRENT LANDSCAPE

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### Strong Community Support

Many organizations spoke of local businesses being excellent allies and supporters. This support often includes monetary donations, time and volunteer support, as well as the use of physical spaces. Many highlighted the successful support of their local municipalities and libraries for formal events like drag story time.

### Community Education & Engagement

Some organizations do not have community events as their focus, but instead serve as a resource and connecting point for the community. A number of organizations facilitate and/or organize 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion training and education in the community, and engage with community members and businesses primarily as a learning resource.

### Collaborators to Enhance Impact

Nearly all participants mentioned strong community support networks with other organizations, recognizing the impact in sharing resources and working together. These partner organizations include social service not-for-profits, federal government service organizations, adult education centres, trans peer support groups, and more.

### Programming & Events for Everyone

Nearly all organizations spoke of community-driven desire for a diversity of programming that supports a wide range of interests, such as physical activity, games nights, book clubs, and more. Other trends include: more alcohol-free community programming, and a growing demand for family-friendly and youth programming.

### Investment in Supporting Youth

Nearly every organization has queer youth engagement as a current priority, or on the road map in the next few years. These efforts include youth-focused community events, board member seat(s) designated for youth members, scholarships and supports for youth, and targeted education and anti-bullying programs for high-school aged students.

### Community Research Projects

For those organizations who were able to secure non-operational grant funding, many chose to invest in community research initiatives to better understand the needs of their local queer community. From this work, many have used this research to inform their organizational strategy for the coming years.



# Pride Organization Learnings

## COMMON CHALLENGES

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### Renewal After COVID-19

Many organizations are in a period of recalibrating and renewal post-COVID. During this time many community members and/or board members moved away and community needs changed and evolved. Many are finding the need to adapt their organizational plans and programming in response to this, but are finding it challenging in this new landscape.

### Capacity & Resources

In many volunteer-run organizations, it is not surprise that many participants are facing capacity issues and are struggling to get consistent volunteer support. Some organizations have lessened volunteer obligations to help combat this, trying to find more volunteers, but having them do less. Others have sought out operational funding to bring on a salaried position, which has helped create consistent results in organizational growth and progress.

### Supporting Community Needs

Challenging societal issues were a prominent theme among all communities, including safe gender and sexually affirming healthcare, housing and cost of living issues, and good quality jobs in smaller communities. Many organizations are unsure of their role in helping to address these important issues impacting so many in their community.

### Rising Culture of Intolerance

Many identified a noticeable increase in intolerance and resistance to progressive ideas and 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion over within recent years, including in increase in general bigotry/homophobia/transphobia, protests at drag events, and organized marches and protests within the community. Those who had extended tenure within their organizations (5+) noted this significant cultural change.

### Relationship with Law Enforcement

Some organizations identified a productive and supportive relationship with their local law enforcement/police group, but many others have shared stories of a more challenging relationship including discrimination and violence. This continues to be difficult relationship amid the rise of intolerance and hate in many communities and the corresponding risks faced by 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

# Pride Organization Learnings

## COMMON ASPIRATIONS

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### Evolution of Management Structure

Many organizations have decided to or are interested in diffusing decision-making authority and increasing ownership and capacity among board members.

Some have moved to non-hierarchical organizational structures successfully and are finding members more involved and engaged, while also acknowledging that this style of decision-making often takes more time. Others have tried and not found success with a non-hierarchical structure.

### Intersectionality & Inclusion

There was a strong theme of organizations acknowledging their majority-white histories and their desire to work towards a more inclusive future embracing the many intersecting identities of being queer.

Organizations in Western Canada are particularly focused on Indigenous and Two-Spirit inclusion, with strong interest in incorporating decolonial practices and thinking into organizational decision-making. Other actions include board representation goals for gender diversity and racial diversity.

### Knowledge Sharing & Collaboration

Many organizations expressed a desire to create a strong network of other pride organizations to share knowledge and wisdom and things they have learned; others are looking for formalize this work into a Community of Practice structure, connecting with similar-sized pride organizations across North America.

A few organizations have already begun this practice, building a smaller network of local pride organizations to offer support and share best practices within local context.

### Building Community-Wide Capacity

Instead of relying just on pride organization members/volunteers to plan and host local events, some organizations have seen success in empowering local businesses to take the initiative to host queer-inclusive events, supported with general guidelines from the pride organization.

Supporting local businesses to host inclusive events that incorporates the business's expertise and resources has helped some pride organizations amplify their impact in the community and reach more people than ever.





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# What's Next?

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# Bow Valley Inclusion Project: What's Next?

## WORKING COMMITTEE & STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A volunteer subset of Banff Pride and Canmore Pride board members will work in collaboration with CEC to build a DEI Strategy working committee. This committee will work to take this report's findings and develop a strategy to help address some of the key opportunities identified from the research. Strategy work creates a long-term plan that is implemented over a number of years – Banff Pride will work to integrate this strategy into its organizational mandate and help bring it to life within the Bow Valley, supporting enhanced inclusion for queer community members.

## RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The planned strategy work will outline and define key community resources and educational needs, incorporating the report findings and important local and organizational context from Canmore Pride and Banff Pride board members. CEC will work with the Working Committee and key subject matter experts to develop these education and support resources. Banff Pride will then own these resources, and work with the local community to distribute and facilitate training for local business and community members.

**Keep in touch with Banff Pride as our project progresses:**



[banffpride.ca](https://banffpride.ca)



[/banffpride](https://www.facebook.com/banffpride)



[@banffpride](https://www.instagram.com/banffpride)



[/banff-pride](https://www.linkedin.com/company/banff-pride)







ASSESSMENT REPORT

# Bow Valley Inclusion Project