



# A YEAR WITHOUT TOUCH



CALGARY FOUNDATION  
*2021 VITAL SIGNS*

In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge that we live, work, and play on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, the Métis Nation of Region 3, and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.



# LASTING IMPRESSIONS

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

CEO'S MESSAGE	02
OVERVIEW	03
HOW HAVE WE COPED WITH THE PANDEMIC?	05
HOW DO WE FEEL ABOUT CALGARY?	09
HOW DO WE FEEL ABOUT OURSELVES?	11
WHAT DO WE THINK ABOUT RACISM?	15
WHAT DO WE THINK ABOUT THE ARTS?	17
HOW DO WE FEEL ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT?	19
DEMOGRAPHICS AND METHODOLOGY	21

It is too soon to understand the impact the pandemic will have on our city, but there can be little doubt it will be a lasting one. As we reflect back on the ways this year has challenged us, it's hard not to feel immense sadness for all that was lost, and for the hardships so many Calgarians have faced. But alongside that grief sits another feeling— **GRIT**.

Calgary is one of Canada's most diverse cities with a long history of bouncing back from challenging times. From innovative entrepreneurs to creative artists, it is the tenacity of our people that makes our city by the Bow so resilient. If this past year has taught us anything, it's how deeply it matters to connect over a common cause. The challenges can be divisive, but we are at our best when our choices are guided by compassion and consideration for others.

The 2021 Vital Signs report reflects the feelings of 1,000 Calgarians who shared their unique perspectives and impressions of life over the past year. Are they feeling stressed about their health? Are they worried about their finances? Is Calgary a good place to raise the next generation? Their responses provide a timely snapshot of life in Calgary and illuminate issues that need our collective support. Their feedback also reveals reasons to be optimistic about what our future holds.

Sincerely,

Eva Friesen  
President & CEO  
Calgary Foundation

## ABOUT CALGARY FOUNDATION

Each year, **Calgary Foundation** flows millions of dollars to every corner of our city, supporting causes as myriad as our population. As those funds spread, our hope is that they bring something else with them—the knowledge that a city is a profound thing to share.

[calgaryfoundation.org](http://calgaryfoundation.org)

## ABOUT CALGARY'S VITAL SIGNS

Published since 2007, **Calgary's Vital Signs** annually measures our quality of life by presenting the results of the Vital Signs survey. Coordinated by Community Foundations of Canada, Vital Signs® is used to measure well-being and catalyze change across Canada and globally.

[calgaryvitalsigns.ca](http://calgaryvitalsigns.ca)

# WE GRANTED \$66.9M TO 1,105 CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

ASSET BASE **\$1.2 BILLION**  
NEW CONTRIBUTION **\$88.7 MILLION**  
NEW FUNDS **64**

## 2021 CALGARY'S VITAL SIGNS REPORT

**Project Management**  
Calgary Foundation  
Communications Team

**Survey**  
DDL Analytics, Inc.

**Concept and Design**  
Daughter Creative

**Website**  
Freshwater Creative

**Printing**  
Style-Craft Printing

## 2021 – 2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Murray Laverty, *Chair*  
John Fischer, *Vice Chair*  
Denise Bright  
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Wes Peters  
Phil Scherman  
Hugh D. Williamson, Q.C.  
Eva Friesen, *President & CEO*



# HOW HAVE WE COPEDED WITH *THE PANDEMIC?*

*IT'S BEEN HARD.*

During the pandemic, our overall quality of life decreased significantly.



2020 **75%**

2021 **64%**

% of Calgarians who feel they have a good quality of life.

**33%**  
FEEL STRESS  
DUE TO FINANCES.

MANY OF US WERE STRESSED,  
ESPECIALLY YOUNGER GENERATIONS.

**22%**  
FEEL STRESS DUE TO  
HEALTH CONCERNS.

63% for people  
under 25

**26%**  
FEEL STRESS DUE  
TO ISOLATION.

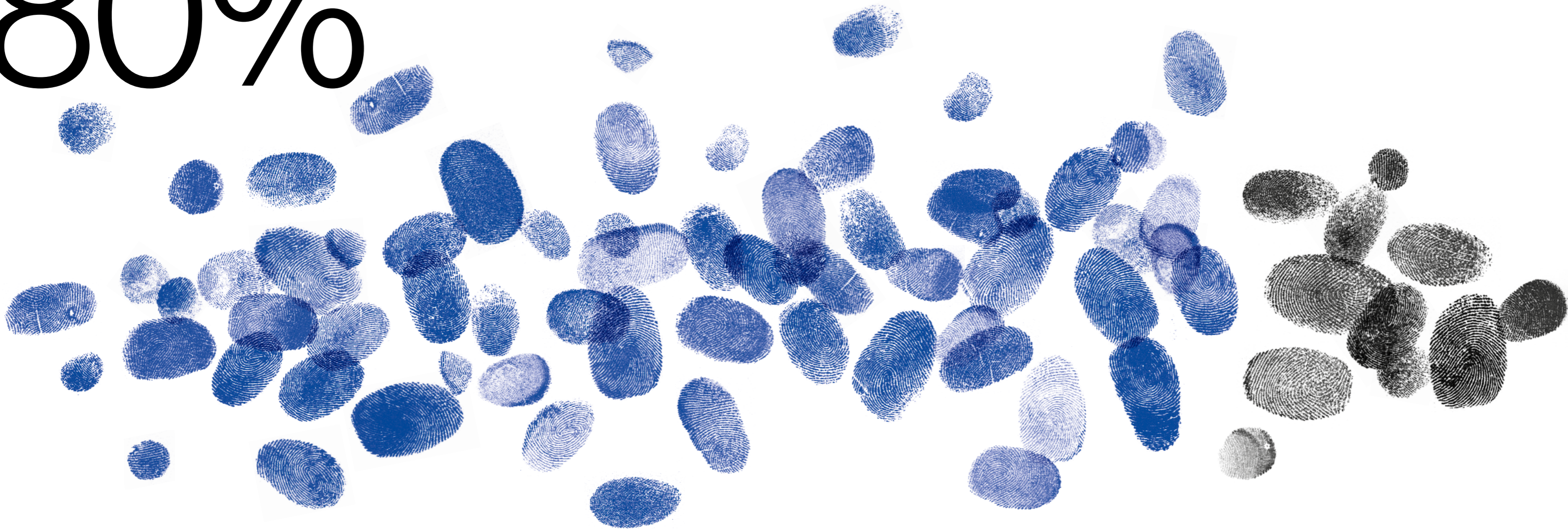
34% of 18–24 year olds  
and 14% of ages 65+

**26%**  
FEEL STRESS DUE  
TO FAMILY MATTERS.



# 80%

HAD SOCIALLY DISTANCED VISITS,  
UP FROM 49% IN 2020.



## THE WAY WE WORKED CHANGED.

50%

Worked remotely at home most of the time.

38%

Worked at their place of employment most of the time.

12%

Worked equally at home and at their place of employment.

37%

Experienced reduced hours, temporary, or permanent job loss.

30%

Of 35–64 year olds experienced reduced hours, temporary, or permanent job loss.

51%

Of 18–34 year olds experienced reduced hours, temporary, or permanent job loss.

## AND WE FOUND NEW WAYS TO STAY IN TOUCH.

20%

Participated in human rights events, up from 4% in 2020.

75%

Connected virtually, up from 53% in 2020.

60%

Dug into backyard gardening, up from 45% in 2020.

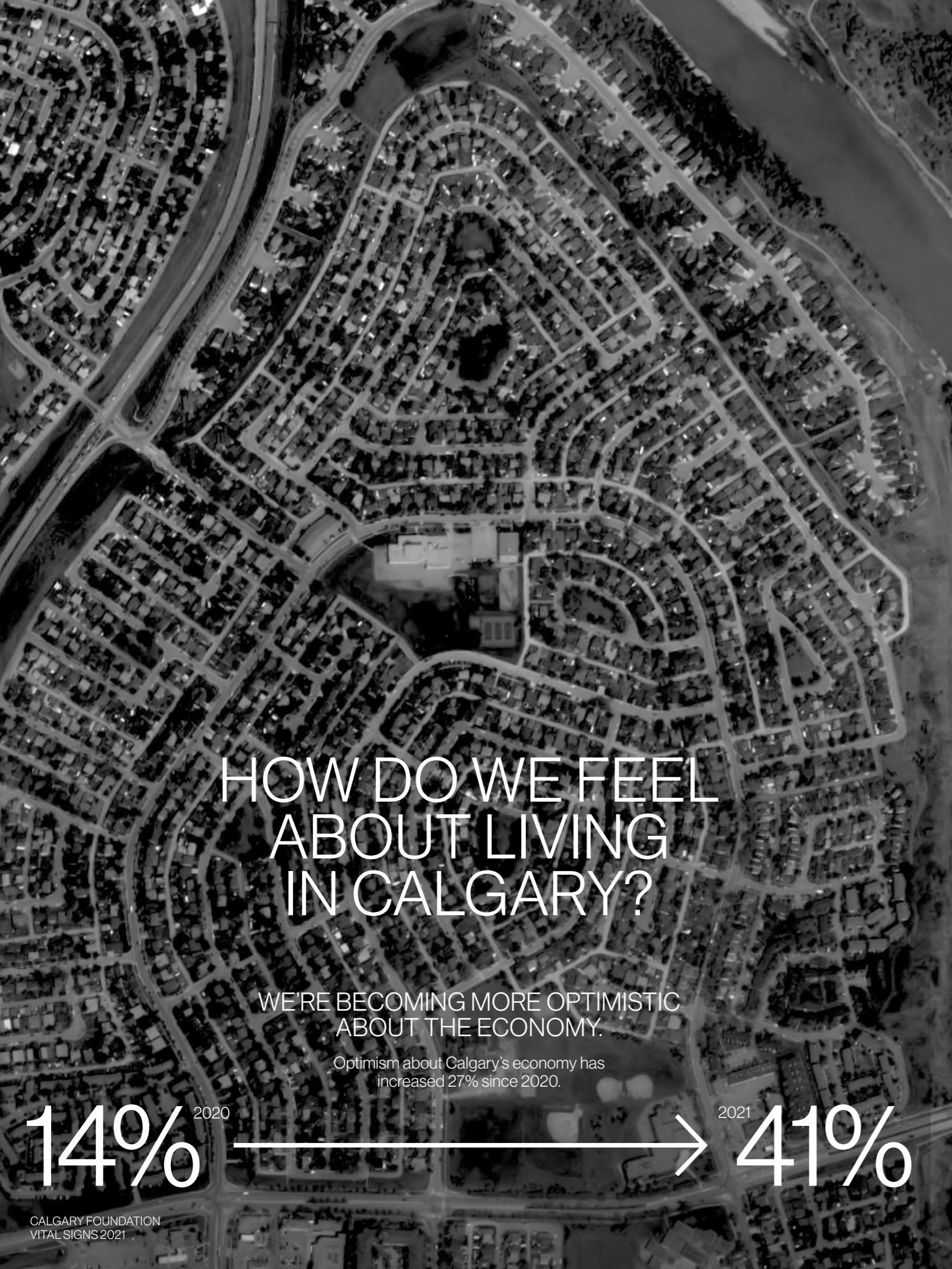
41%

Participated in online learning, up from 31% in 2020.

30%

Did drive-by greetings, up from 12% in 2020.



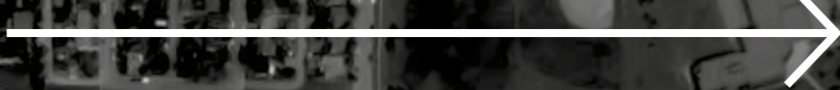


# HOW DO WE FEEL ABOUT LIVING IN CALGARY?

WE'RE BECOMING MORE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE ECONOMY.

Optimism about Calgary's economy has increased 27% since 2020.

14% <sup>2020</sup>



41% <sup>2021</sup>

GENERALLY, WE THINK IT'S A GOOD PLACE TO LIVE.

88%

Feel Calgary is a good place for families to live.

83%

Believe Calgary is a good place for young people to live.

70%

Of those aged 65+ feel Calgary is a good place for seniors to live.

50%

Of Calgarians are worried about the number of young people moving out of Calgary.

65%

Are concerned about safety in Calgary.

85%

Are able to meet our basic needs — housing, food, utilities, and healthcare.

80%

Believe Calgarians are entitled to a living wage, up from 75% in 2020.

HOME OWNERSHIP IS A STRUGGLE FOR YOUNGER GENERATIONS.

68%

Of Calgarians think home ownership is affordable.

39%

Of 18–24 year olds think home ownership is affordable.

BUT IT'S NOT FOR EVERYONE — ALMOST ONE THIRD OF US WANT TO MOVE.

30%

Foresee moving out of Calgary in the near future.

OF THE 30% WHO PLAN TO LEAVE...

82%

Plan to move out of Alberta.

60%

Of those under 25 plan to leave in the next five years.

73%

Plan to leave within the next five years.

AT LEAST THE INTERNET ISN'T SO BAD.

87%

Have adequate internet/computer technology to support their work, education, and social needs.

WE PARTICIPATE IN OUR DEMOCRACY.

77%

Understand and feel comfortable exercising their rights and freedoms, up from 74% in 2020.

67%

Participate in activities that strengthen democracy, up from 64% in 2020.





HOW DO WE FEEL  
ABOUT OURSELVES?

58%

35% of 18–24 year olds  
rated their mental health  
as poor or below average.

20% of ages 25+ rated  
their mental health as  
poor or below average.

8% of 65+ rated their  
mental health as poor  
or below average.

THIS YEAR TOOK A TOLL  
ON OUR MENTAL HEALTH.  
51% RATE THEIR MENTAL HEALTH  
AS GOOD/EXCELLENT,  
DOWN FROM 58% IN 2020.

51%



SAW OUR PHYSICAL HEALTH TAKE A DIVE.

55%

Rate their physical health as excellent or good, down from 61% in 2020.

ARE STRUGGLING TO FIND BALANCE.

45%

Rate their school and/or work-life balance as good/excellent.

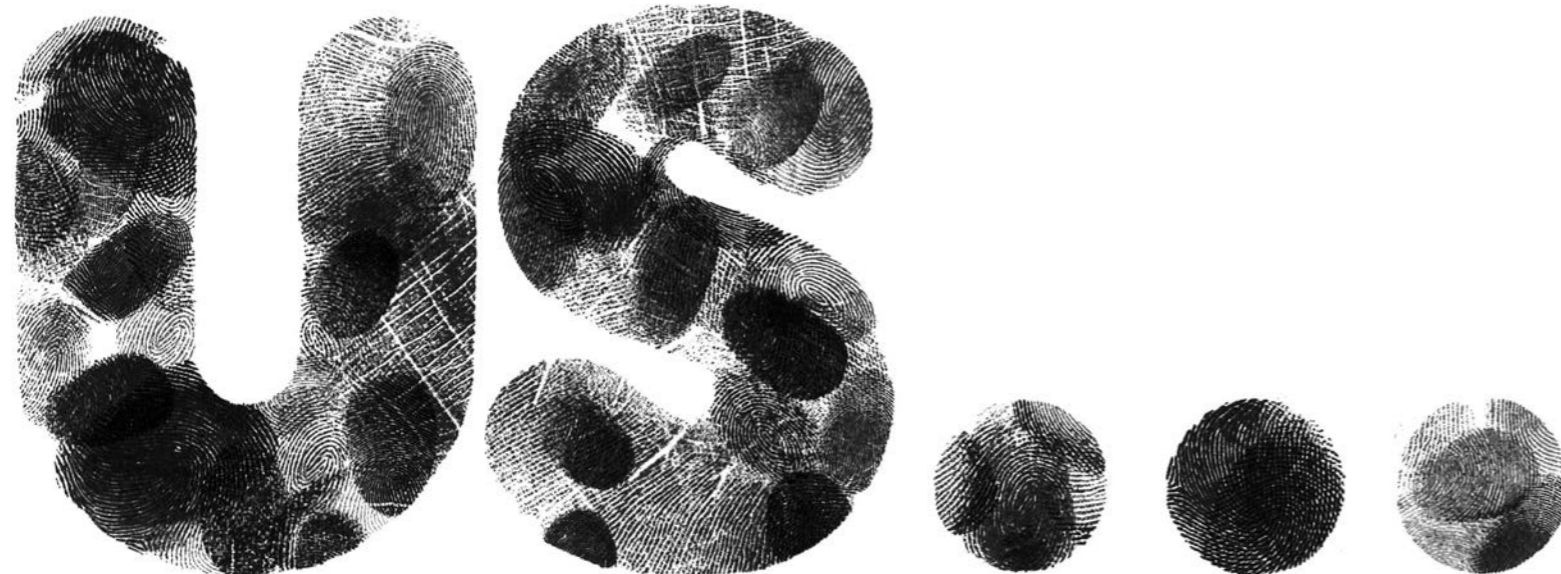
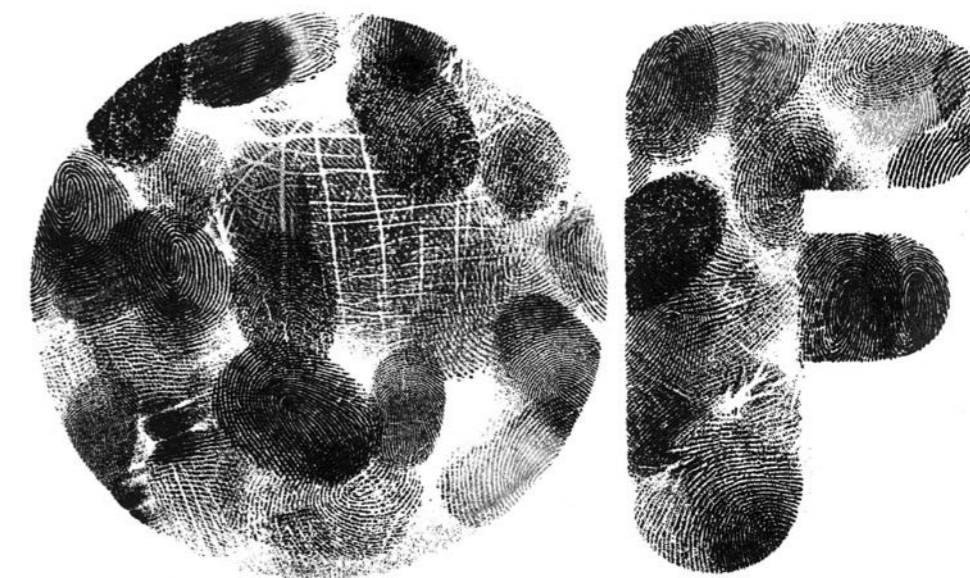
ARE FEELING STRESSED AND EXHAUSTED.

30%

Frequently feel stressed. Comparatively, 47% of 18–24 year olds frequently feel stressed, but only 8% of those aged 65+.

30%

Frequently feel exhausted. Comparatively, 35% of 35–44 year olds frequently feel exhausted, but only 14% of those aged 65+.



CAN'T ACCESS SUPPORT, EVEN IF WE NEED IT.

30%

Don't have access to mental health services/supports.

40%

Of 18–24 year olds don't have access to mental health services/supports.

57%

Have access to mental health services/supports through their employer.

60%

Have access to culturally appropriate health and well-being services.

44%

Don't have access to addiction services/supports.

60%

Of 18–24 year olds don't have access to addiction services/supports.





## WHAT DO WE THINK ABOUT RACISM?

77% think racism exists towards Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour, down from 82% in 2020.

But only some of us believe it exists on an institutional level.

50% believe Black and Indigenous people experience disproportionate levels of violence by police/RCMP/peace officers, down from 61% in 2020.

53% believe Black, Indigenous, and racialized people have opportunities to be equal participants in community, down from 58% in 2020.

The importance of understanding Truth and Reconciliation is growing.

78% believe it's important to learn about shared history from an Indigenous perspective, including the impacts of residential schools and intergenerational trauma, up from 73% in 2020.

61% believe Calgarians are accepting of people with diverse backgrounds, down from 65% in 2020.



MOST OF US FEEL STRONGLY THAT THE ARTS ARE IMPORTANT.

78%

Believe public art should be easily accessible to everyone.

63%

Think the arts helps them appreciate other cultures and perspectives.

WE'D LIKE MORE PUBLIC ART BY LOCAL ARTISTS.

61%

Want more public art created by local artists.

MANY OF US FEEL THEY HELP US CREATE A SENSE OF BELONGING.

58%

Believe public art helps create a sense of belonging.

AND OUR SENSE OF BELONGING COULD USE A LIFT. ONLY...

28%

Of us have a strong sense of belonging and 19% of 18-24 year olds have a weak sense of belonging.

63%

Think a strong arts and culture scene is key to creating a vibrant city.

SOME OF US WOULD LIKE MORE EMPHASIS ON ART FROM DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES.

48%

Think there should be a greater emphasis on public art honouring Black, Indigenous, and racialized peoples' histories and culture.

THE ARTS ARE BECOMING MORE ACCESSIBLE, BUT THERE'S ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT.

44%

Rate affordability of arts programs/events as good/excellent, up from 38% in 2020.

56%

Rate the availability of arts programs/events as good/excellent, up from 50% in 2020.

EVEN DURING THE PANDEMIC, WE FOUND WAYS TO CONNECT WITH THE ARTS.

37%

Of Calgarians aged 18-44 participated in online/socially distanced art programs/events, compared to only 22% of Calgarians aged 45-65+.



# HOW ARE WE FEELING ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT?



WE'RE COMMITTED TO TAKING CARE OF IT.

**92%**  
Are committed to recycling.

**76%**  
Are committed to composting.

WE LIKE SPENDING TIME IN IT.

**90%**  
Value access to local, provincial, and national parks.

**28%**  
Enjoyed cycling, up from 18% in 2020.

BUT WE'RE CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE OF IT.

**80%**

Of 18-24 year olds are concerned about climate change

VS.

**58%**

Of those aged 55+.

**65%**  
Of Calgarians are concerned about climate change, down from 67% in 2020.

**69%**  
Rate conservation of sensitive natural areas in Calgary and area as excellent/good.



**74%**  
Of Calgarians enjoyed getting around by walking this year, up from 66% in 2020.

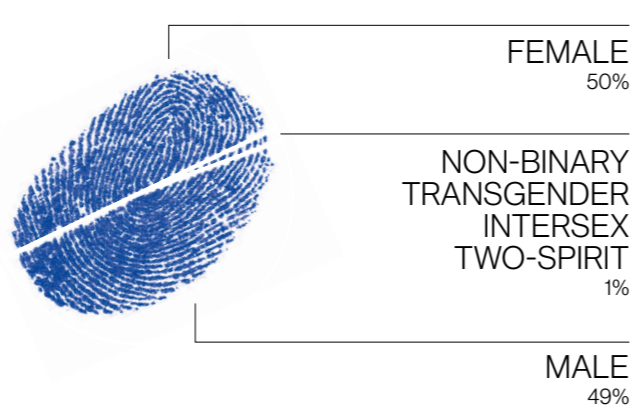


# DEMOGRAPHICS OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

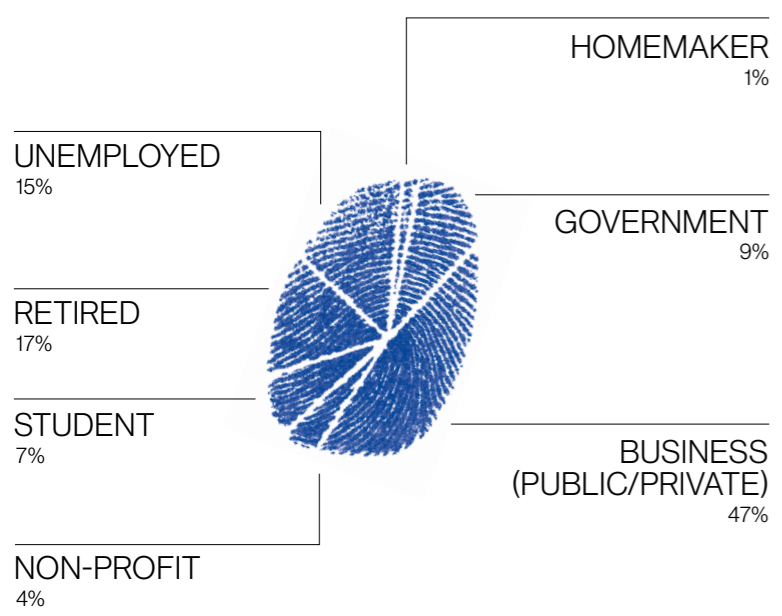
## AGE



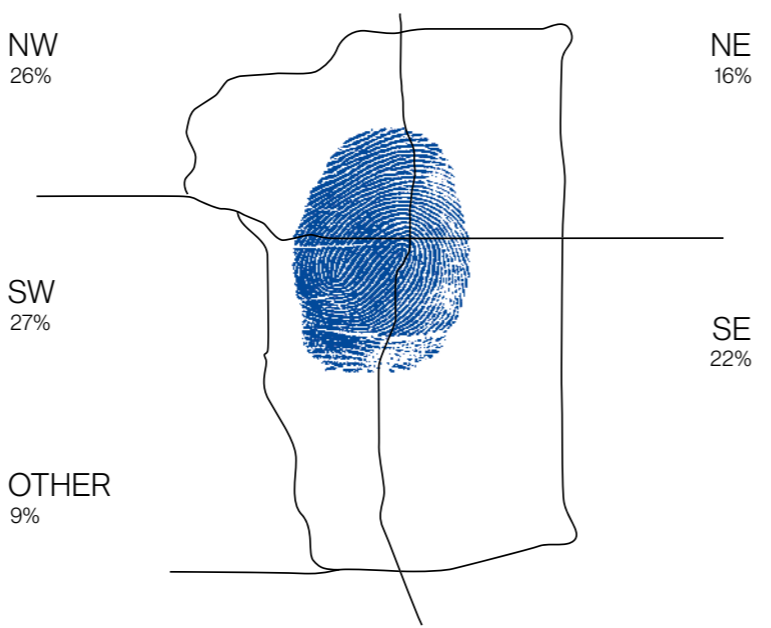
## GENDER



## EMPLOYMENT



## QUADRANT



## RACIAL IDENTITY



## SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The 2021 Vital Signs report is based on the survey responses of 1,000 Calgarians.

To ensure an accurate representation of the population, survey respondents were randomly selected based on demographic quotas from a pool of over 20,000.

For comparative purposes, a probability sample of 1,000 results in a margin of error of +/- 3.10%, 19 times out of 20.



CALGARYFOUNDATION.ORG  
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