



# A Place to Belong as We Age

What aging well can look like when community comes together

## Thank you to our partners

Thank you to the many partners who are helping make Alberta one of the best places in the world to grow older. Healthy Aging Alberta's work is powered by United Way of Calgary and Area and generously supported by the Alberta Government and the Waltons Trust. Through their investments, we are helping communities develop, test, and strengthen community-based approaches that support older adults to age well.

Our funded community partners are at the heart of this work. Through their dedication, wisdom, care, and lived experience, they bring programs to life and support older adults in essential ways across the province.

We are also grateful to PolicyWise for Children & Families for their thoughtful collection and analysis of program data, helping us understand our impact and continue learning and improving together.



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### About our data collection

This report shares highlights from Healthy Aging Alberta's Assisted Transportation, Social Prescribing, and Community Supports programs. The data comes from participant surveys, service records, feedback from program staff, and various forms of stakeholder engagement, which reflect the experiences of those who chose to share information. Because not all participants complete follow-ups, and data collection can vary across communities, the results are not meant to represent all participants or the broader population. If you have any questions about the data or what it means, please email us at [info@healthyagingalberta.ca](mailto:info@healthyagingalberta.ca). We'd be happy to connect.

# Aging well looks different for everyone

Across Alberta, older adults are navigating many different stages of aging. Some are active and independent. Others are managing health concerns, fixed incomes, or living alone. Where you live and what supports are available nearby can make a big difference in how easy it is to age well.

In some communities, services are well-connected. In others, supports may be limited, delivered differently, or still emerging.

Healthy Aging Alberta is working alongside communities to strengthen and grow these supports. So, no matter where someone lives, they have the pathways to age with dignity, connection, and choice.



## Meet Jean

Jean is 74 and lives alone in 'Prairie Ridge', a small rural community in central Alberta. Her town is one of many communities working to build stronger supports for older adults.

She's lived here most of her life. Her neighbours know her, and she values her independence, but, like many older adults, things have become harder over time.

Jean lives on a modest income. She no longer drives, and public transportation isn't available in her town. Lately, she's been feeling more tired, more isolated, and a bit overwhelmed as she manages everything on her own.

When she starts experiencing shortness of breath and joint pain, she knows it's time to see her doctor.

*Jean is a fictional character, inspired by common experiences reflected in Healthy Aging Alberta's program data. Her story helps bring to life what can happen when community-based services are connected and working together.*

## Getting to care: Assisted Transportation

When Jean needs to see her doctor, her first concern isn't the appointment—it's how to get there.

In Prairie Ridge, a local, subsidized assisted transportation program helps fill that gap. A volunteer driver picks her up, helps her into the vehicle, and makes sure she gets to her appointment and back home safely.

Not every community has access to transportation supports like this, and programs can look different depending on local capacity and resources. But where they exist, they play a critical role in helping older adults stay connected to essential care and friends and family.

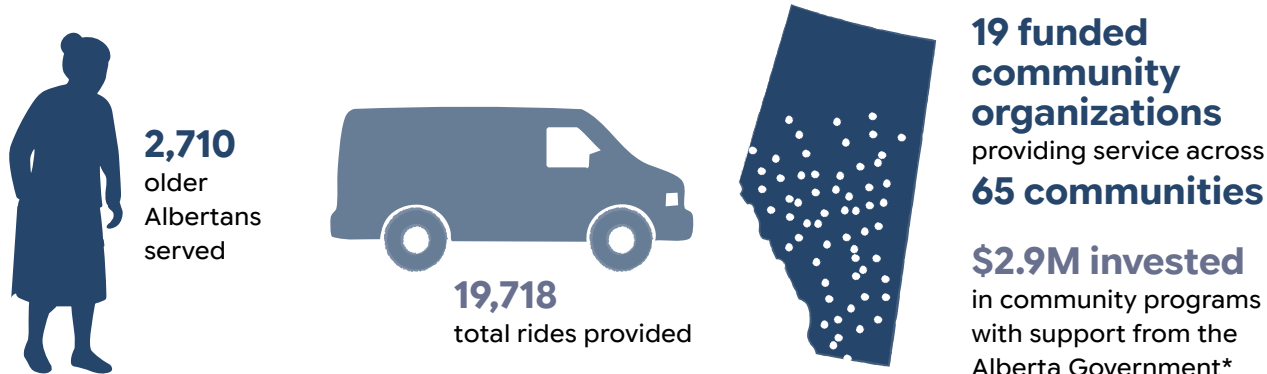
**For Jean, this ride means access, dignity, and the ability to keep living in the place she calls home.**



Getting there changes everything:  
Assisted Transportation supports  
healthcare, connection, and independence

All data is cumulative from  
October 2023 to September 2025.  
Source: Healthy Aging Alberta's Assisted  
Transportation Program: Year 3 Data Analysis  
by PolicyWise for Children & Families

TRANSPORTATION IN ACTION



MAKING TRANSPORTATION ACCESSIBLE

Subsidies and accessible options help  
ensure transportation is not limited by  
income or physical ability.

15 riders  
per month  
(on average) use walkers,  
wheelchairs, or other  
mobility aids

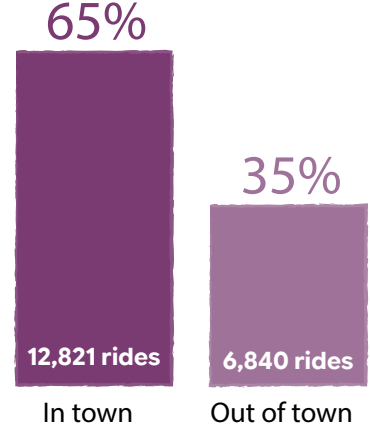
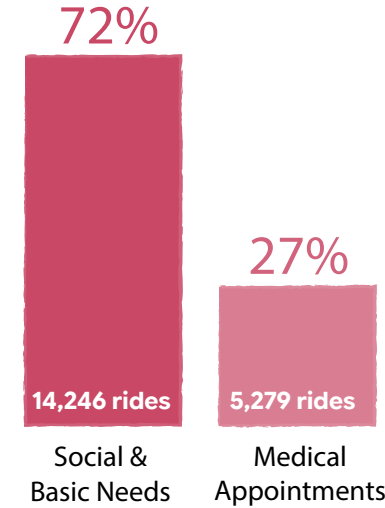


“This program has given me back my independence.  
I felt celebrated and connected again, being able  
to attend the Calgary Philharmonic, where I got  
recognized and acknowledged from the stage for my  
97th birthday, and then could meet with my family for  
a meal. I feel so special and alive again.”

- Older adult rider, a local Assisted Transportation program

WHERE RIDERS  
NEEDED TO GO

Many rides support more than  
one need or can have more than  
one stop. For example, a medical  
appointment might be followed  
by a stop at the grocery store.



CLOSE TO HOME  
AND BEYOND

Whether travelling within  
the community or to larger  
centres, transportation bridges  
service gaps.



WHAT GETTING THERE  
MAKES POSSIBLE

Transportation does more  
than move people from  
place to place.

It helps older adults:

- ✓ Attend medical appointments consistently
- ✓ Pick up groceries and prescriptions
- ✓ Stay connected to friends, family, and community
- ✓ Feel confident and independent

Accessible transportation  
is a foundation for aging well  
in our own communities.

\*Between October 2023 and March 2026.

# A new kind of support: Social Prescribing

At her appointment, Jean's doctor looks beyond her immediate medical needs.

Because Prairie Ridge has a Social Prescribing program, the doctor can connect Jean with a Link Worker—someone who can help her navigate non-medical supports, such as food security and social connection programs—in her community.

In many parts of Alberta, social prescribing is still developing or not yet available. Healthy Aging Alberta works with communities to explore how these models can grow in ways that fit local realities.

## Finding the right fit: Meeting a Link Worker

Jean meets with her Link Worker at a familiar community space. Together, they talk about what's been hardest lately.

She shares that she's:

- Struggling with mobility around her home.
- Feeling lonely since a close friend moved away.
- Unsure where to turn for help that fits her budget.

The Link Worker helps her explore options that feel realistic and respectful of her independence.

This kind of one-on-one support doesn't look the same everywhere. In some communities, similar roles may be offered through different organizations or informally through trusted local partners. What matters is the shared goal: **helping people find the right support, in the right place, at the right time, in ways that feel respectful and personal.**



Care that connects:  
How Social Prescribing is  
bridging healthcare and community

All data is cumulative from December 2022 to September 2025.

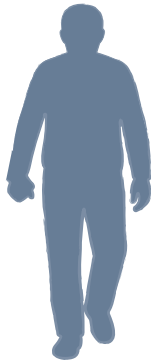
Source: Healthy Aging Alberta's Social Prescribing Program for Older Adults: Annual Evaluation Report – Year 3 by PolicyWise for Children & Families.

A GROWING PROVINCIAL MODEL



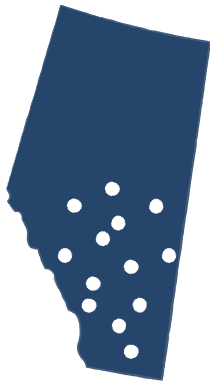
5,170 social prescriptions received from healthcare professionals

3,590 older adults supported by social prescribing staff across Alberta



\$2.2M invested in community programs with support from Waltons Trust\*

13 communities implementing social prescribing programs



385 regulated healthcare professionals providing social prescriptions on average each quarter



WHAT IT MEANS FOR OLDER ADULTS

54% reported increased awareness of services

39% reported improved mental health

47% reported improved access to services

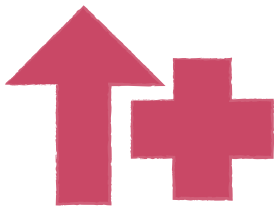
32% reported greater contentment with social connections

Progress may be gradual, but increased stability and connection represent meaningful change.

*\*Between December 2022 and September 2025. Outputs and outcomes reflected are representative of broader investment in social prescribing provincially in addition to funding that flows through HAA.*

“Most of the seniors now, with our presence and our support, they are no longer missing their appointments, and they are happy about that...we have actually assisted them to reduce the number of times they have been to the emergency at the hospital.”

- Link Worker



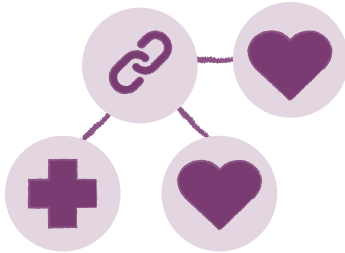
STRENGTHENING HEALTHCARE CAPACITY

95% say the service met their patients' needs

54% spend less time addressing non-medical needs

60% report fewer repeat appointments for some patients

Social prescribing allows healthcare providers to focus on clinical care while Link Workers address social and practical needs.



COMMUNITIES WORKING BETTER TOGETHER

87% report more streamlined service delivery

87% report improved referral pathways for older adults

83% report stronger relationships between community partners

Social prescribing strengthens collaboration between healthcare and community organizations.



WHAT WE'VE LEARNED SO FAR

- ✓ Stability can be a meaningful outcome. For older adults facing chronic or complex challenges, preventing decline matters.
- ✓ Social prescribing strengthens healthcare capacity when roles are clear and collaborative.
- ✓ Urban and rural programs require flexibility to reflect different realities and service gaps.
- ✓ Strong referral pathways and shared language across sectors improve system coordination.
- ✓ As the model grows, better cost information and stronger data sharing across sectors will help guide long-term planning.

## Strengthening daily life: Community Supports

Through this conversation, Jean is connected to a couple of Community Supports programs that offer light home help once a week and a local seniors' group that meets for coffee and other fun activities.

Community Supports are often shaped by local strengths, volunteers, nonprofits, and informal networks working together. Some communities may offer a wide range of services, while others are expanding supports step by step.

**For Jean, these supports help her feel connected and confident managing daily life.**



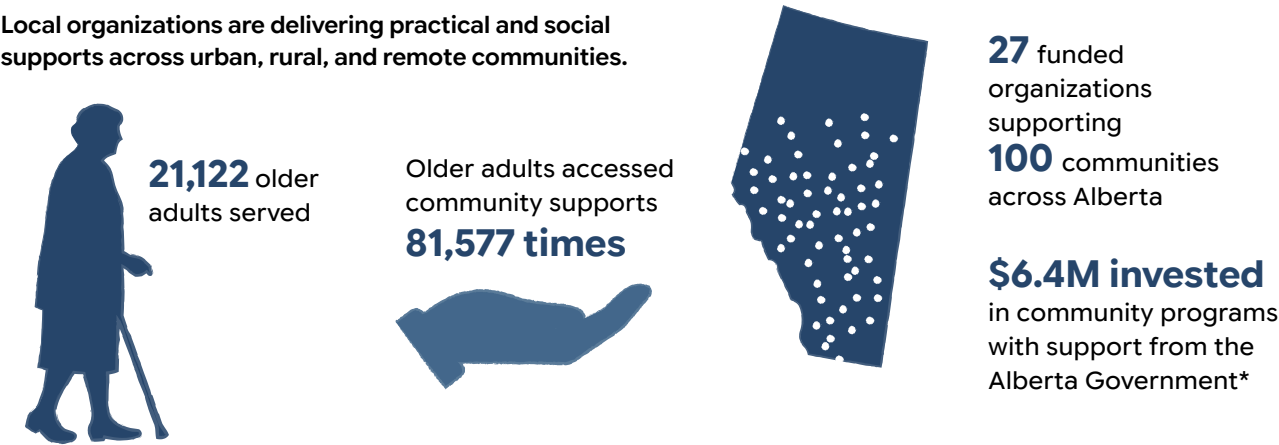
Support close to home:  
Community Supports helping  
older adults age in place

All data is cumulative from November 2022 to September 2025.

Source: Healthy Aging Alberta's Provincial  
Community Supports Program: Interim Report  
(Nov 2025) by PolicyWise for Children & Families

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS IN ACTION

Local organizations are delivering practical and social  
supports across urban, rural, and remote communities.



WHAT SUPPORT LOOKS LIKE

Top 3 services accessed:



Support ranges from practical daily needs to  
trusted conversations and community connections.

\* Between  
November 2022  
and March 2027.

“One of the most significant positive outcomes is that senior-serving partners have a clear point of contact when an older adult requires support to age in community. Our project has helped streamline referrals and strengthen inter-agency collaboration, making it easier for organizations to know who to call and how to respond effectively.”

- Funded community partner

WHAT IT MEANS FOR OLDER ADULTS



For many older adults, maintaining stability and preventing decline represent meaningful progress.



CONNECTION OPENS DOORS

- Group programs, shared meals, cultural gatherings, and trusted relationships often become entry points to broader services.
- Connection builds trust, leading to referrals and stability.

ACCESS MAKES PARTICIPATION POSSIBLE

- Transportation, navigation assistance, and caregiver support remove barriers that prevent older adults from participating in community life.
- Navigation and trusted staff help older adults complete applications, access benefits, and connect to additional services.

WHAT WE'VE  
LEARNED  
SO FAR



Every community is different,  
and supports are shaped to fit  
local needs.

- ✓ Social activities often open the door to other kinds of help.
- ✓ Programs that reflect people's language and culture help build trust and inclusion.
- ✓ Rides and one-on-one guidance make it easier to access support.
- ✓ Aging in place is made possible when connection and accessibility work together.



## The future of aging well, together

For Jean, support showed up as a ride, a conversation, and a connection to her community. For Alberta, it shows what aging well can look like when communities lead the way.

Across the province, older adults have unique needs, and communities are at different stages in developing or expanding supports such as Assisted Transportation, Social Prescribing, and Community Supports.

But aging well isn't a single service or solution. It's the result of communities being equipped to respond thoughtfully, locally, and together.

Jean's story shows what becomes possible when support is close to home, easy to navigate, and built around real life. It may not yet be the reality for every older adult in Alberta—but it's the future we're working toward.

