Where Pride Meets the Prairies

2SLGBTQ+ Youth Community Needs Assessment Executive Summary for Grande Prairie, Alberta



Conducted by: *Northreach Society*
Funded by: *Women and Gender Equality Canada*
September 2026

Women and Gender Equality Canada
Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada

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Introduction



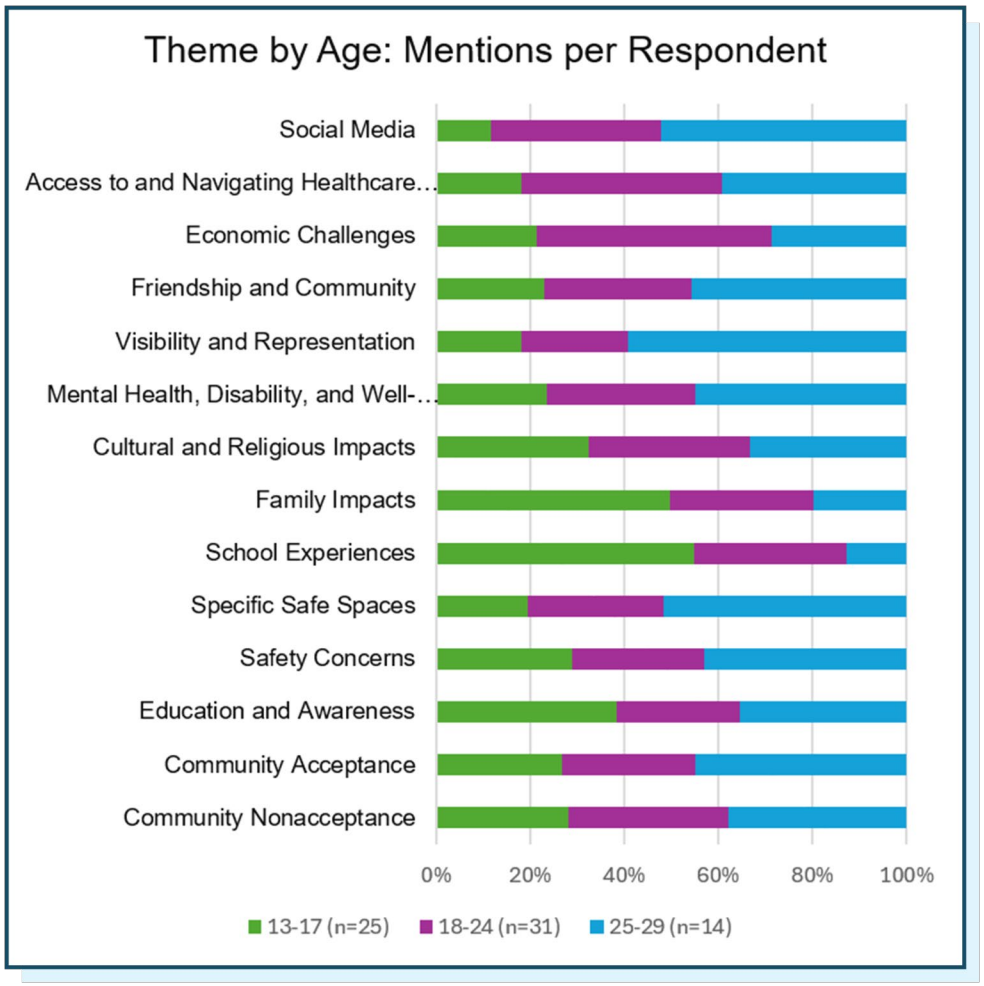
This 2SLGBTQ+ Youth Community Needs Assessment for Grande Prairie, Alberta, conducted by Northreach Society and funded through Women and Gender Equality Canada, is a critical step toward building community understanding and support for 2SLGBTQ+ youth in the region. Youth, as defined in this assessment, span a broad age range from 13 to 29 years, with analysis focused on three groups: 13–17, 18–24, and 25–29. Grande Prairie has a population of 70,385, with 20.8% children, 12.9% adolescents, and 16.5% young adults (City of Grande Prairie, 2024). Given the city's young demographic, addressing the needs identified in this assessment will improve the quality of life for 2SLGBTQ+ community members, both now and in the future.

This is the first needs assessment of 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Grande Prairie, offering a vital opportunity to generate much-needed knowledge for community members, service providers, parents, and stakeholders. With over a decade of experience supporting 2SLGBTQ+ youth, including through our youth group, binder buddy program with GALAP, and partnerships with local organizations, Northreach Society is uniquely positioned to lead this work. The findings have the potential to drive supportive, community-level change and ensure that the unique needs of 2SLGBTQ+ youth are recognized and addressed. Supporting 2SLGBTQ+ youth strengthens the community as a whole, fostering a more inclusive and thriving environment for everyone in Grande Prairie.

The needs assessment involved 90 points of data from youth over a 6-month period. Of these, 40 came from interviews, focus groups, and art-based submissions, while 50 came from verified surveys. The assessment also drew on 22 surveys from service providers, 7 youth working groups, and 3 service provider meetings. This report was authored by Amanda Gear, MA (Community Studies), BSW, RSW, 2SLGBTQ+ Community Needs Assessment Analyst at Northreach Society. Art and Design created by Jude Tweed.

2SLGBTQ+ Youth Community Needs Assessment Executive Summary

Grande Prairie, AB | Conducted by Northreach Society | Funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada | Sept. 2026



Why This Matters

Grande Prairie is a young city (20.8% children, 12.9% adolescents, 16.5% young adults), and its 2SLGBTQ+ youth (ages 13–29) have urgent, unmet needs. This first-ever needs assessment, led by youth, based in Grounded Theory and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+), reveals a complex reality: community acceptance, friendship, hope, and resilience sustain youth, while gaps in belonging, safety, education, and resources create barriers that negatively impact their daily lives. Addressing these disparities will strengthen the entire community.

How We Listened

Youth collaborated to design, verify, and decide every theme in this report including how the data is presented.

Methods included:

40 points of youth engagement (focus groups, interviews, art-based submissions) + 50 valid survey responses (after fraud prevention) for 90 total points of engagement.

Service provider surveys (22 responses) to triangulate findings. 3 service provider meetings for toolkit creation input.

7 Working groups, 2 full day and 5 half day, where youth validated all data and themes *(including collaboration for online survey creation)*.

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Key Findings: The Youth Experience

All themes prioritized by youth, ordered by youth preference

1. **Community Acceptance** (*678 mentions*)
   Visible allyship, Pride events, and safe spaces (e.g., Northreach's 2SLGBTQ+ Youth Group, Kickstand GP) are critical for wellbeing. Youth emphasize vocal allies (*100 mentions*) and listening to 2SLGBTQ+ voices (*100 mentions*).

2. **Friendship and Community** (*201 mentions*)
   Peer connections are vital lifelines for youth, offering safety, support, and access to resources. As one youth shares, *"I feel safest around other queer people"*.

3. **Community Nonacceptance** (*684 mentions*)
   Youth face systemic barriers in Grande Prairie, including political conservative influence/oilfield/Northern culture (*176 mentions*), hatred, phobias, stigma, and fear (*166 mentions*), lack of compassion, empathy, and othering (*110 mentions),* lack of resources (*82 mentions*), double standards (*82 mentions*), and specific unsafe locations within Grande Prairie (*27 mentions*). Older youth (25–29) report the highest frequency (*11.14 mentions/respondent*).

4. **Safety Concerns** (*338 mentions*)
   Youth live in hypervigilance, citing assaults (*80 mentions*), unsafe spaces (*65 mentions*), and hiding identity (*51 mentions*). Social media (e.g., Grande Prairie Facebook groups) amplifies hostility.

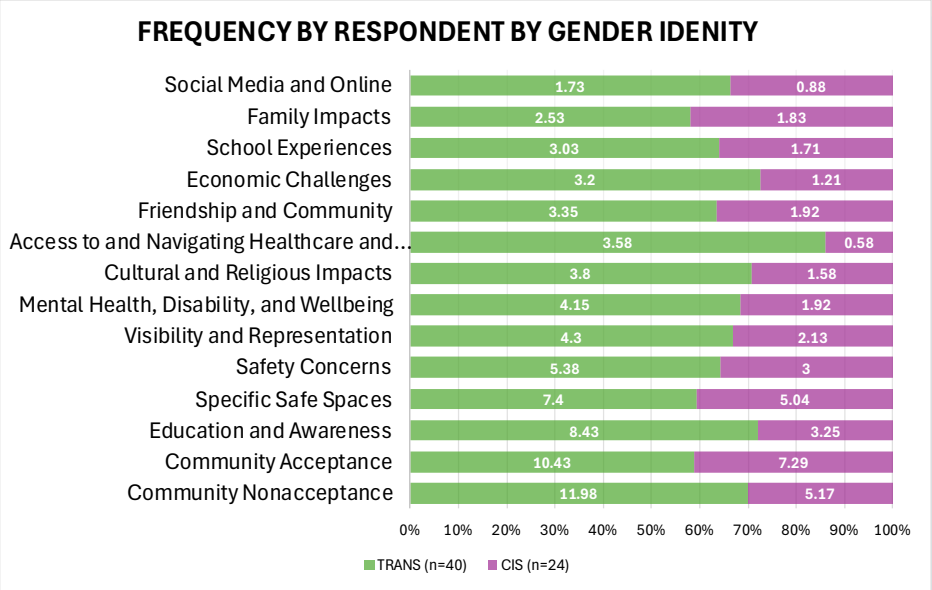
5. **Education and Awareness** (*477 mentions*)
   Misinformation (*166 mentions*) and lack of 2SLGBTQ+-specific knowledge (*103 mentions*) drive stigma. Youth call for school-based education, family workshops, and public awareness campaigns.

6. **Visibility and Representation** (*246 mentions*)
   Youth demand intentional visibility of resources, allies, and 2SLGBTQ+ people with a need for visibility (*173 mentions*). Performative allyship (*25 mentions)* was a concern; youth want action over symbols.

7. **Mental Health, Disability, and Wellbeing** (*241 theme-level mentions*)
   Youth face barriers to accessing and navigating healthcare and services (*171 mentions*) and economic instability (*167 mentions*). However, they also find strength in resiliency and hope (*34 mentions*) and the intersection of identity (*66 mentions*), while navigating their connection to Grande Prairie as home (*26 mentions*).

8. **Socialization** (Family, Religion, Culture) (*363 mentions*)
   Family (*160 mentions*) and cultural and religious impacts (*203 mentions*) shape youth experiences from rejection and shame to affirmation and healing. Youth highlight the need for culturally competent supports (e.g., Two-Spirit circles, Indigenous elders).

The Trans Experience in Grande Prairie



Transgender and gender-diverse youth discuss *every theme* more frequently than cisgender peers, revealing distinct and severe challenges:

- Medical underservice (e.g., no local gender-affirming care; referrals to Peace River or Edmonton).
- Minority stress (Meyer, 2003) and systemic marginalization.

Future research and programming must prioritize trans-specific, intersectional approaches.

What Youth Need You to Know

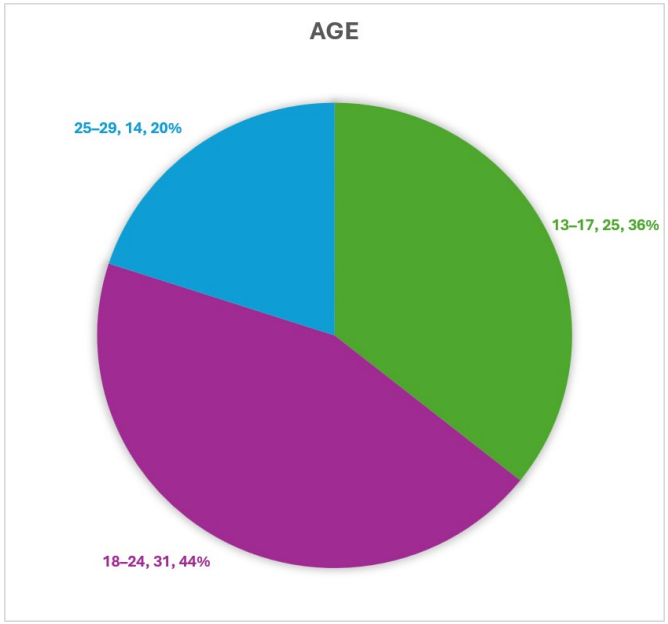
Priority Area	Action Items
Safety	Create a Community Safety Network; increase safe space visibility; advocate for inclusive policies.
Acceptance	Hold leaders accountable; promote visible allyship (e.g., ongoing Pride events, inclusive policies).
Education and Awareness	Advocate for inclusive school curricula; expand community workshops on 2SLGBTQ+ identities.
Visibility	Increase intentional visibility of resources; move beyond performative allyship.
Mental Health and Wellbeing	Improve access to affirming, intersectional supports; strengthen provider training.
Socialization	Develop family support programs; offer culturally appropriate resources.

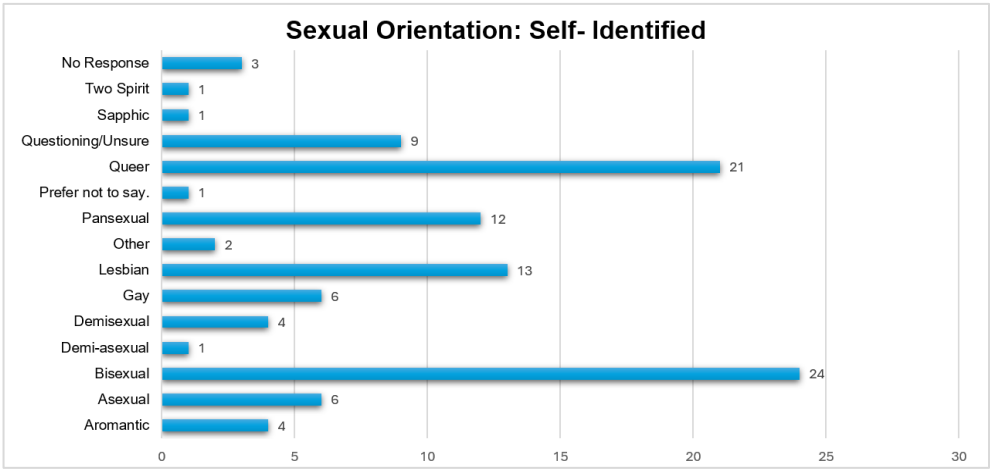
A Call to Action

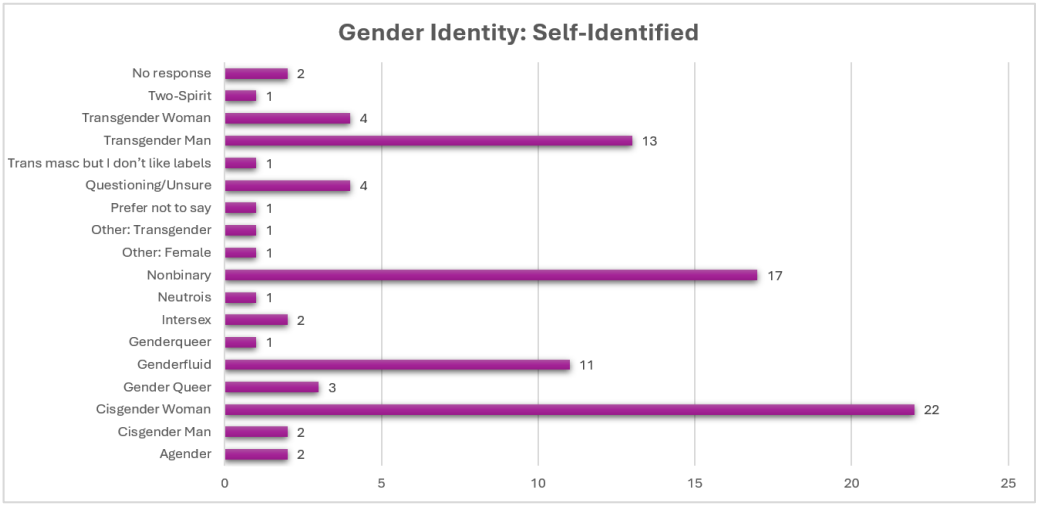
This assessment is a roadmap for change. By addressing these gaps, Grande Prairie can:

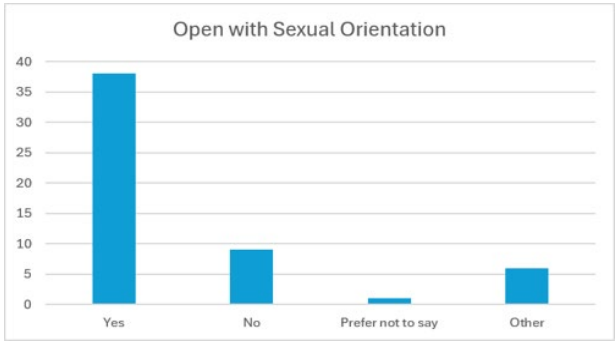
- Increase safety (address bullying, discrimination, nonacceptance).
- Save lives (expand mental health supports, suicide prevention, gender-affirming care).
- Build a stronger community where all youth thrive.

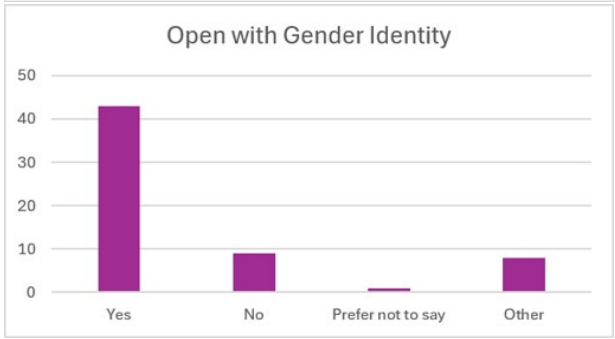
Demographics



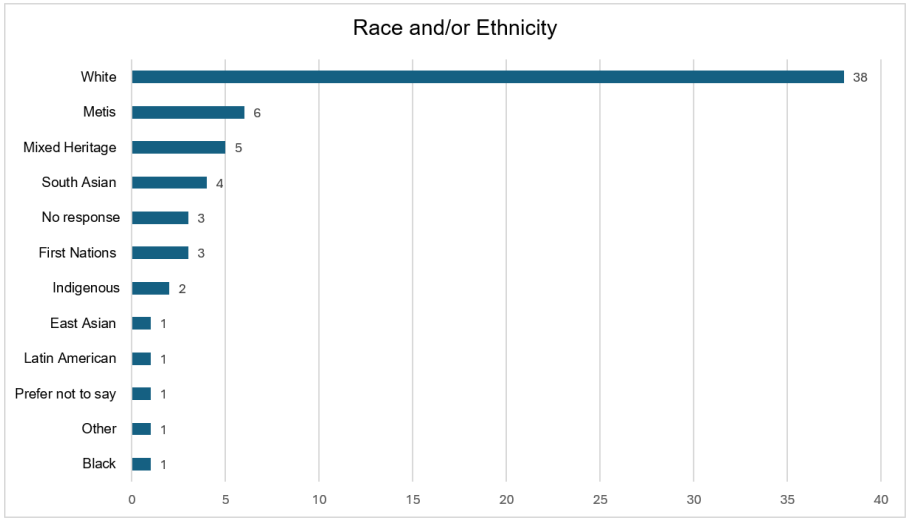


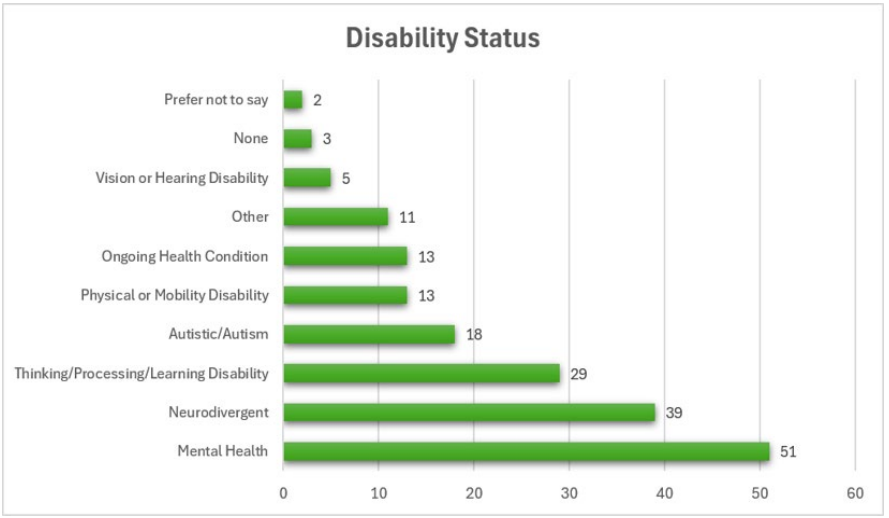




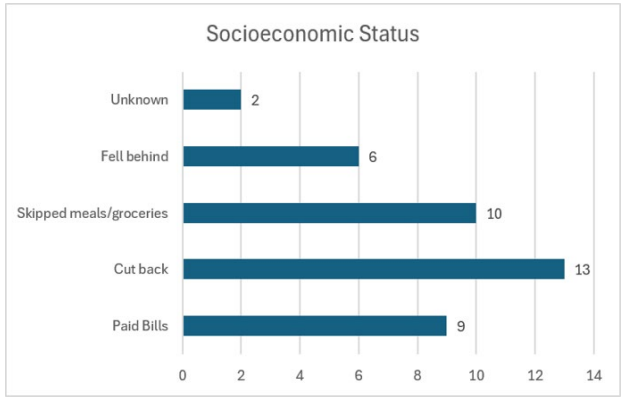


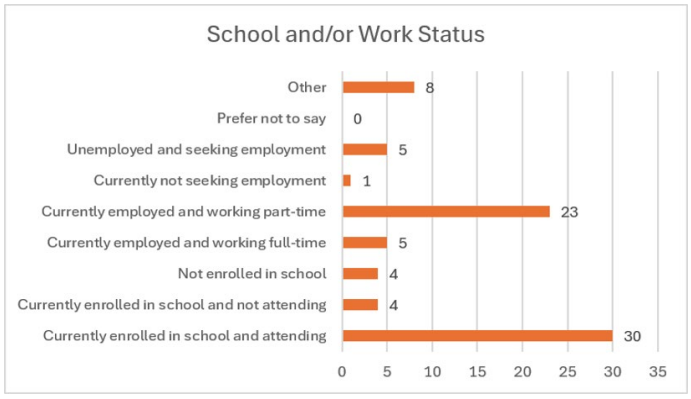
Demographics Continued





Note: Racial and ethnic identity data was self-reported by 52 participants. Not all participants disclosed this information. Further research is recommended to better understand the diversity and unique experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ racialized and ethnic minority youth in Grande Prairie.





Note: All data is self-reported. Socioeconomic data was collected through interviews and focus groups (n=20). School and work data was gathered via SurveyMonkey (n=50), reflecting a youth-driven decision to frame questions during survey development. Disability data comes from interviews, focus groups, and surveys (n=70), with participants able to select multiple categories or opt not to disclose. These supplementary data points provide important context for the assessment's themes. However, further research is needed to explore how each status affects 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Grande Prairie.