

# Increase in Urban & Rural Crime: Allocation of Additional Resources (2023)

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## Issue

The increase in both urban and rural crime highlights the necessity for reallocation of resources, in addition to financial support for those organizations that provide policing and policing alternatives.

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## Background

Increased crime affects both businesses and residents across the province, in both urban and rural communities, with 61% of Albertans believing crime is increasing in the part of Alberta where they live.<sup>1</sup> Individuals as well as organized criminal group activities exploit communities, putting those who live and work in those communities at higher risk, while decreasing the economic viability of the affected neighborhoods.

Large rural areas with small urban centers are subject to increased crime due to lack of deterrents. Deterrents could include improving enforcement visibility such as satellite community offices, crime reduction awareness campaigns by local detachments or in crime watch organizations, such as Rural Crime Watch and Citizens on Patrol. Causes of crime are varied including the economy (38%), homelessness (26%), and lack of policing resources.<sup>2</sup>

An increase of policing presence in and around rural communities creates the potential of both decreased crime as well as vigilantism by frustrated community residents and business owners. Smaller, satellite community offices, not only increases the feeling of safety in the communities, but also decreases the amount of time required to attend call outs.

Registered organizations such as Citizens on Patrol and Rural Crime Watch work with residents and businesses to decrease the incidents of crime by acting as deterrents and reporting incidents in both urban and rural environments. These organizations require funding to succeed. Their costs include fuel, insurance, and equipment, in order to keep their volunteers safe and decrease crime in their areas. They currently have to apply for limited funding through the submission of receipts with uncertain results on if and when that funding will be received. This severely inhibits these organizations with planning and recruiting.

By providing stable and consistent funding to organizations like the Citizens on Patrol, Rural Crime watch and any other like minded Provincial or Federally registered organization, this will allow them to actively provide crime reduction sessions in their local communities to help educate residents & business owners on ways to help reduce crime.

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## The Alberta Chambers of Commerce recommends the Government of Alberta:

1. That the Minister of Justice support & encourage the RCMP to explore & establish community offices within their service areas to reduce response times and have more

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.abmunis.ca/system/files/2023-02/Public%20Safety%20%26%20Policing%20Survey%20Report%20-%20Feb%202023.pdf> – page 5

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.abmunis.ca/system/files/2023-02/Public%20Safety%20%26%20Policing%20Survey%20Report%20-%20Feb%202023.pdf> – page 6

presence in rural communities

2. That the Minister of Municipal Affairs support & encourage municipalities to support the RCMP in exploring & establishing community offices within their local RCMP service areas to reduce response times and have more presence in rural communities
3. Provide additional funding to the RCMP to create & promote crime reduction awareness campaigns to help community residents and businesses help reduce crime. (E.g.: Rental space to host public engagement sessions on crime reduction, pamphlets, window decals, etc.)
4. Provide easier access and consistent funding to registered Provincial or Federally registered organizations, that provide services and supports in urban and rural communities looking to reduce rural crime.