

# COVID-19 Impact Snapshot

WHISTLER'S VITAL SIGNS | OCTOBER 2021

All aspects of community life have been impacted by COVID-19. This is a snapshot of the data and lived experiences of the people living and working in Whistler over the past 18-months.

[whistlerfoundation.com](http://whistlerfoundation.com)

PEOPLE



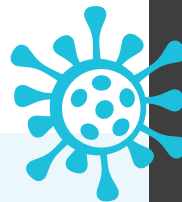
**1120**  
CASES

in Whistler January & March 2021



in early 2021 -  
identified as aged  
**20-39 YEARS**

(VCH)



*Chronic unpredictability  
is malignant to the  
brain, impacting our  
health and wellbeing.*

~ Jackie Dickinson,  
Whistler Community Services ED.  
Vital Café on Parenting During the  
Pandemic, May 2021



Overcrowded housing was linked in the rapid spread of COVID-19 in early 2021 when Whistler saw cases climb exponentially in a matter of weeks.

**38%** OF YOUNG ADULTS  
**LOST THEIR JOBS**

due to COVID-19

DUE TO FULL OR PARTIAL JOB LOSS  
OF YOUNG ADULTS COLLECTED  
**62%**  
**GOVERNMENT  
BENEFITS**

(809 residents aged 18-30 responded)

*Alistair Cray, manager at Whistler  
Cooks noted that 'In 2021, Whistler  
is experiencing a sustained staffing  
crisis due to lower numbers of  
working holiday visas issued.'*



**5792** **FOOD  
BANK**  
visits in 2020

The **primary reason** for accessing the food  
bank was job loss due to COVID-19.

Immigrant and racialized populations were  
disproportionately affected by **job loss in tourism sector**.



**FOOD BANK  
DELIVERIES**  
made to people  
**self-isolating**

**YOUNG ADULTS (AGED 19 - 30)  
COMMUNITIES THAT CARE SURVEY**

**70%**  
experienced  
**worsened  
MENTAL  
HEALTH**

**65%**  
experienced  
**ANXIETY**

**42% FEWER**  
JOB APPLICATIONS

were submitted to Whistler  
Personnel Solutions in winter  
2021 compared to 2020



**19,842** APRIL 2019

**342** APRIL 2020

**1,794** APRIL 2021

**Average visitors per day**  
from outside Whistler

Tourism, a key economic sector in Whistler,  
lost visitors due to health protocols and  
restrictions causing record-breaking financial  
losses for employees and employers.

**Mental and physical health has  
suffered due to:**

- elective surgery cancellations
- increased severity in diagnoses of life-limiting illness resulting from residents staying away from health facilities
- COVID-19 illness
- burnout and decreased sense of vitality
- financial stress
- restrictions barring gathering, particularly affected elderly, parents of young children and teens

Most Prevalent Theme  
of COVID-19

## Mental Health

**2021  
FOOD BANK USE  
IS SET TO  
SURPASS  
2020**

**52%**

**INCREASE  
IN FOOD  
BANK USE**

**3005  
VISITS IN 2019**

**TOTAL  
CRIMES  
REPORTED**

**1477** in 2019

**1043** in 2020

**30%**

**VIOLENT  
CRIMES  
REPORTED**

**201** in 2019

**167** in 2020

**17%**

**SEXUAL  
ASSAULTS  
REPORTED**

**30** in 2019

**16** in 2020

**47%**

*Allison Harriman, Victim Services  
Coordinator with the Whistler RCMP*

*"noticed a decrease in the reporting  
of sexual assaults initially during  
COVID. This seemed to be tied to  
drinking establishments being closed,  
and we have seen an increase in  
Sexual Assault reports again now that  
the restart plan has advanced."*

*"In the early stages of the pandemic,  
demand for housing slowed  
significantly due to the challenges of  
survivors calling for help when they  
were trapped at home in lock down"*

- Ashley Oakes, Executive Director of  
Howe Sound Women's Centre

## PLACE

The gap between rich and poor widened as local workers faced unemployment and food insecurity while the housing market saw record sales.

575  
UNITS  
in 2019



# of market housing units  
sold in Whistler/Pemberton  
(REBGV, Dec 2020)

816  
UNITS  
in 2020

**% OF LOWER MAINLAND  
BUYERS**

85% in 2020 and 70% in 2019

~ David Higgins, WRE



average time on  
**WHA  
PURCHASE  
WAITLIST**

54%  
of young adults  
**SPEND  
50% +  
OF INCOME  
ON HOUSING  
COSTS**

Affordable housing equates to  
**30% OF GROSS INCOME**  
spent on housing costs  
(BC Housing)

**\$790/month**

affordable for a min. wage earner

**\$1590/month**

affordable for 2 min. wage earners

**\$2259/month**

avg. advertised 1 BR rent (WHA)

**<1%  
RENTAL  
VACANCY RATE**

AT WHISTLER HOUSING  
AUTHORITY (WHA)

Whistler's total estimated  
community-wide GHG emissions

likely related to  
**PANDEMIC  
RESTRICTIONS**  
on socializing, travel, work  
& shopping.



**33% REDUCTION**

in GHGs, was the community  
climate action target for 2020

Andrew Tucker, Manager of Transport and Waste for the RMOW,  
commented that due to the nature of people working from home,  
residential waste increased and the commercial waste  
decreased over the past 18 months.



## CULTURE

**5000  
VOLUNTEER HOURS  
LOST**  
in Arts & Culture sector

182%



USE OF  
LIBRARY'S

**EBOOK  
SITE**

**70%**

Youth's sense  
of belonging

(CTC SURVEY)

DECREASE

USE OF LIBRARY'S  
**ONLINE COURSES**

**228%**



INCREASE



*Creativity and participation in the arts is a proven pathway for better mental health and community connection. The ReachOut! pins will help us build community awareness and enable pin wearers to identify themselves as compassionate supporters.*

Mo Douglas,  
Exec. Dir.,  
Arts Whistler



**Being a new mom in the pandemic, the Virtual Parent Infant Drop-In was my weekly anchor. I was able to connect with other parents and helpful professionals to learn all about caring for baby and myself, and actually see other people!**

~ Whistler Public  
Library User

**Increase in calls  
requiring mobilization**

**38%**

With the pandemic-fueled need to embrace nature, visitors have flocked to Whistler. Many newcomers to outdoor experiences came unprepared for rugged trails,

mountain weather and long distances which caused increased injury. Part of the call volume included experienced people pushing their limits in more difficult and dangerous terrain (WSAR).



WHISTLER'S

**VitalSigns**



COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATIONS  
OF CANADA

