

Alberta
RCMP



The Alberta RCMP:
UNDERSTANDING POLICING COSTS & AGREEMENTS



CLARITY NOT INFLUENCE

Public discussion about policing in Alberta, particularly the role of the RCMP under the Municipal Police Service Agreements (MPSA) and the Provincial Police Service Agreement (PPSA), has increasingly focused on cost, vacancies, and value. These are important issues that require clear, accurate information to inform community discussions around policing services.

The primary drivers of rising policing costs are labour, market pressures, and operational costs, all of which are impacting law enforcement agencies across North America.

Providing clarity on these factors is not about influencing the decisions of municipalities or the province. It is about ensuring that discussions about policing service under the MPSA and PPSA are grounded in a shared understanding of how the current system operates, what drives costs and vacancies, and what value is being delivered. With clear, accurate information, communities can more confidently assess their policing options and make decisions that reflect their local needs and priorities.



COMMON PRINCIPLES OF MUNICIPAL POLICE SERVICE AGREEMENTS & THE PROVINCIAL POLICE SERVICE AGREEMENT

The Provincial Police Service Agreement (PPSA) enables the RCMP to provide provincial and rural policing services across Alberta, including policing for smaller communities. Under Alberta's Police Act, municipalities with a population over 5,000 must decide how policing services will be delivered and may choose to enter a contract with the RCMP through a Municipal Police Service Agreement (MPSA). These agreements establish the framework for delivering, funding, and governing RCMP policing services in Alberta.

Common Principles

Both agreements recognize the mutual benefits of contract policing, which creates economies of scale, reducing costs, improving efficiencies, and standardizing service delivery. This model is built on core principles of consultation and collaboration.

Developing Policing Budgets

Multi-Year Financial Plan

MPSAs and the PPSA require the RCMP to develop a Multi-Year Financial Plan (MYFP) to support annual budgeting. The MYFP looks ahead three to five years to help plan for future policing needs, staffing, infrastructure, and equipment requirements.

- **Identifies cost pressures:** Salaries, benefits, fleet, property, equipment, operating costs, as well as inflationary and new requirements.
- **Collaboration with contract partners:**
 - Provincial Minister (PPSA) or CEO/Mayor (MPSA) reviews vacancies, deployment pressures, and emerging service needs with the RCMP.
 - Provincial Minister (PPSA) or CEO/Mayor (MPSA) set and approve final budget.
- **Multi-year forecast:** Anticipates resource and cost pressures to refine each year's financial plan.

Annual Budget

Annual budgets are based on authorized funding and the multi-year financial plan.

- **Annual budget authorization:** Authorizes the number of affordable police officer positions for the fiscal year.
- **Drives billing:** Quarterly invoices are billed to the contract partner at one quarter of the authorized funding cap. Year-end reconciliation makes adjustments to reflect actual costs.

Setting Policing Priorities

MPSAs and the PPSA require the RCMP and contract partners to work together to set policing priorities. These priorities help ensure policing services focus on the needs and concerns of local communities.

PPSA:

- Minister sets provincial policing priorities.
- Detachment Commanders establish local policing priorities in consultation with communities, advisory groups, and residents.

MPSA:

- Detachment Commanders establish local policing priorities in consultation with municipalities, advisory groups, and residents.

Priorities are set by the people we serve.

Alberta RCMP's New Community Priority Plan

The Alberta RCMP recently updated the way policing priorities are identified and set through the Community Priority Plan. The process includes consultation and collaboration with communities to help ensure local needs and concerns are reflected in policing priorities. Community Priority Plans are reviewed quarterly to ensure priorities stay relevant and results stay measurable.

Operational Readiness and Response

PROVINCIAL POLICE SERVICE AGREEMENT

The Provincial Police Service Agreement (PPSA) is **between the provincial government and the federal government**.

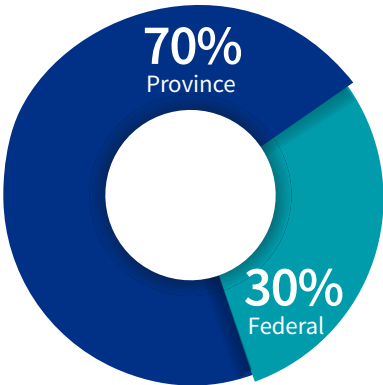
The current PPSA came into effect on April 1, 2012 and expires March 31, 2032. This includes core funding for provincial policing.

Under the PPSA, the RCMP provides policing services to rural areas and communities with a population under 5,000.

Cost-Share

Under the PPSA, the Government of Alberta and the federal government share the cost of RCMP policing services.

The **province is invoiced for 70%** of total policing costs, with the **federal government absorbing the remaining 30%**.



Police Funding Model

The Police Funding Model (PFM) was created as the result of the Policing Funding Regulation in April 2020 to build up the provincial police service, to enhance services to rural Alberta. The PFM only applies to PPSA communities.

Policing costs charged under the PFM are separate from the PPSA. Under the PPSA, the Alberta RCMP only bills the Government of Alberta and does not bill rural communities directly for policing costs.

Billing Cycle

The Government of Alberta provides an annual funding letter. This letter authorizes the funding level under the PPSA.
Quarterly invoices are billed to the Government of Alberta for 70% of the provincial policing cost. Invoices are based on one quarter of the total funding outlined in the annual letter.
Collaborative discussions with the Government of Alberta take place throughout the year. As policing costs are incurred, invoices may be adjusted.
Year-end reconciliation involves calculating and billing actual costs, with adjustments made for factors such as vacant positions.
Important to Know
No money is paid upfront. Budgets are developed based on projected policing costs and agreed staffing levels, but funds are not transferred in advance. - The federal contribution is not invoiced to the Government of Alberta. - The Government of Alberta does not pay for vacant positions; only actual costs are reflected in the final invoice.

2025/26 Funding Year



POLICE FUNDING MODEL

The Police Funding Model (PFM) applies only to communities receiving policing services under the PPSA.

The PFM, between 2020-2025, grew the Alberta RCMP:

279
more police officer positions



242
civilian staff positions



These positions have been allocated to frontline policing, specialized support units, and resources focused on addressing the root causes of crime.

Due to time required to staff positions, there was a natural slippage of funds. These funds were reinvested into other priorities such as strategic initiatives, operating costs, and programs that support communities across Alberta. Over the past five years, the PFM bolstered rural frontline policing in detachments, enhanced specialized investigative support across the province, grew our Emergency Response Team, and supported the formation of the Real Time Operations Centre.

With the initial PFM period (2020–2025) now complete, the provincial government is moving ahead with an updated funding model based on a new formula.

Any contributions communities make under the PFM are determined by the province and are separate from RCMP billing. Questions regarding how PFM contributions are calculated should be directed to the Government of Alberta.

IN ADDITION TO CORE PPSA COSTS

2025/26 Funding Year

Summary of additional services with costs calculated under applicable policing agreements.



\$54.3M

Alberta Law Enforcement Response Team (ALERT)



\$22.7M

Alberta First Responders Radio Communication System (AFRRCS)



\$17.2M

First Nations Contract Policing (FNCP)

COSTS NOT BILLED UNDER MPSA OR PPSA

This includes covered claims and litigation settlements, legal services, and more — not billed to municipalities or Government of Alberta.



\$16.2M

Non-billable Government of Canada costs

2025-26 RCMP POLICING COSTS

Final expenditures; municipal, provincial and federal shares calculated under applicable policing agreements.



*Provincial line includes core funding for policing, ALERT, AFRRCS, etc.

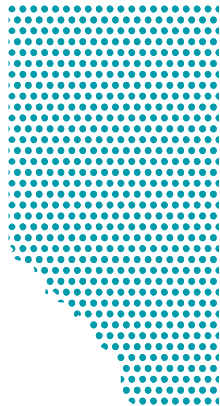
DRIVERS OF COSTS

More than 80% of policing costs are people-related, including salaries, benefits and overtime. Costs for equipment, technology, infrastructure, and operations have also increased significantly. These **common costs** are not unique to RCMP. Police services across Alberta and North America are dealing with similar fiscal pressures.



**80% OF
POLICING
COSTS ARE
PEOPLE COSTS.**

*The Alberta RCMP
polices approximately
95% of the province's
geography and serves
roughly 40% of the
population.*



While RCMP per-member costs are comparable to other agencies, our operating environment differs. This comes with **unique costs**.

Realities of rural and remote policing:

- Greater travel distances
- Increased vehicle mileage and maintenance
- Higher fuel consumption and costs
- Infrastructure requirements for **402 buildings** (rural detachments and housing)

These factors all contribute to higher maintenance and operating costs.

Inflation affects all industries, and policing is no exception.

One example is the rising cost of police vehicles. Over the past several years, vehicle prices have increased significantly due to higher labour costs, materials, ongoing supply chain pressures, and added technology. As a result, Alberta RCMP vehicles not only cost more to purchase, but also more to maintain.

These higher costs are compounded by the demanding nature of police work. Operational vehicles experience substantial wear and tear from covering long distances in rural areas to being used in pursuits and immobilization techniques. Higher upfront purchase prices and intensified operational use drive up operating costs.

FLEET COST COMPARISON - FORD F150

	2018	2026
Purchase cost:	\$32,656	\$55,725
Cost to outfit a vehicle for duty:	\$34,750	\$45,500
Total cost:	\$67,406	\$101,225

The figures above reflect average costs. When possible, the Alberta RCMP utilizes refurbished parts to reduce overall cost.



MEMBER COST COMPARISON

average cost per member

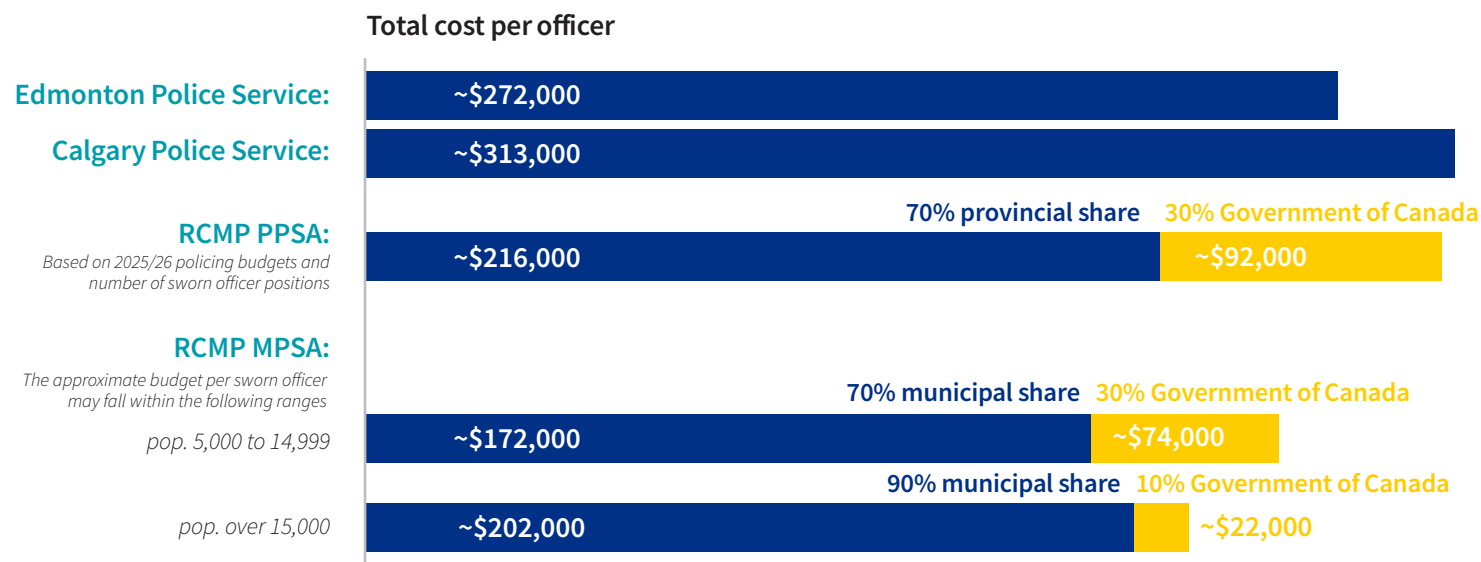
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entire annual budget

total number of officers

The average cost per police officer is calculated by dividing total policing costs by the number of police officers. It can be used as general reference, but it is not a fixed rate and will vary amongst the RCMP and other police agencies.

When comparing costs per member, it is important to consider the federal cost-share under both the PPSA and MPSA.



Costs will vary across PPSA and MPSA contracts based on:

Resource levels

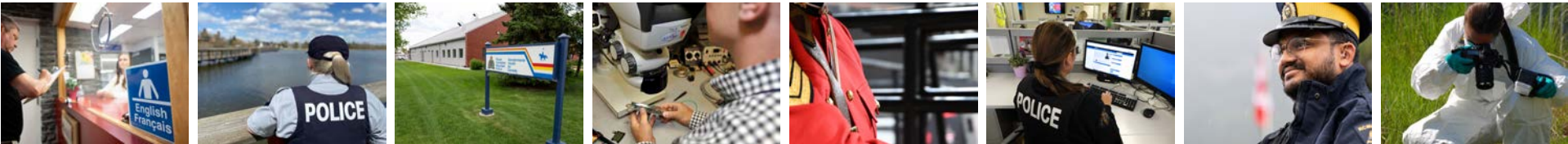
Rates of pay

Equipment and police vehicles

Infrastructure

Other operating and support costs

Overall, when comparing the cost of a member across different police agencies, it is important to remember that the operating environment (rural vs. urban) differs and will influence cost. Specific costs or line items included in each agency’s calculations should also be considered.



VACANCIES

Police services across North America are experiencing a highly competitive labour market. All agencies are competing for the same limited pool of qualified candidates, and signing bonuses are becoming more common across policing. Compensation is one factor that influences recruitment and retention. While the RCMP is not the highest-paid police service, it generally falls within the mid-range of police compensation.

Policing resources are planned based on agreed staffing levels and are not funded on the assumption that every position will be filled at all times. While efforts continue to reduce vacancies, zero vacancies would require adjustments to funding levels.

TEMPORARY ABSENCES

Temporary absences occur when a position is filled, but the member is unable to perform operational duties for a period of time. These absences are common across all police services and industries.

Examples include:

- Injury (physical or psychological)
- Maternity or parental leave
- Other extended absences

These situations exist in all professions. However, policing is particularly sensitive to them. For example, an injured officer may be able to work in a role, but unable to perform frontline policing duties. As a result, a position may appear filled but the employee is not operational. This can understandably create concern for communities. Unlike unfilled positions, some temporary absences may result in partial costs.

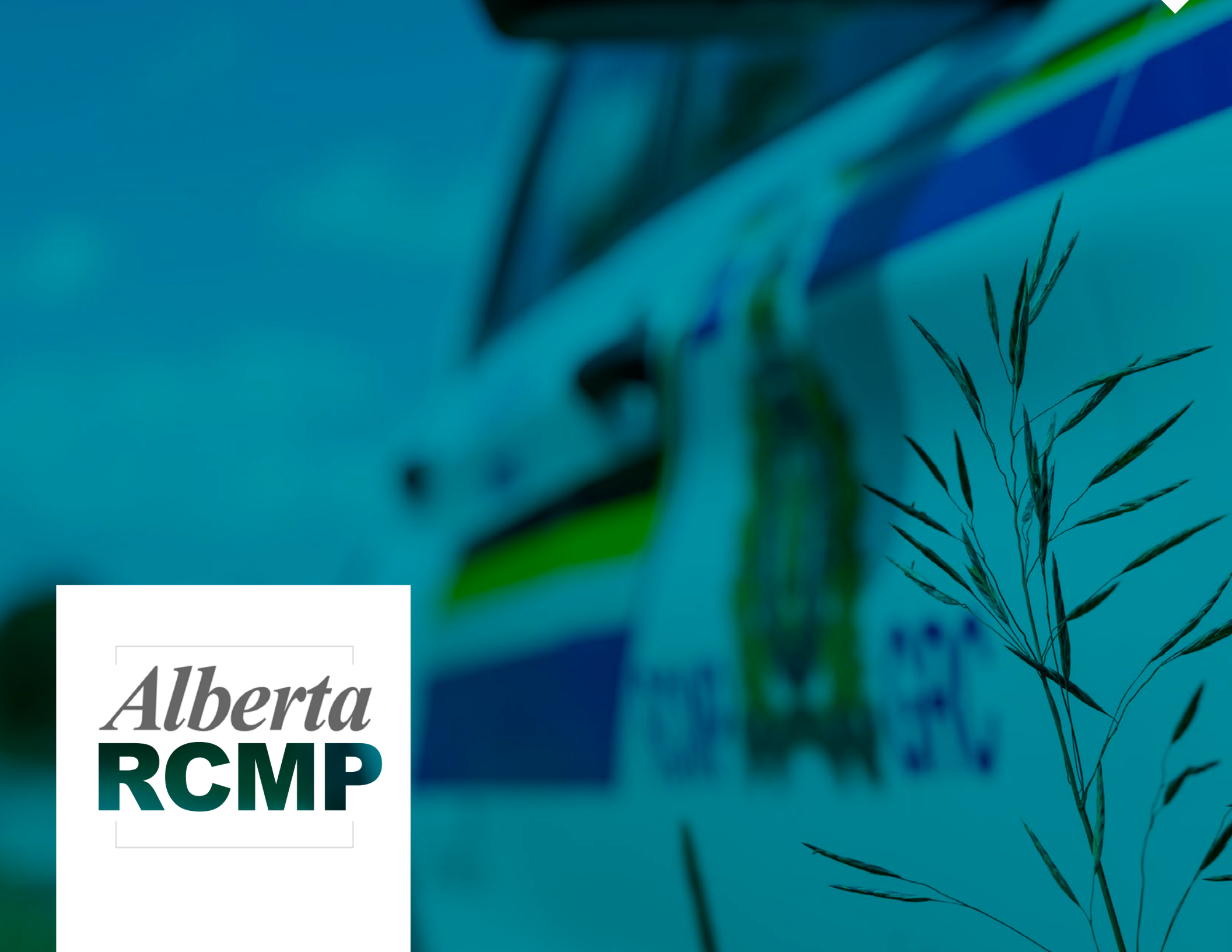
What we're doing

The Alberta RCMP has adjusted its deployment model to improve operational coverage and address the impacts of temporary absences.

1. The Division Relief Unit is made up of dedicated officers based out of Cochrane and Leduc who are ready to deploy to detachment areas in need of frontline support on a temporary basis.
2. Fly-in models enhance service delivery by offering officers the opportunity to live with their family in or around a hub location rather than in remote or isolated communities on a more permanent basis.
3. The Alberta RCMP employs reservists to address vacancies in operational duties.
4. The Alberta RCMP recruits experienced former police officers to strengthen its ranks and maintain a highly capable police force.

We are also modernizing our recruitment efforts to create shorter application timelines, improved candidate experience, and create stronger outreach across Alberta.





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