

Navigation Centres

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

In 2024, Alberta established Navigation Centres (NCs) in Calgary and Edmonton to support individuals experiencing homelessness or housing instability, including those with complex health, mental health, and addiction issues. Using an integrated “one-stop” model, NCs bring multiple services together into a single location, reducing barriers to access and improving connections to care.

[Recovery Coaches](#) serve as the initial point of contact, providing intake and service navigation. They can also provide ongoing support to help clients access housing, treatment, healthcare, and other essential services.

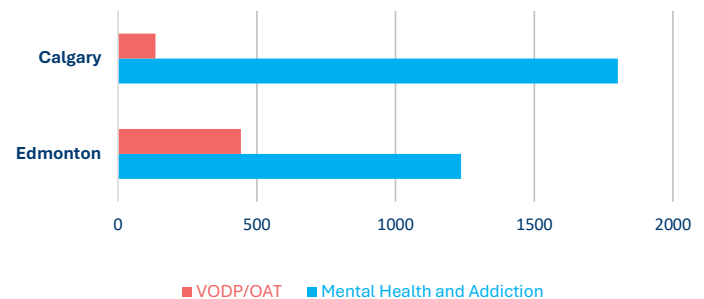
NOTABLE TAKEAWAYS

- NCs are designed as **entry points to Alberta’s broader Recovery-Oriented System of Care**.
- NCs provide opportunities to **increase recovery capital** by offering various supports and services in one location and address immediate needs like providing identification.
- NCs demonstrated **strong service delivery and sustained engagement** with both participants and partner organizations, with high levels of referral activity.
- **Recovery Coaches are an important aspect of the NC service** delivery model, through supporting recovery while aiding clients with other life challenges.

KEY METRICS

- Between July 2024 and June 2025, the Calgary NC had more than 28,000 visits, with approximately 1,800 of those visits being for mental health and addiction support and over 100 visits for the Virtual Opioid Dependency Program (VODP) (see [Figure 1](#)).
- Between January 2024 and June 2025, the Edmonton NC had more than 29,000 visits, with approximately 1,200 of those visits being for mental health and addiction support and over 400 visits for VODP.
- NCs supported access to same-day addiction treatment, including medication for those in need through the VODP at no cost to the user.
- In addition to mental health and addiction supports, other services include on-site shelter beds, meals/food, secure storage, pet accommodation, employment and training services, access to same-day identification, medical assistance, financial and income support, and probation services (see [Figure 2](#)).
- NCs facilitate access to cultural supports, including Indigenous programming, community connections, and Status Cards.

FIGURE 1. Recovery Alberta Connections Through the NC*



*Recovery Alberta primarily connects clients to MHA and VODP/OAT, but other supports may also be accessed at NCs. Calgary: Jul. 2024–Jun. 2025; Edmonton: Jan. 2024–Jun. 2025.

FIGURE 2. Types of Services and Supports at NCs



RAPID LITERATURE REVIEW

Emerging evidence demonstrates that navigation programs are an effective service to reduce barriers and support individuals in accessing mental health and addiction care (Mullen et al., 2023; Waid et al., 2021). Originating from cancer research, navigation programs for mental health and addiction have emerged over the past decade (Mullen et al., 2023). A review of 25 studies revealed there are various types of navigation programs (from system entry to system navigation) and these can be delivered in various formats, with in-person being the most viable (Waid et al., 2021). The literature describes these programs as adaptable, patient-centred, integrated, and collaborative (Mullen et al., 2023; Waid et al., 2021). NCs are a key mental health and addiction service as they support individuals with complex needs through complicated systems by offering flexible support (Mullen et al., 2023).