

Building Families, Strengthening the Economy:

The Case for Provincial Fertility
Support in Alberta



Building a family is a fundamental human right¹,

yet for thousands of Albertans, the path to parenthood is blocked by restricted access and a staggering price tag. Alberta's public health care system covers most medical care, except for fertility services (outside of diagnostics). Private delivery of fertility services without public support for access means patients must pay tens of thousands of dollars out-of-pocket to receive the fertility care they need.

By providing support to residents, **the government can help reduce financial barriers, improve access to services, and support Albertans' needs.**

¹ World Health Organization. (2025, November). *Infertility*.

A Demographic Challenge

Alberta's population is projected to reach 6.9 million by 2051, with 84% of that growth expected to come from immigration. Natural growth accounts for only 16%, as the provincial total fertility rate has dropped to 1.41 children per woman — well below the 2.1 needed to sustain the population.²

To better understand how the government can help, Fertility Alberta Advocacy & Outreach Association partnered with Mount Royal University to conduct the study *Employees Accessing Fertility Care: Perceptions of Effective and Supportive Government and Employer Policies*, supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. We surveyed a total of 206 patients who underwent treatment in Alberta in the past five years and hosted four focus groups that included individuals willing to share their experiences.

These findings demonstrate that fertility support is a win-win:

By implementing provincial fertility care policies and removing barriers to family creation, Alberta can empower its population to be mentally, physically, and financially healthier, while securing the province's long-term economic prosperity.

Infertility is Common

An estimated 1 in 6 people of reproductive age worldwide will face infertility.³

Infertility affects men and women at nearly equal rates.

Diverse Needs

Beyond medically diagnosed infertility, many others rely on fertility care to build their families, such as single parents by choice, members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and people with other medical conditions, such as cancer, that impact their ability to reproduce.

Inconsistent Support

Government support in Canada varies greatly by province. Alberta does not currently have any public funding for fertility care, leaving many Albertans with significant financial and mental strain caused by barriers to access.

“Fertility issues cause financial, emotional, physical and mental burden on both partners.”

—Survey Respondent

² Government of Alberta. (2025, July 11). *Population projections: Alberta and local geographic areas, 2025–2051*.

³ World Health Organization. (2025, November). *Infertility*.

The Alberta Experience

Women are becoming mothers later in life.

The average age of women in our survey was 32.3 and the average length of their fertility journey was reported as approximately 3.5 years.

According to our study,

50.5%

of respondents explored fertility care because of a diagnosed fertility challenge

While

37.4%

had undiagnosed fertility concerns

10

is the average number of fertility interventions each participant went through.

Interventions include procedures like:

- in vitro fertilization (IVF)
- intrauterine insemination (IUI)
- and frozen embryo transfers, among others

Impact on Productivity

Fertility treatments impact economic outcomes like productivity, and have a noted negative effect on the workplace:

82%

of respondents said they took time off work for fertility treatment

The average number of days they took off was

18.7

65%

said their fertility journey negatively impacted their employment

Only

39%

of respondents described their workplace culture as supportive

“(With the implementation of a publicly funded fertility program), the province would be investing in people and families. What better cause for a government than investing in their people?”

—Focus Group Participant

The Barriers

Our study has revealed two main challenges to family building in Alberta: Accessibility and Affordability

Accessibility

Challenges with referrals from family doctors to fertility clinics, lengthy waitlists and driving long distances for treatment all hinder participants' ability to access the medical care they required.

23%

waited six to 12 months for treatment

12%

of patients faced waits of over a year, with some waiting more than two years

25%

of respondents travelled further than 60 kilometres for treatment as all Alberta clinics are in Edmonton and Calgary

“We still had to pay over \$100,000 out of pocket, (and) remortgage our house for the treatments.”

—Focus Group Participant

Affordability

In Alberta, fertility care is a private health service and is extremely expensive. Individual treatments cost tens of thousands of dollars and multiple treatments are often required.

Participants reported spending a cumulative average of approximately

\$35,000

out-of-pocket on fertility care

Respondents spent an average of approximately

\$7,000

on other related costs such as travel, acupuncture, counselling, supplements, massage, chiropractor and legal fees

21.2%

of respondents said their employer offered any benefits to help with the cost of fertility care

61%

of respondents required outside financial assistance, such as loans or gifts from family and friends, to pay for their treatments

The Solution

The Government of Alberta has a powerful opportunity to change the experience of thousands of Albertans.

The survey results demonstrate how Albertans are struggling financially and emotionally due to a lack of support for fertility health care. Albertans are taking significant time off work and managing the challenges of inflation, higher cost-of-living, and significant out-of-pocket fertility treatment costs. As a result, they are sacrificing spending money in other areas of their lives to afford fertility care.

The Government can positively change the experience of 1 in 6 Albertans, an estimated 250,000, by implementing fertility policies and programs that remove access and affordability barriers for Albertans who want to start and build their families.

There is a patchwork of fertility programs across this country. Other Canadian provinces support residents through the following publicly funded fertility options:

- Refundable tax credit
- Grant
- Funded IVF program (with or without medications included)
- Subsidy
- Reimbursement

“Both my husband and I feel that with proper government funding, treatment would have been a faster and less stressful process.”

— Survey Respondent

Participants of our study were presented with the list of current Canadian programs and asked which they believed would significantly alleviate the burden of fertility care.

Over **80%** of respondents expressed support for the Government of Alberta to implement a publicly funded IVF program or a refundable tax credit.

However, respondents made it clear that any government policy providing financial relief would be welcome.

By taking concrete, practical steps to support individuals and families going through fertility treatment, the government can help reduce financial barriers, improve access to services, and support Albertans' needs.

Key Takeaways

The government has a unique opportunity to create a pragmatic and thoughtful made-in-Alberta solution, turning a widespread challenge into a provincial advantage.

ESSENTIAL INSIGHTS

Prevalent Need

An estimated
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Albertans face infertility

Approximate cumulative
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on fertility care

61%
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outside financial
assistance, such as loans
or gifts from family and
friends, to pay for their
treatments

21.2%
have employer
coverage

PROVINCIAL IMPACTS

Economic

- Increase workforce participation
- Support Alberta families by improving affordability
- Create jobs
- Attract business

Social

- Remove barriers to needed fertility health care
- Empower a greater number of Albertans to start and grow their families
- Mitigate the emotional and psychological toll of infertility

As a result of this survey and focus groups, Fertility Alberta Advocacy & Outreach Association and Mount Royal University urge the Alberta government to:

Implement a publicly funded fertility program to build a thriving province where families and futures can flourish.



About This Report

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Contact Us

Contact us to learn more about the research or for support in advocating for better family building benefits in your organization.

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