

CANADIAN INDEX OF WELLBEING: ONTARIO SNAPSHOTS

A true measure of a country's progress must include the wellbeing of its citizens. What is the value of a high GDP if we are not healthy, cannot breathe the air, or spend time with family and friends? What important challenges does GDP mask? Who is getting left behind and what can we do about it?

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) tracks indicators in eight domains that have an impact on our wellbeing. It gives us a comprehensive portrait of the quality of life in Canada and Ontario and its evolution over time.

- » Community Vitality
- » Democratic Engagement
- » Education
- » Environment
- » Healthy Populations
- » Leisure and Culture
- » Living Standards
- » Time Use

**NORTH
REGION**

i CANADIAN
ndex
OF WELLBEING

Measuring what matters
Making measures matter

Ontario
Trillium Foundation



Fondation Trillium
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UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO
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IT'S EASY TO SEE, ONTARIO'S WELLBEING LAGS WELL BEHIND OUR ECONOMIC GROWTH.

- » Ontario is less economically secure than Canada overall with more people living in poverty. Many people struggle with housing costs and food insecurity is higher than the national average.
- » Compared to Canada, employed Ontarians spend more time working and commute an average of almost one hour per day.
- » 1 in 5 Ontarians feel high levels of time pressure.

Still ...

- » Ontarians feel a stronger sense of belonging to their communities than Canadians overall and have the lowest incidence of severe crime than any other Canadian province.

REGIONAL STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES DIFFER GREATLY AND CALL FOR DIFFERENT APPROACHES.

To build on strengths and tackle challenges, the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) — an agency of the Government of Ontario and one of Canada's largest granting foundations — commissioned the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) to produce detailed reports for Ontario's five regions: Central, East, North, Toronto and West.

Using the latest data from 2014 and 2015 to form a comprehensive picture of wellbeing, funders, agencies, policy-makers and all stakeholders can make informed, evidence-based decisions as we build healthy and vibrant Ontario communities. When we understand regional strengths and challenges and see the domains as parts of an interconnected system, we can invest resources wisely to tackle multiple challenges.

**NOW WE CAN ANSWER “HOW ARE WE REALLY DOING?”
AND “HOW DO WE MAKE IT BETTER?”**

NORTH REGION

Ontario's North Region has almost 90% of the land with only 6% of the population. Unemployment rates are high and family incomes are lower than the provincial average. The population is expected to decline by just over 1% which contrasts sharply with Ontario's expected 5.7% growth rate. The region is home to the greatest concentration of Indigenous households. It also has the highest rate of bilingualism (24%) and the highest percentage of people with French as a first language. The average age in the region is 44, with 41% of people over the age of 50.

COMMUNITY VITALITY

Do strong, active, and inclusive relationships exist among people and between all types of organisations?

Compared to Ontario, the region has:

- » Strongest sense of community belonging
- » Highest rate of people helping others (84%)
- » 56% participating in organised activities — similar to Ontario's average



- » 12% of people living alone
- » Lowest percentage people who believe that most people can be trusted
- » Highest rate of serious crime in Ontario, but still below Canadian average



CRIME SEVERITY INDEX

North **69.1**
Ontario **50.0**

PEOPLE WITH STRONG SENSE OF BELONGING TO THEIR COMMUNITIES

North **72.3%** Ontario **68.1%**



People in the North have strong community and interpersonal connections, so why is trust so low? What can reduce the incidence of serious crime and help combat isolation?

DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

Are people advancing democracy through political institutions, organisations, and activities?

The region has typical voter turnout but:

- » Lowest confidence in federal Parliament
- » Lowest percentage of female MPs and MPPs

PEOPLE WITH A LOT OF CONFIDENCE IN FEDERAL PARLIAMENT

North **33.3%** Ontario **39.6%**

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

PROVINCIAL

North **18.2%**
Ontario **34.6%**



FEDERAL

North **18.2%**
Ontario **31.4%**



How could the region be more politically engaged? What would motivate more women to participate in provincial and federal politics?



EDUCATION

Are instruction, schooling, and training from youth to adulthood available? Accessible? Do they prepare people for work, life, and life's changes?

Compared to Ontario, the North has:

- » Greatest number of library-based career, job help and skills programs
- » More regulated centre-based child care spaces for kids



- » Fewest people with university degrees (16%) and fewer library-based adult learning programs
- » Lowest number of library-based early literacy and early learning programs

CHILDREN WITH REGULATED CENTRE-BASED CHILD CARE AVAILABLE

North **25.6%**
Ontario **20.7%**



LIBRARY-BASED EARLY LITERACY AND LEARNING PROGRAMS PER 1,000 CHILDREN

North **21.7** Ontario **25.8**



Access to quality child care is almost the best in the province, but this only represents 26% of children. In addition, other supports for early years are needed. With education linked so closely to health, living standards, and many other indicators, what will improve access for all age groups?



ENVIRONMENT

Are we protecting our environment while revitalizing our ecosystems and working towards sustainability?

Compared to Ontario, the region has:

- » Highest quality fresh water



- » Lowest residential waste diversion rates
- » Production of 19% of Ontario's total greenhouse gas emissions

RESIDENTIAL WASTE DIVERSION RATE

North **28.0%**
Ontario **47.3%**



How can all stakeholders be greater stewards of the environment?



HEALTHY POPULATIONS

Are people physically, mentally and socially healthy?

More so than any other part of the province, the North faces serious health concerns:

- » Only 53% rate their overall health as very good or excellent and only 68% rate their mental health that way – the lowest in Ontario
- » Almost 4 in 10 people have health restrictions or activity limitations
- » Rates of diabetes (9.3%) and teen smoking (7%) are the highest in Ontario
- » 15% do not have a family doctor



HEALTH RATED AS VERY GOOD OR EXCELLENT

OVERALL

North **53.0%**
Ontario **59.2%**

MENTAL

North **67.5%**
Ontario **70.4%**

Many residents are struggling with ill health, chronic illness, and health limitations. What will best address current health challenges? How is poor health having an impact on other aspects of people's lives?



LEISURE AND CULTURE

Are arts, culture, and recreation activities available and being embraced?

Compared to Ontario, the region spends an average amount of time in social leisure. It also has on average:

- » Highest physical activity levels
- » More time spent in arts and culture activities
- » More library programs, second highest use of the library, and the greatest number of library internet connections

Yet ...

- » Less time spent volunteering for culture and recreation organisations

HOURS SPENT VOLUNTEERING FOR RECREATION/ CULTURE ORGANISATIONS IN PAST YEAR


North **25.9** Ontario **30.5**

AVERAGE NUMBER OF TIMES PER MONTH PARTICIPATING IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LASTING OVER 15 MINS.

North **31.2** Ontario **28.2**



How can the high levels of physical activity be maintained or enhanced to translate into better quality of life? What will encourage more volunteerism?

 **LIVING STANDARDS** Are we economically secure?

Compared to Ontario, the region has on average:

- » Lowest number of households struggling with housing costs
- » Fewer people reporting high levels of work stress (26%)




- » Lower after-tax median family incomes (\$65,347)
- » 8% of households struggling with food insecurity (same as provincial average)

HOUSEHOLDS WITH SHELTER COSTS EXCEEDING 30% OF BEFORE-TAX INCOME

North **20.2%** Ontario **27.0%**



While fewer people in the North struggle with housing costs, 1 in 5 still do and many face economic and food insecurity. What can be done to ensure people have the necessities? What would improve employment opportunities?

 **TIME USE** Are we balancing leisure, work, social, and rest time?

Compared to Ontario, the North has on average:

- » Far shorter commutes
- » Only 13% of people working 50+ hours/week
- » Lowest levels of time pressure
- » Greatest amount of time spent with friends



- » Only 60% of workers with regular, weekday hours — the lowest in Ontario
- » Only 34% of workers with flexible hours

WORKING PEOPLE WITH:

REGULAR HOURS	FLEXIBLE HOURS
North 59.9%	North 33.5%
Ontario 65.9%	Ontario 46.1%



AVERAGE DAILY WORKDAY COMMUTE
 North **37 mins.**
 Ontario **54 mins.**



Shorter commutes and shorter work weeks leave more time for friends, but people have much less control over their working arrangements. Can employers offer more options for regular and flexible work hours?

USING THE WELLBEING SNAPSHOT

This snapshot summarizes some of the key findings found in the detailed Canadian Index of Wellbeing regional reports commissioned by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The reports show that systems are complex and inter-related. These and other resources provide solid evidence to help policy makers, program developers and granting agencies consider community needs and to make focused, impactful, evidence-based decisions.

Visit the Ontario Trillium Foundation Knowledge Centre to access the full reports.

WHAT OTHER QUESTIONS SHOULD BE ON THIS LIST?
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AND **@ONTRILLIUM**.



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When developing policy or programs or making community investment decisions, ask yourself:

Which innovations will work best in your region?
Can you address multiple areas of need simultaneously?
Does your policy or program:

ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

- broaden access, choice and opportunity for a more active lifestyle?
- address work-related stress, time pressure or better sleep?
- reduce barriers for the 32% of Ontarians who have a health or activity limitation?
- help the 40% of Ontarians who rate their overall health and 30% who rate their mental health as below 'very good' or 'excellent'?

CONNECT PEOPLE

- boost participation in political/advocacy groups or organized activities?
- reduce isolation, fight discrimination and increase belonging?
- enhance voter turnout or support women who pursue elected office?

ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENT

- address pressing environmental concerns?
- lead to responsible use and/or protection of the environment?

SPOTLIGHT ARTS AND LITERACY

- expand arts and culture opportunities?
- encourage volunteering in arts and culture?
- support library programs or Culture Days?
- boost early learning and literacy?
- increase the availability and affordability of quality children's programs?

LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD

- create additional high quality child care options?
- make a difference to reduce economic hardship like food or housing insecurity, low incomes or job security?
- provide job help or skills programs?



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