

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

WEST
REGION

 CANADIAN
index
OF WELLBEING

Measuring what matters
Making measures matter

Ontario
Trillium Foundation



Fondation Trillium
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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?”**

WEST REGION

Accounting for 4% of the land in Ontario, the West region is home to 21% of the population. Residents are slightly older than the provincial average — almost 40% are over 50. The region's growth rate is three times lower than Ontario, and while 73% of people own their homes, employment rates and family incomes are lower than the provincial average. Here, 80% of people have English as their first language. While there is less diversity than Ontario's average, nearly 18% of residents have a first language other than English or French and 9% are from racialized populations.



COMMUNITY VITALITY

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

Compared to Ontario, the region has on average:

- » 7 out of 10 reporting a strong sense of community belonging, equal to provincial average
- » Highest participation in organised activities

Yet ...

- » More serious crime, but still well below Canadian average
- » Slightly fewer people helping one another

PEOPLE WHO PARTICIPATE IN ORGANISED ACTIVITIES

West **58.6%**
Ontario **55.2%**

People in the West have a solid sense of belonging, trust and close connections. What can be done to extend community connections to those who are isolated? What can improve community safety?

CRIME SEVERITY INDEX
West **58.5** Ontario **50.0**



DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

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

Compared to Ontario, the region has on average:

- » 4% of people volunteering for law, advocacy or political groups — 2nd highest in Ontario

Yet ...

- » Slightly lower federal voter turnout (66.1%)
- » Lower confidence in federal Parliament

PEOPLE WHO VOLUNTEER FOR LAW, ADVOCACY OR POLITICAL GROUPS

West **4.2%**
Ontario **3.8%**



PEOPLE WITH A LOT OF CONFIDENCE IN FEDERAL PARLIAMENT
West **35.7%**
Ontario **39.6%**

People are participating in the democratic process by volunteering. What would improve participation in other parts of the political process?



EDUCATION

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

Compared to Ontario, this region has:

- » Most library-based early literacy and learning programs and more other children's programs at libraries
- » Most adult learning programs and 2nd highest participation in adult education, after Toronto

Yet ...

- » Only 18% of kids 0-4 with access to regulated centre-based child care — Ontario's lowest
- » Fewer elementary schools measuring progress in student health and wellbeing and socio-emotional skills
- » Fewer people with university degrees

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

West **31.3** Ontario **25.8**



PEOPLE WITH A UNIVERSITY DEGREE

West **18.7%**
Ontario **28.5%**



Availability of library-based children's and adult education programs is a regional strength. However, the lowest access to regulated centre-based child care is a concern. How can this community maintain and build on its strong educational activities?



ENVIRONMENT

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

Compared to Ontario, West Region has serious issues:

- » Highest smog levels
- » Emitting more than half of Ontario's total greenhouse gas emissions (58%)
- » Lower waste diversion rates (43.2%)

SMOG = GROUND LEVEL OZONE (PARTS PER BILLION)

West **29.3**
Ontario **27.4**



As a region with a higher concentration of large industries, the greater environmental risks are not surprising. What will engage stakeholders to become greater stewards of the environment?



HEALTHY POPULATIONS

Are people physically, mentally and socially healthy?

Compared to Ontario, the region has a similar rate of diabetes and ratings of overall health, and on average:

- » Best access to a family doctor
- » Higher flu-shot rates (38%)



- » Second lowest mental health ratings
- » 2nd highest rate of teen smoking (6%)
- » 35% of people with health restrictions or activity limitations

PEOPLE WITH A FAMILY DOCTOR

West **94.1%**
Ontario **92.5%**

HEALTH RATED AS
VERY GOOD OR
EXCELLENT

OVERALL
West **58.6%**
Ontario **59.2%**

MENTAL
West **68.8%**
Ontario **70.4%**



Health is so critical to full participation in all aspects of community. What will encourage healthier behaviours, overcome activity barriers, and improve outcomes for many more people?



LEISURE AND CULTURE

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

Compared to Ontario, this is a regional strength:

- » Highest average time away on vacation
- » 2nd highest volunteerism for cultural and recreational organisations
- » More Culture Days events, poetry and story readings, and art shows at libraries
- » Greatest number of library programs



- » Typical physical activity levels
- » Average participation in arts and culture activities


ANNUAL LIBRARY PROGRAMS PER 1,000 PEOPLE
West **23.9** Ontario **16.6**



HOURS SPENT VOLUNTEERING FOR RECREATION/CULTURE ORGANISATIONS IN PAST YEAR

West **38.6** Ontario **30.5**

People in the West are taking advantage of leisure, cultural, and recreational activities. How can the region build on this strength to increase community connections? What could increase physical activity levels to improve quality of life?

 **LIVING STANDARDS** Are we economically secure?

Compared to Ontario, the region has serious concerns:

- » Lower after-tax median family incomes (\$66,134)
- » Almost 15% of people in low income — 2nd highest rate in Ontario
- » Nearly 10% struggling with food insecurity
- » Nearly 1 in 3 people reporting high work stress



PEOPLE IN LOW INCOME


West **14.6%**
Ontario **13.9%**



HOUSEHOLDS WHERE SHELTER COSTS EXCEED 30% OF BEFORE-TAX INCOME

West **24.3%**
Ontario **27.0%**

Many people are struggling with housing and food costs. What will reduce financial insecurity? What can alleviate work stress that is compounded by an overall time crunch?

 **TIME USE** Are we balancing our leisure, work, social, and rest time to improve wellbeing?

Compared to Ontario, the region has on average:

- » Shorter commutes to work (45 minutes)
- » Greatest percentage of people getting good quality sleep (yet still only 34%)



- » 15% of people working 50+ hours/week — tied with Central Region for highest in Ontario
- » Highest levels of time pressure — tied with Toronto
- » 38% of workers without regular weekday hours and fewer people with flexible work hours
- » Lowest amount of time spent with friends

PEOPLE GETTING 7 TO 9 HOURS OF QUALITY SLEEP

West **34.4%**
Ontario **30.5%**



PEOPLE REPORTING HIGH LEVELS OF TIME PRESSURE

West **21.3%** Ontario **19.8%**

Long work weeks, a huge time crunch, and little time to spend with friends — how can the region create more jobs with regular hours and flexible arrangements? What can improve sleep, reduce stress and improve quality of life?

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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