

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

**CENTRAL
REGION**

i CANADIAN
ndex
OF WELLBEING

Measuring what matters
Making measures matter

Ontario
Trillium Foundation



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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?”**

CENTRAL REGION

With 1/3 of Ontario's population, this fast-growing region is home to the youngest demographic in the province and has the fewest families led by single parents. The population is highly educated and very diverse ethnically. Employment rates and family incomes are the highest in Ontario and 8 out of 10 people own their own home.

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:

- » Lowest rate of people living alone
- » Highest rate of people who feel safe walking alone after dark
- » Less serious crime



- » Below average participation in organized activities (53%)
- » 1 in 10 people experiencing discrimination



CRIME SEVERITY INDEX

Central 39.6
Ontario 50.0

PEOPLE WITH STRONG SENSE OF BELONGING TO THEIR COMMUNITIES

Central 67.6% Ontario 68.1%



The Central Region is safe yet it has the second highest percentage of people experiencing discrimination, after Toronto. Are people in this region feeling as connected to each other as they could be?

DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

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

There is a paradox in the Central region. Compared to Ontario, it has on average:

- » Higher confidence in federal Parliament
- » Highest percentage of female MPPs (45%)



- » Tied with the West for lowest federal voter turnout, but still similar to provincial average
- » Lowest volunteer rate for law, advocacy, or political groups (2.8%)

PEOPLE WITH A LOT OF CONFIDENCE IN FEDERAL PARLIAMENT

Central 42.8%
Ontario 39.6%

VOTER TURNOUT IN LAST FEDERAL ELECTION
Central 66.1%
Ontario 67.8%



What would encourage people in the region to be more engaged in their political systems?



EDUCATION

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

Compared to Ontario, the region has on average:

- » More library-based early literacy and learning programs
- » 2nd highest rate in Ontario of people having university degrees (31%), after Toronto

Yet ...

- » Lower access to regulated centre-based child care and fewer library-based children's programs
- » Lowest number of library-based adult learning programs and adult participation in education-related activities

CHILDREN WITH REGULATED CENTRE-BASED CHILD CARE AVAILABLE

Central	18.9%
Ontario	20.7%



While many adults have university educations, fewer adults are in other educational activities. There are plenty of early learning programs, however residents may be struggling with access to child care. Who's having trouble accessing the programs they need and why?



ENVIRONMENT

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

The Central region has:

- » 2nd highest residential municipal waste diversion rates (after Toronto); and,
- » only 9.6% of Ontario's total greenhouse gas emissions.
- » While smog and water quality are the same as Ontario's average, there is room for improvement.



RESIDENTIAL WASTE DIVERSION RATE

Central	52.1%
Ontario	47.3%

How can industry and residents become greater stewards of the environment?



HEALTHY POPULATIONS

Are people physically, mentally and socially healthy?

Compared to Ontario, the region has on average:

- » Best ratings for overall and mental health
- » Lowest percentage of people with health restrictions or activity limitations (26%)
- » Excellent access to family doctors



- » Lowest flu shot rate
- » 7.2% of people living with diabetes, similar to Ontario's rising average



HEALTH RATED AS VERY GOOD OR EXCELLENT



PEOPLE GETTING THEIR FLU SHOT

Central **30.4%**
Ontario **35.4%**

OVERALL

Central **61.7%**
Ontario **59.2%**

MENTAL

Central **72.8%**
Ontario **70.4%**

Although residents rate their overall and mental health the highest, many people still struggle. Considering the low flu shot rates, lower rates of physical activity and quality sleep, are people taking good care of themselves?



LEISURE AND CULTURE

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

Compared to Ontario, the region has on average:

- » Most time spent in social leisure activities

Yet ...

- » Slightly lower physical activity levels
- » Less time volunteering in culture and recreation
- » Fewer Culture Days, poetry and story readings, art shows, and other programs at libraries, and fewer in-person library visits

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

Central **27.9**
Ontario **28.2**



HOURS SPENT VOLUNTEERING FOR RECREATION / CULTURE ORGANISATIONS IN PAST YEAR

Central **25.2** Ontario **30.5**

People are enjoying social leisure activities but are less likely to volunteer, be physically active and have access to arts and culture programming. Is the time crunch to blame?

 **LIVING STANDARDS** Are we economically secure?

Compared to Ontario, the region has on average:

- » The highest after-tax median family incomes (\$78,353)
- » Lowest percentage of people in low income and facing food insecurity

Yet ...

- » Nearly 30% of people reporting high work stress
- » 27% of households struggling with high housing costs – 2nd highest in Ontario after Toronto



HOUSEHOLDS THAT ARE FOOD INSECURE

Central 5.1%
Ontario 8.3%



PEOPLE IN LOW INCOME

Central 11.2%
Ontario 13.9%

Despite having the highest family incomes in Ontario and having lowest rates of low income and food insecurity, nearly half a million people in the Central Region face economic insecurity. What can be done to support people on the margins?

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

Compared to Ontario, Central region has important challenges:

- » People spending more time with friends
- » More workers (67%) with regular weekday hours

Yet ...

- » 1 in 5 people reporting high levels of time pressure
- » Tied for highest number of people working 50+ hours/week with the West region
- » 2nd longest commuting times (55 minutes)
- » Fewer than 1 in 3 people getting enough quality sleep

AVERAGE TIME SPENT PER DAY WITH FRIENDS (IN MINUTES)



Central 93.9
Ontario 90.1

PEOPLE WORKING 50+ HOURS PER WEEK

Central 15.2% Ontario 14.3%

Although residents take time to be with friends, they spend a lot of time at work – and getting there. Do people have enough balance? How does time use impact health, community, and arts engagement?

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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