



Measuring what matters
Making measures matter

A Profile of Wellbeing in Ontario **THE NORTH REGION**

Ontario
Trillium
Foundation



Fondation
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UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO
FACULTY OF APPLIED HEALTH SCIENCES

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WHAT IS WELLBEING?

There are many definitions of wellbeing. The Canadian Index of Wellbeing has adopted the following as its working definition:

The presence of the highest possible quality of life in its full breadth of expression focused on but not necessarily exclusive to: good living standards, robust health, a sustainable environment, vital communities, an educated populace, balanced time use, high levels of democratic participation, and access to and participation in leisure and culture.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A movement is underway not only in Ontario and Canada, but internationally that recognises the value of having accurate, relevant data to assist in decision-making and in the development of policy. “Evidence-based decision-making” is not just a catchphrase. It is a meaningful strategy leading to better community processes and outcomes that can enhance the quality of life of all Ontarians. It helps us recognise innovative solutions to the problems and issues, rather than relying on conventional practices that might not have produced the results we hoped for.

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) recognises how important data are in helping us understand a complex society — a society that is made up of a number of interconnected systems — the domains of the CIW framework — where different sectors, our communities, and our governments interact, influence, and have impacts on the wellbeing of Ontarians. Efforts to improve wellbeing in one system, such as leisure and culture, will inevitably have positive impacts on others such as community vitality, healthy populations, and the environment, and ultimately, on the entire community or society. This is a “systems thinking” approach, and a key goal of the CIW is to identify and understand the interconnections among the eight domains — each of which represents a system — and the many factors that comprise them to influence overall wellbeing. This approach leads to greater collaborations and to new and innovative solutions that have collective impact in our communities. At the core of the approach is the evidence.

SO, WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE RESIDENTS IN THE NORTH REGION OF ONTARIO?



WELLBEING IN NORTH ONTARIO

As the smallest part of the population living in the largest land area of the province, residents of the North region of Ontario face a number of unique challenges.

The population is older with the highest percentage of people 50 years of age or older and one of the lowest percentages of children and youth, as well as the smallest average family size. The north is the least ethnically diverse part of the province (apart from the highest percentage of Aboriginal peoples), but does have the highest percentages of people with French as their first language and with a working knowledge of both official languages. People in the North region have one of the lowest after-tax median incomes in the province as well as the lowest level of employment and the highest level of unemployment, although only about 1 in 5 people pay more than 30% of their income on housing — the lowest percentage in the province. Despite these indicators of relative economic insecurity, the region has percentages of people in low income and facing food insecurity that are very near the provincial rates.

People in the North region feel somewhat less safe in their communities and have the highest incidence of serious crime than anywhere else in the province, and perhaps relatedly, fewer residents feel that most people can be trusted. Nevertheless, despite these things, people in the North more so than anywhere else provide support to others in need, do volunteer slightly more than others, and have the highest percentage of people reporting a stronger sense of belonging to their communities. Residents help each other despite some of the conditions.

North region residents are facing similar environmental issues like smog and greenhouse gas emission as elsewhere in the province. However, they have the lowest participation rate in waste reduction through the Blue Box program, which has not expanded throughout the region as much as elsewhere in the province.

Even though very few people in general take advantage of adult educational activities, the libraries in the North are offering many more programs in career support and skill development undoubtedly in response to the employment conditions. Perhaps not surprisingly, fewer learning opportunities are offered to children who make up a smaller percentage of the population, but there are more child care spaces available.

Residents spend somewhat less time in social leisure activities, but have the highest level of monthly physical activity in the province. Their volunteering rate is about the same as the province as a whole, but somewhat less of that commitment is devoted to recreation and cultural organizations.

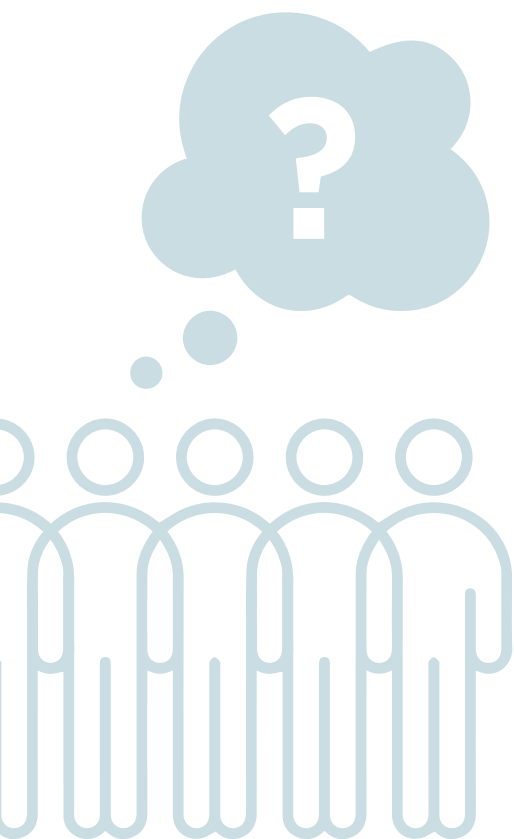
Finally, the North region has the lowest percentages of people in the province with good overall health, with good mental health, and living without health or activity-related limitations to their day-to-day living. Further, the percentage of people with access to a regular health physician also is the lowest in the province. These are serious health concerns for the North and they undoubtedly contribute to and detract from many other aspects of the residents' overall wellbeing.

Despite all of these challenges, a majority of residents in the North region (86.7%) report being satisfied with their lives. So there is much to celebrate about living in the North region of Ontario. As this portrait of wellbeing illustrates, however, there are numerous factors across all domains of life that contribute to and detract from the residents' quality of life. By recognising how these circumstances interact and intersect to affect the lives of the North region's residents in different ways, we are in a better position to make informed decisions that can lead to enhanced quality of life in their communities, and ultimately, the province overall.








WITH THIS REPORT,

**we are in a
better position to
make informed
decisions that can
lead to enhanced
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communities, and
ultimately, the
province overall.**



IMPLICATIONS

The results of this exploration has provided some interesting insights as well as intriguing questions concerning the wellbeing of residents living in the North region of Ontario that could be considered when deciding on action. For example:

-  Most critically, what steps can be taken to improve the conditions in the North that are contributing to the overall poorer health of its residents? Might the high levels of unpaid help being provided to others and stronger sense of belonging to community be paths to improving wellbeing and hence overall health?
-  Are there things that could be done to further enrich the arts and culture opportunities available to residents? Are there ways in which families, especially children and youth (perhaps through intergenerational programs), could be exposed to the arts earlier to develop lifelong interests?
-  Beyond expanding the Blue Box program for recycling, in what other programs or activities could residents become involved to encourage even greater stewardship of the environment?
-  With the high percentages of people in low income and facing food insecurity, what more can be done to ensure fewer people confront such economic hardships? How might tackling these issues contribute to better health?
-  What can be done to encourage more civic engagement and participation in the democratic process so people can take greater control of their lives?

These questions are not presented as challenges. Rather, they are intended to stimulate further conversations among those with local knowledge and who are positioned to enhance the wellbeing of Ontarians. By reflecting on these questions and considering innovative solutions that could have an impact on many aspects of people's lives, we hope community leaders will have an even greater understanding of the interconnectedness of the domains that define the wellbeing in people's lives. Doing so leads more often to strategies that will advance policies, services, and programs for — *and with* — residents of the region and thereby create more interest, awareness, and participation in activities that will enhance their wellbeing.



WHY WE NEED THE CANADIAN INDEX OF WELLBEING (CIW)

The United Nations and the OECD agree — the true measure of a country’s progress must include the wellbeing of its citizens. The Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) shifts the focus from solely on the economy to include other critical domains of people’s lives.

Increasingly, citizens and their government are thinking “beyond GDP” as a measure of our progress and quality of life. Even though Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is an important measure of our economic performance, it does not capture those areas of our lives that we care about most like education, health, the environment, and the relationships we have with others. GDP also is not sensitive to the costs of economic growth such as environmental degradation, loss of farmland, or growing income inequality.



**COMMUNITY
VITALITY**



EDUCATION



**HEALTHY
POPULATIONS**



**LIVING
STANDARDS**



**DEMOCRATIC
ENGAGEMENT**



ENVIRONMENT



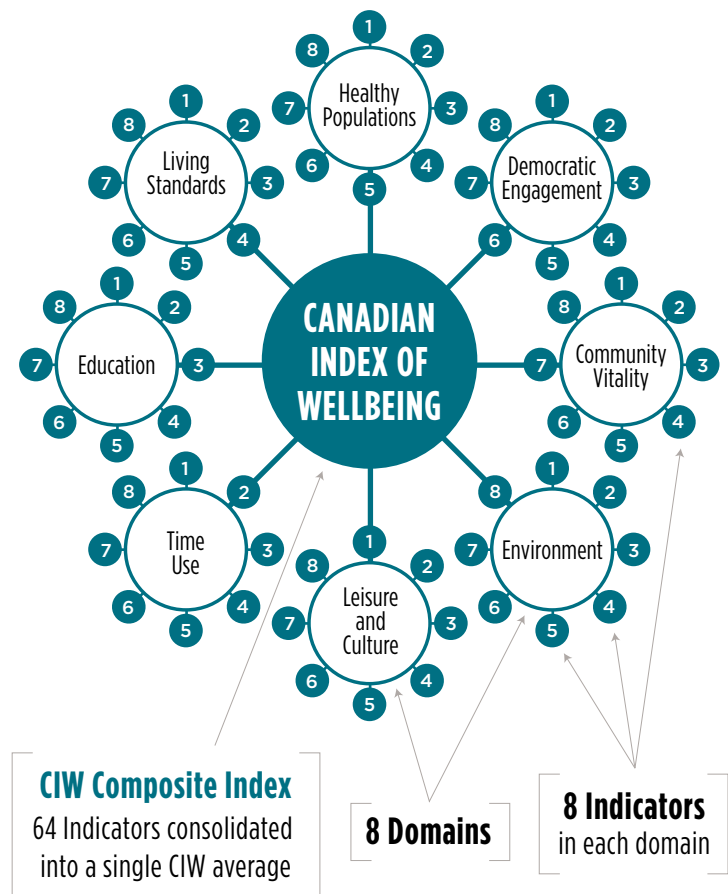
**LEISURE AND
CULTURE**



TIME USE

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) was created through the combined efforts of national leaders and organizations, community groups, international research experts, indicator users, and in particular, consultation with hundreds of Canadians. Those efforts and consultations led to the identification of the following eight areas or domains that contribute to, and continuously affect, the wellbeing of Canadians:

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



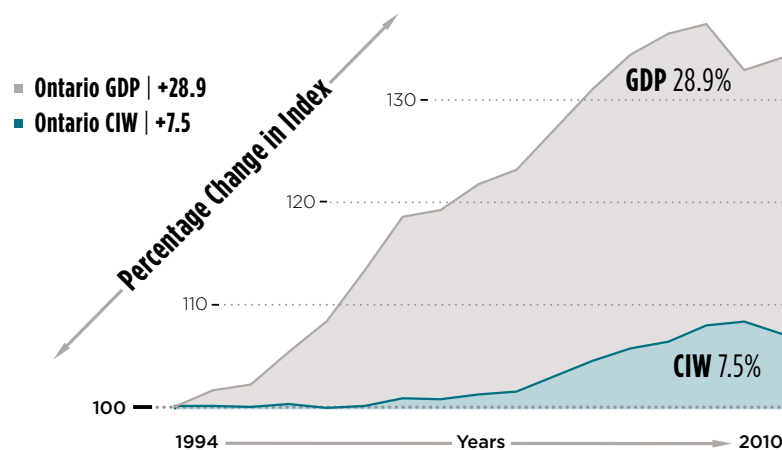
We selected valid, reliable, and relevant measures as the indicators of the various aspects of a domain's contribution to wellbeing. By integrating the indicators and domains and revealing their complex interconnections, the CIW provides a comprehensive portrait of quality of life in Canada and in Ontario.

The CIW composite index tracks all indicators and domains of wellbeing to measure our progress over time, highlighting where we are doing well and where we could be doing better. By 2014, we have seen GDP rise by 12.7% from its lowest point following the recession of 2008, yet the wellbeing of Canada's residents continues to lag behind, recovering at a much slower rate.

The CIW's call to action is to encourage all sectors to be guided by solid evidence, and to empower Canadians to advocate for change that reflects their needs and values. By putting wellbeing at the heart of policy development, funding decisions, program development, and service delivery, we respond to our desire to know, "How can we do better?"

A REGIONAL PROFILE OF THE WELLBEING OF ONTARIANS: HOW ARE WE REALLY DOING?

Ontario's GDP has recovered by 11.2% from its lowest point following the recession of 2008 — a good sign. However, the 2014 report commissioned by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, “How are Ontarians really doing?”¹, showed that Ontarians' overall wellbeing continues to lag well behind our economic growth.



While economic productivity in Ontario continues to recover, although not as quickly as for Canada overall, the wellbeing of Ontarians has not shown signs of rebounding from

the recession in the same way that GDP has. To help address this gap, these reports provide evidence-based illustrations of the wellbeing of Ontarians in five different regions. These reports will therefore help us better understand the different challenges and opportunities that each region faces. We hope that everyone working to help improve wellbeing across the province can use the data provided in these reports to make more informed decisions when choosing how to focus their efforts.

1. Canadian Index of Wellbeing. (2014). How are Ontarians Really Doing? A Provincial Report on Ontario Wellbeing. Waterloo, ON: Canadian Index of Wellbeing and University of Waterloo. Available from: <https://uwaterloo.ca/canadian-index-wellbeing/news/new-ontario-index-puts-wellbeing-forefront>

A SNAPSHOT OF ONTARIO

DEMOGRAPHICS

Statistics Canada estimates that the population of Ontario in 2016 is 13,873,933 people, which represents 38.5% of the population in Canada. Since 2011, this represents an almost 8% growth in number of residents in Ontario.

The median age of Ontarians in 2011 was 40.4 years with just over 35% being 50 years of age or older. There are three persons per family on average, and of these families, 16.7% are led by a lone parent. In all of these characteristics, Ontario is very much like Canada overall.

Almost 11% of Ontarians have knowledge of both of our official languages, and overall, just under 30% reported that another language other than English or French was their first language. In contrast, across the country, many more Canadians (17.5%) report having knowledge of both official languages, but many fewer people (20.2%) report another language as their first language.

Also in 2011, the unemployment rate had dropped to 8.5% as Ontario continued to emerge from the 2008 recession albeit more slowly than the country overall where unemployment stood at 7.8%. The median after tax annual family income in Ontario was just under \$72,000, which is much lower than the national median income of over \$78,000 per year.



PEOPLE WITH KNOWLEDGE OF BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Ontario	10.9%
Canada	17.5%



PEOPLE WITH ANOTHER FIRST LANGUAGE

Ontario	28.7%
Canada	20.2%



PEOPLE PAYING OVER 30% OF THEIR INCOME ON HOUSING

Ontario	27.0%
Canada	25.2%

PERSONS WITH SELF- REPORTED DIABETES

Ontario	7.4%
Canada	6.7%

CIW DOMAINS OF WELLBEING

In this section, we provide an overview of wellbeing in Ontario and how it compares to Canada as a whole based on selected indicators representing each of the CIW's eight domains. The majority of these indicators are from 2014.

Beyond basic demographic information, the **Living Standards** domain highlights areas where economic risk affects Ontarians' wellbeing. In this regard, 13.9% of Ontarians are living in low income (i.e., where "low income" is defined as household income that is less than half of the national median income), and over one-quarter (27.0%) are paying in excess of 30% of their income on housing, which is a recognised benchmark for assessing the affordability of housing relative to income.² In both cases, these percentages are higher than the national rates which are just under 10% and slightly over 25% respectively.

Just under 1 in 10 Ontarians (8.3%) report moderate to severe food insecurity, which is slightly higher than in the country as a whole (7.7%). Similar to Canadians overall, over one-quarter of working Ontarians (28.2%) report feeling stressed because of work, which can have an impact on the health and wellbeing of a significant proportion of the working population.

In terms of the **Healthy Populations** domain, almost 6 in 10 Ontarians (59.2%) rate their overall health as very good or excellent and almost three-quarters (70.4%) of residents rate their mental health as very good or excellent — both of which are very similar to what Canadians overall report. Over seven per cent (7.4%) of Ontarians report having diabetes — up significantly from 6.7% in 2013 — and higher than the national rate of 6.7%. In contrast, among teens (12 to 19 years of age),

2. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2015). The adequacy, suitability and affordability of Canadian housing, 1991-2011. Research Highlight, Socio-Economic Series. Ottawa, ON: CMHC. Available from: <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/pdf/68310.pdf>

only 5.8% report smoking daily or occasionally, which is much lower than the national average of almost 8%. Over a third of Ontarians (35.4%) received immunization for influenza in the past year — slightly more than elsewhere in Canada (32.5%) — but still down from previous years.

With respect to the **Community Vitality** domain, over two-thirds of Ontarians (68.1%) have a somewhat or strong sense of belonging to their community, which is an increase over previous years, and well over half (57.3%) feel many or most people can be trusted, which is slightly down from previous years. In both instances, these percentages are higher than in Canada overall (65.9% and 51.8%, respectively). Similar to Canada overall, a majority of Ontarians (79.2%) feel safe walking alone after dark in their neighbourhoods, and under 1 in 10 residents (9.6%) report experiencing discrimination due to their ethnicity or cultural background. The Crime Severity Index in Ontario (50.0) is not only much lower than for Canada overall (66.7), but is lower than any other province. Further, the Index dropped 4.6% in Ontario between 2013 and 2014 — the fifth year in a row the Index has fallen.

The **Leisure and Culture** domain contributes to the wellbeing of Ontarians through their participation in a variety of free time pursuits and access to recreation opportunities. For example, on average, Ontarians spend 13.0% of their time on the previous day engaged in social leisure activities and another 4.1% in arts and culture activities. Over 90% of Ontarians engage in some form of physical activity (e.g., sports, walking, exercise) and do so about once per day for at least 15 minutes. In all of these activities, Ontarians are participating at rates very similar to Canadians overall. Ontarians volunteered for culture and recreation organizations for an average of 30.5 hours in the past year, which is, however, quite a bit lower than the national average of 34.3 hours.



CRIME SEVERITY INDEX

Ontario	50.0
Canada	66.7

AVERAGE HOURS IN PAST YEAR VOLUNTEERING FOR CULTURE AND RECREATION ORGANIZATIONS

Ontario	30.5
Canada	34.3



PEOPLE FEELING HIGH LEVELS OF TIME PRESSURE

Ontario	19.8%
Canada	17.4%

PEOPLE WORKING MORE THAN 50 HOURS PER WEEK

Ontario	14.3%
Canada	8.7%

In terms of **Democratic Engagement**, two-thirds of eligible Ontarians (67.8%) voted in the last federal election — up from previous elections — and about 4 in 10 people (39.6%) report that they have quite a lot or a great deal of confidence in Parliament — down from previous years (although this measure was taken prior to the last election). These figures and recent trends are similar to those in Canada overall. Ontario can, however, boast a higher percentage of female Members of Parliament (31.4%) than for Canada overall (26.0%).

As part of setting the stage for life, the **Education** domain shows that over half of Ontario elementary schools are measuring progress both in their learning environments (51.9%) and in their students' health and wellbeing (55.7%). Related to the role of education in preparing students to be engaged in the democratic process, under one-third of elementary schools (29.0%) are measuring progress in students' citizenship skills. As a positive developmental activity for children, Ontario adults spend on average almost 40 minutes per day in interactive, talk-based care of children from 0 to 14 years of age — more than the 35 minutes spent by Canadians overall. With respect to lifelong learning, only about 5% of Ontarians and Canadians 25 years of age and older are participating in education-related activities.

With respect to **Time Use**, almost 1 in 5 Ontarians (19.8%) report high levels of time pressure. This could in part be attributable to the almost one hour spent commuting to and from work (53.7 minutes per day on average) and the work weeks (i.e., over 50 hours per week) in which 14.3% of Ontarians are engaged — both of which are higher than for Canadians overall. Further, only about one-third of residents (30.5%) are getting the recommended 7 to 9 hours of quality sleep, which is a smaller percentage than in Canada overall (35.9%).

More positively, about half of Ontarians (46.1%) have some flexibility in their work hours and they are allocating 90 minutes per day on average to be with their friends. In both cases, these measures are higher than in Canada overall (43.2% and 84.3 minutes, respectively).

For the **Environment** domain, Ontario has a relatively high carbon footprint — it emitted 170 megatonnes of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in 2014, which represents just under one-quarter of the GHG emissions for Canada as a whole. Ontario's contribution in recent years, however, has been declining in part due to the slowing of manufacturing and especially in reductions in residential emissions. Concentrations of ground level ozone in Ontario are at 27.4 parts per billion, which is well below the threshold set by the World Health Organization (WHO) where lung damage and inflammation can occur. Across Ontario, the waste diversion rate — that is, all Blue Box and other materials diverted by municipalities from landfill — is 47.3%, which has been slowly and steadily increasing in recent years.

In terms of overall wellbeing, 85.6% of Ontarians report that they are satisfied with their lives, which is slightly lower than in Canada overall, but up from the previous year.

WELLBEING IN THE REGIONS OF ONTARIO

In this series of reports, we provide portraits of each of the five regions of Ontario using the most recent data available on selected indicators for each of the domains of wellbeing. By examining selected indicators of wellbeing within and across the eight domains of the CIW, these portraits can help inform the planning, development, and implementation of programs and services that have greater potential to enhance the wellbeing of Ontarians, especially those who might be most marginalized. Creating portraits based on the CIW also provides an opportunity to learn more about the complexity of wellbeing in people's lives and to see how it varies across the five main regions of the province.

Based on boundaries used by several of the Ministries in Ontario, the five regions described in these reports are made up of the counties and districts listed in the table at the right.

We begin with a brief demographic profile of the region, highlighting characteristics that make it unique. In the sections that follow, we present the eight domains of the CIW with descriptions of indicators of wellbeing that reflect how well Ontarians are doing within the region. Finally, a summary section highlights the distinctiveness of the region and points to potential interconnections among the domains. Three appendices are included that provide more detail on the methods and data sources (Appendix A), the specific indicators for the region and Ontario overall (Appendix B), and a glossary of terms used throughout the reports (Appendix C).

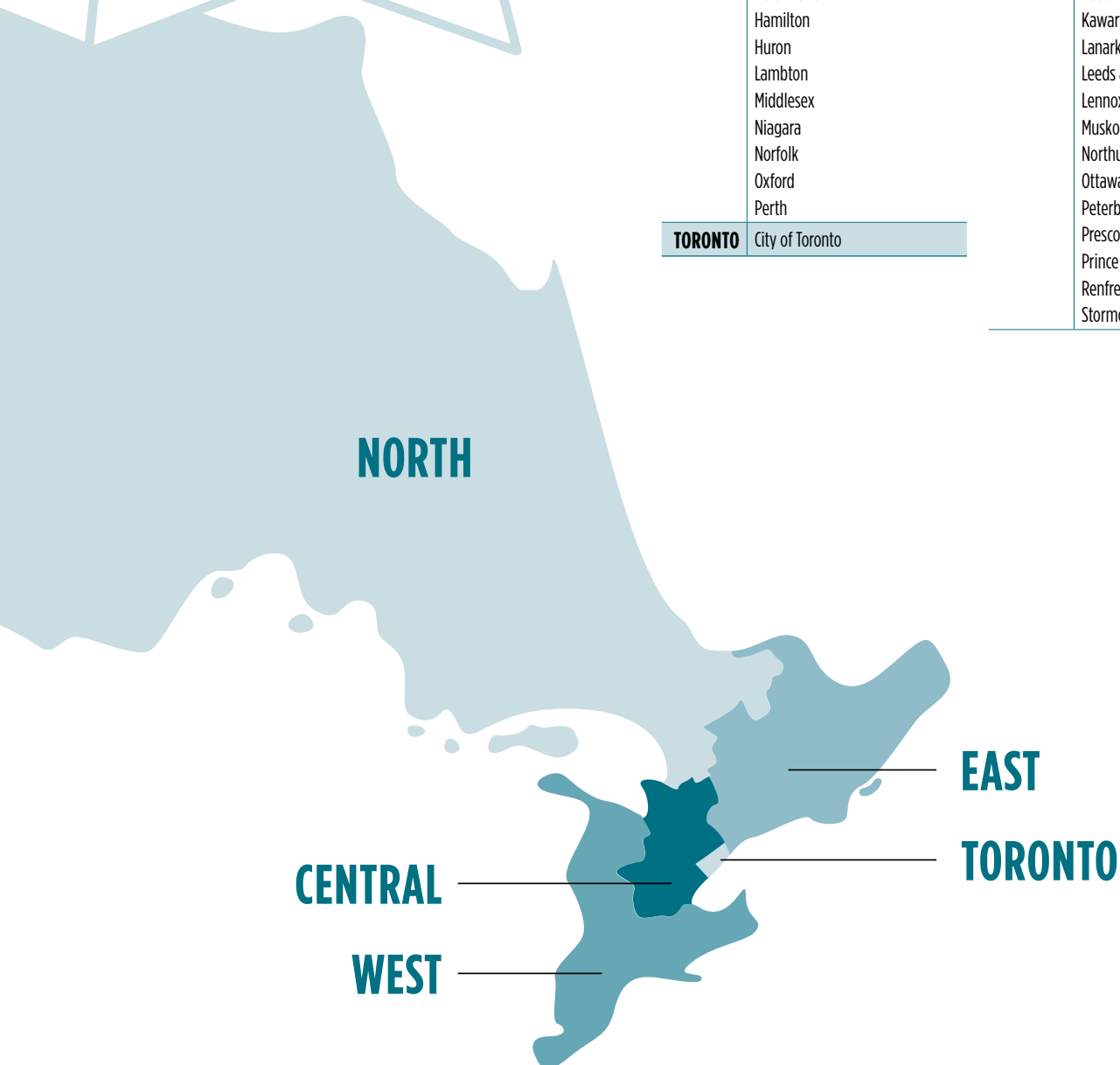
In each section, we compare the indicators of wellbeing within the region to the province as a whole. Such comparisons help us understand how Ontarians are doing relative to the province overall and focuses our attention on areas where we are doing well and where we might choose to direct greater emphasis in planning and allocating resources.

ONTARIO WELLBEING PROFILE



REGION	COUNTY/DISTRICT
CENTRAL	Dufferin
	Halton
	Peel
	Simcoe
	Waterloo
	Wellington
	York
WEST	Brant
	Bruce
	Chatham-Kent
	Elgin
	Essex
	Grey
	Haldimand
	Hamilton
	Huron
	Lambton
	Middlesex
	Niagara
	Norfolk
	Oxford
	Perth
TORONTO	City of Toronto

REGION	COUNTY/DISTRICT
NORTH	Algoma
	Cochrane
	Kenora
	Manitoulin
	Nipissing
	Parry Sound
	Rainy River
	Sudbury (District & City)
	Thunder Bay
	Timiskaming
EAST	Durham
	Frontenac
	Haliburton
	Hastings
	Kawartha Lakes
	Lanark
	Leeds & Grenville
	Lennox-Addington
	Muskoka
	Northumberland
	Ottawa
	Peterborough
	Prescott and Russell
	Prince Edward
	Renfrew
	Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry



A photograph of a dense forest of evergreen trees, possibly spruce or fir, with a teal overlay. The trees are dark and silhouetted against a lighter, hazy background. The text "THE NORTH REGION" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font in the upper right quadrant.

THE NORTH REGION

DEMOGRAPHICS

Recognising the unique socio-demographic profile of a region is an important first step in understanding the needs and circumstances of its residents. How many people live here? Are the residents generally younger or older than elsewhere in the province? What do their families look like? How diverse is the population? Answers to these questions allow us to make more informed decisions about the types of programs and services that will best contribute to the wellbeing of the region's residents.

POPULATION

According to the 2011 Census of Canada, the northern region of Ontario is home to over three-quarters of a million people (775,076), which represents just over 6% of the total population of the province. Even though the north is the smallest region in terms of population, it boasts by far the largest land area — over 800,000 square kilometres — or almost 90% of the total land mass of Ontario.

By 2016, the total population is expected to decline slightly overall by just over 1% with most of the declines occurring in smaller places like Dryden and Fort Francis while slight increases in population will be concentrated in larger communities such as North Bay and Sudbury. This slight decline in population contrasts with an expected growth of 5.7% in Ontario's total population in 2016.

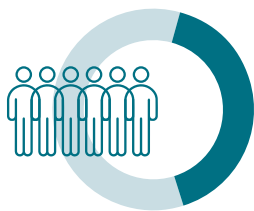


6.0% OF THE
POPULATION



LIVING ON
88.4%
OF THE LAND MASS OF ONTARIO

PEOPLE 50 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER



North **41.0%**
Ontario **35.1%**

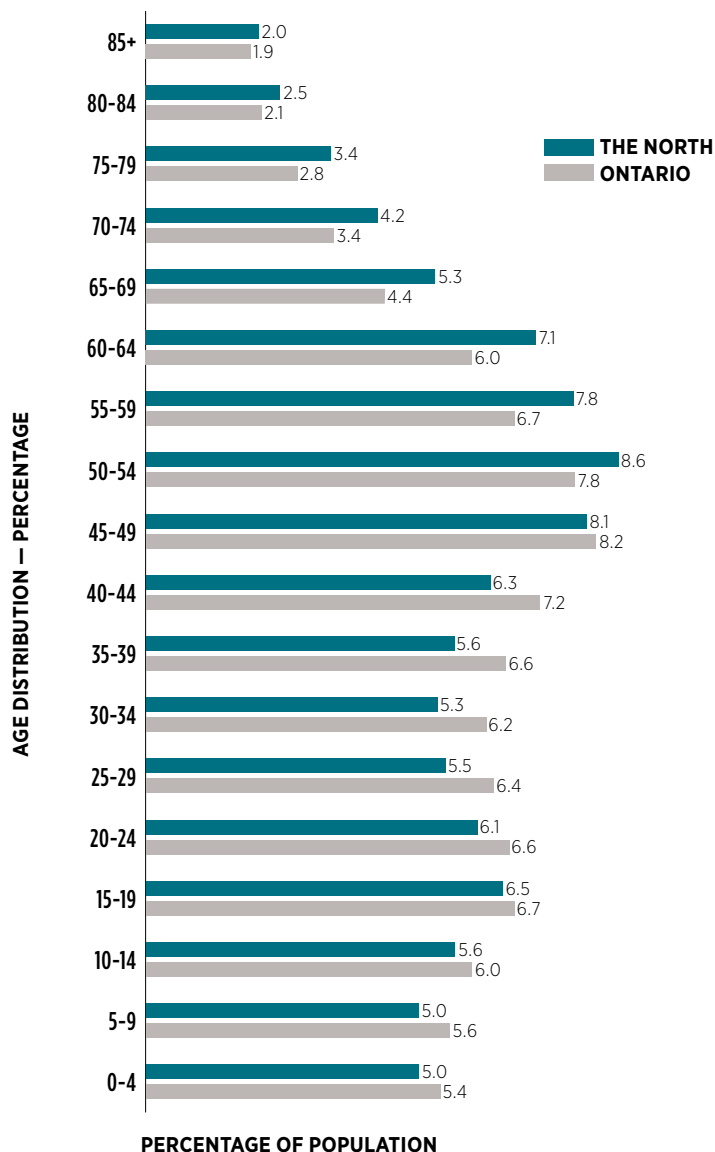
44.1
years

MEDIAN AGE

AGE

The population of the North is generally older than the province overall. The North has a higher percentage of residents in every age category 50 years and older than elsewhere in Ontario. The higher percentage of older residents in the North is reflected in its median age of 44.1 years compared to 40.4 years for Ontario as a whole, and is the highest of any region in the province.

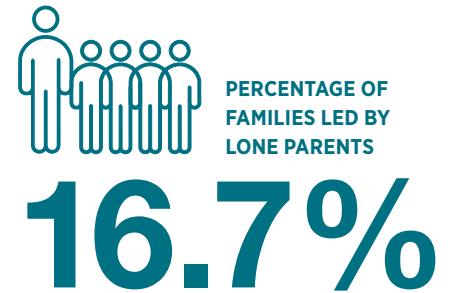
HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF OLDER RESIDENTS IN THE NORTH REGION THAN ANYWHERE IN ONTARIO



FAMILIES

Consistent with the provincial average, 16.7% of families are led by a lone parent with approximately three-quarters of those parents being female (76.5%). Over half of the residents are married or living in a common-law relationship (58.9%), which is slightly higher than the provincial rate (57.7%).

Families in the North have an average of 2.8 persons living in the household, which is slightly lower than the provincial average of 3.0 persons. Just under three-quarters of the population owns their homes (71.5%), while just over a quarter of the population rents their dwellings (27.0%), both very similar to the provincial rates.



EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

The North has the lowest employment rate in the province at 54.8% and the highest unemployment rate of 9.4%. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, the after-tax median family income of just over \$65,000 in 2011 was second lowest in the province above only Toronto and notably lower than the provincial median income.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

North	9.4%
Ontario	8.5%

AFTER TAX MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME

North	\$65,374
Ontario	\$71,715

ETHNICITY AND LANGUAGE

The North has the lowest percentage of visible minorities in the population (1.9%) than anywhere else in the province, and is well below the percentage for the province (25.5%). However, as the region of Ontario with the highest percentage of Indigenous peoples in the population, the percentage of residents reporting a First Nations language, especially Cree or Ojibway, is correspondingly higher. Indeed, more so than anywhere else in the province, the North has the highest percentage of households occupied by Indigenous peoples (12.8%).

PERCENTAGE OF VISIBLE MINORITY POPULATION

North	1.9%
Ontario	25.5%



PEOPLE WITH KNOWLEDGE OF BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

North	23.6%
Ontario	10.9%

PEOPLE WITH ANOTHER LANGUAGE AS THEIR FIRST LANGUAGE



North	10.0%
Ontario	28.7%

Over 90% of the residents in the North report one of Canada's official languages as their first language. Almost three-quarters of the residents (73.7%) report English as their first language, followed by French (16.4%). Just under one-quarter of the residents (23.6%) indicate they have a working knowledge of both official languages, which is the highest percentage in the province and more than twice the provincial rate. Although they represent just 1 in 10 people of the total population, most other first languages reported by residents have European origins. The largest of that group — Italian — represents only 1.5% of the population in the North.



COMMUNITY VITALITY

Vital communities are those that have strong, active, and inclusive relationships among people, private, public, and non-governmental organizations that foster individual and collective wellbeing.

Their qualities reflect the power and potential of a community to pull together, to adapt, and to thrive. Those qualities include measures of community safety and of caring relationships, participation in organised activities, and residents' sense of belonging to their communities.

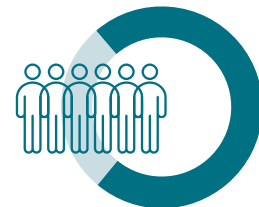


SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Residents in the North generally feel an even stronger connection to their communities than Ontarians living in other regions, even as sense of belonging has been steadily rising in recent years throughout the province. Almost three-quarters of the population (72.3%) report feeling a somewhat or strong sense of belonging to their communities, which is higher than any other region. Such a connection to their communities in the North suggests that the majority of residents feel supported and are better able to cope and are more resilient when faced with challenging situations.

Residents of the North feel this greater sense of belonging even though fewer of them (49.2%) have five or more close friends who provide important social support compared to Ontarians overall (53.7%). Further, there is a higher percentage of people (11.8%) living alone in the North than in the province overall (9.6%), which has the potential to contribute to a sense of isolation.

PEOPLE WITH STRONG SENSE OF BELONGING TO THEIR COMMUNITIES



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



The percentage of people in the North (55.9%) that participate in organized activities, such as a union, a sport or recreation organization, or a cultural or educational group, is about the same as for Ontarians overall (55.2%). These engagements serve to reinforce residents' sense of belonging to their communities.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Crime Severity Index compiles all Criminal Code violations for each year and weights them by their seriousness, thereby providing an index that reflects the severity of criminal activity in an area. The North has the highest level of the Index at 69.1 than anywhere else in the province and is much higher than the overall rate for Ontario. More positively, the Index has been dropping steadily over the years in all parts of the province, including the North. Further, just over 3 out of 4 people (76.5%) in the North report feeling safe walking alone after dark in their neighbourhood, just slightly lower than the provincial average of 79.2%.

Both of these indicators suggest that residents' wellbeing in the North is not being seriously affected by incidence of serious crime or feeling unsafe when out walking in their communities.

SOCIAL NORMS AND VALUES

The greater sense of belonging people in the North feel appears to be related to a shared value to support their neighbours. A significant proportion of residents in the North provide unpaid help to others in their communities who are on their own (83.8%), and this represents a slightly higher percentage than for the province as a whole (81.0%).

Similar to the province as a whole, a little over half of the residents in the North believe that many or most people can be trusted (55.5%). Building trust can lead to the development of strong interpersonal and community relationships, so the fact that over 40% of residents do not feel others can be trusted is of concern.

Nearly 8% of residents in the North report experiencing discrimination due to characteristics such as one's ethnicity, race, or sexual orientation. While this percentage is lower than the provincial rate of 9.6%, it might be a result of the substantially lower rate of visible minorities in the North. As a factor affecting not only the sense of belonging residents feel, but also their mental and emotional wellbeing, these low rates of discrimination are encouraging. However, we can always strive to do even better to help marginalized peoples feel welcome in our communities.

PEOPLE REPORTING EXPERIENCE OF DISCRIMINATION



North	7.7%
Ontario	9.6%



DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

Democratic engagement means being involved in advancing democracy through political institutions, organizations, and activities. A society that enjoys a high degree of democratic engagement is one where citizens participate in political activities, express political views, and foster political knowledge; where governments build relationships, trust, shared responsibility, and participation opportunities with citizens; and where citizens, governments, and civil society uphold democratic values at local, provincial, and national levels.

A healthy democracy needs citizens who feel their votes count, are informed, participate, debate, and advocate. It needs governments at all levels to be transparent, inclusive, consultative, and trustworthy. In essence, political leadership, citizen participation, and communication demonstrate the level of democratic engagement.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

In the most recent federal election in October 2015, just over two-thirds of eligible voters in the North voted (67.1%), which is similar to the province as whole (67.8%), and is up significantly from previous elections. Only one-third residents of the North, however, have a great deal of confidence in our federal Parliament, although that measure was taken prior to the last election and might not reflect the renewed enthusiasm for democratic engagement resulting with a new government. Nevertheless, people in the North have much less confidence in federal Parliament than Ontarians overall, a level which has dropped considerably in the past decade. Perhaps their turnout at the polls is a reflection of their desire to have their voices heard and to effect change.



PEOPLE WITH CONFIDENCE
IN FEDERAL PARLIAMENT



North 33.3%
Ontario 39.6%



FEMALE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

PROVINCIALY (MPPs)

North	18.2%
Ontario	34.6%

FEDERALLY (MPs)

North	18.2%
Ontario	31.4%

Very few residents in the North participate directly in the democratic process by volunteering for a law, advocacy, or political group. Indeed, the numbers are too low to be reliably reported, so are significantly lower than the Ontario rate (3.8%). This lack of engagement is unfortunate because participation in political organizations connects citizens with one another and provides them with a forum to share and express opinions about a society they desire.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Fewer than 1 in 5 Members of both the Provincial and Federal Parliaments representing the North are women. These levels of representation are significantly below that for all women in the Provincial Parliament as well as for all women representing Ontario in the Federal Parliament. With over 50% of Ontario's population made up of women, our democratic and decision-making institutions should fairly reflect their values and opinions, so more work is needed to encourage women to become involved in our governments and remove barriers to their involvement.

COMMUNICATION

Members of Parliament for the North region dedicate 6.2% of their total eligible expenses to communications, typically in the form of newsletters or pamphlets mailed directly to householders in their ridings. These expenses are just slightly below the provincial average of 6.9%. Politicians' investments in communications is a reflection of the strength of the connection between citizens and their local representative in Parliament, and a means of sharing activities and progress towards goals. With the advent of social media, print materials are relied upon less so the recent decline in budgets dedicated to this form of communication is not unexpected.



EDUCATION

Education is the systematic instruction, schooling, or training given to the young in preparation for the work of life, and by extension, similar instruction or training obtained in adulthood.

Societies that thrive encourage a thirst for knowledge — at every age and stage of life. Education is a process that begins before school age and is reflected in pre-school arrangements such as childcare and early childhood education. It also continues beyond elementary and high school, to college, university, and professional training through apprenticeships. Education continues as lifelong learning.



ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Fewer than 1 in 5 residents in the North region, 25 to 64 years of age, have a university degree, almost half the provincial rate. Further, very few residents participate in other education-related activities such as formal courses, special interest, and self-development classes. In fact, too few people engage in these activities to provide reliable numbers. Across the province, the participation rate is 5.2% of the population, and although low, the rate has increased steadily over recent years.

Participation in education is critical for preparation for work as well as for ongoing personal development and its positive impact on our living standards and social networks. Creating more opportunities and encouraging greater participation in education-related activities would serve to enhance wellbeing because of their influence in many domains.



**25 TO 64 YEAR
OLDS WITH A
UNIVERSITY
DEGREE**



North	16.4%
Ontario	28.5%

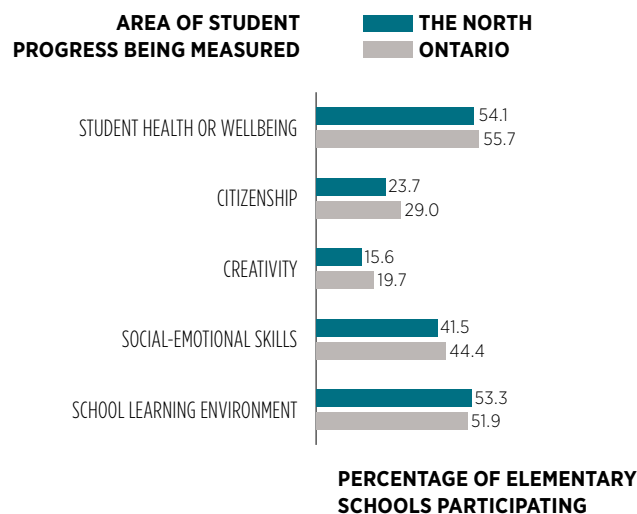


LIBRARY-BASED EARLY LITERACY AND LEARNING PROGRAMS PER 1,000 CHILDREN

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

MEASURING PROGRESS

Elementary schools in Ontario make important contributions to the early development of our children and their preparation for life. In the past year, the Ontario Ministry of Education added “wellbeing” to its goals for the education system and many schools are now including softer skills such as creativity and social-emotional skills among its key measures of progress.³



In the North, the over half of all elementary schools are measuring student progress in areas such health and wellbeing and the school learning environment. Many fewer schools — the lowest percentages in the province — are measuring progress in the areas of the development of citizenship skills and especially creativity.

CONTRIBUTION OF LIBRARIES

Beyond their traditional role in providing citizens with the content they need to succeed, libraries in our communities have evolved to play a central role as a hub for community development, learning, and sharing. The many instructional programs and services they offer promote literacy, skill development, and access to technology for people of all ages.⁴

Public libraries in the North offer an average of 21.7 programs per 1,000 children in the region for early literacy and learning, which is the lowest level of offerings

3. People for Education. (2015). Ontario's Schools: The gap between policy and reality. Annual Report on Ontario's Publicly Funded Schools 2015. Toronto, ON: People for Education. Available from: www.peopleforeducation.ca/document/ontarios-schools-the-gap-between-policy-and-reality

4. Federation of Ontario Public Libraries. (2012). Annual Report on the State of Public Libraries 2012. Toronto, ON: FOPL. Available from: <http://fopl.ca/news/2011-annual-report-on-the-state-of-public-libraries/>

in the province. They also offer an average of an additional 18.0 programs per 1,000 children in other areas (such as arts and culture, health and wellness, and play groups), which is slightly higher than the level of offerings overall in the province at an average of 16.5 programs. Taken together, libraries in the North region have approximately one literacy or other program for every 25 children.

In comparison, libraries offer far fewer programs for adults. On average, less than one program for every 1,000 adults related to career support and advice, job help, and skills training is provided in the North, yet this number is four times more than anywhere else in the province, which averages 1 program per 5,000 adults overall. Libraries in the North are more similar to the province as a whole when offering learning programs for adults in other general topics of interest. While these figures for the number of programs being offered might appear small, when one considers that for a small community of, say, 10,000 people, a total of about 25 adult learning programs are being offered to the community.

CHILD CARE

The availability of quality child care, which has expanded in Ontario in recent years, contributes to our pre-school children's social, emotional, developmental, and educational outcomes, especially for children living in lower income families. In the North, there is a higher proportion of children from 0 to 4 years of age for whom regulated, centre-based child care is available (25.6%) than almost anywhere else in the province. Spaces made available to pre-school children extend the positive benefits derived from quality child care to more children, especially those most marginalized by income or access, and also provide families with more opportunity to allocate their time differently and reach work-life balance.

Children from 0 to 14 years of age benefit in their cognitive, linguistic, and social development from time spent in talk-based interactions with adults. In the North, adults spend an average of almost 40 minutes per day in such interactions with children, which is very similar to the provincial average. These interactions contribute to our children's overall development.



LIBRARY-BASED LEARNING PROGRAMS PER 1,000 ADULTS

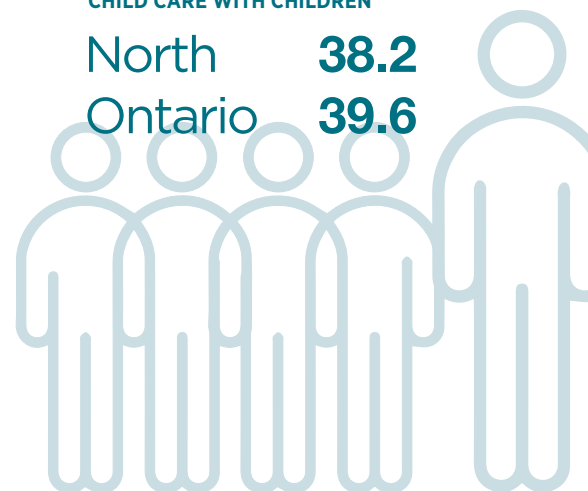
North	2.5
Ontario	2.7

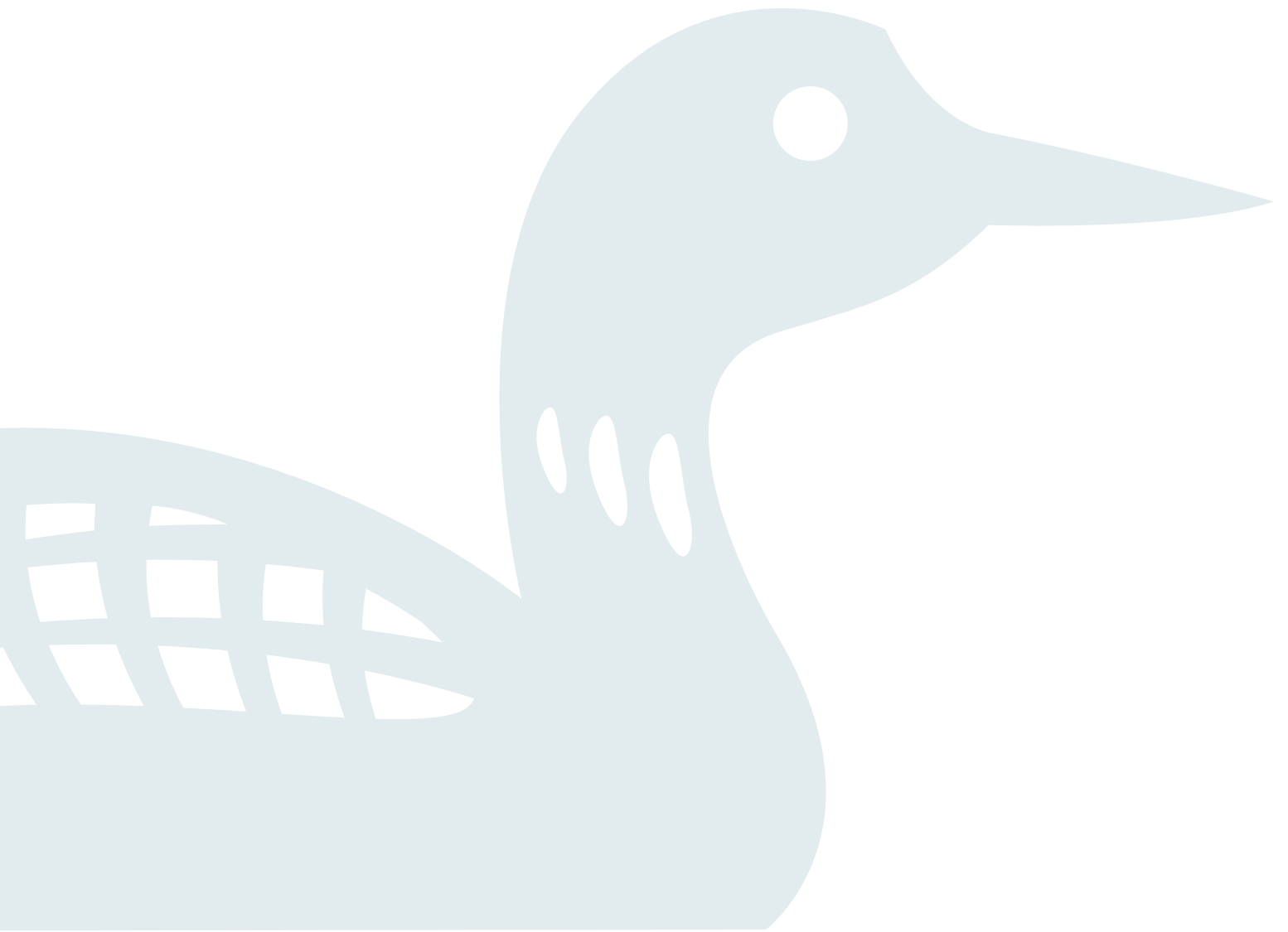
CHILDREN WITH REGULATED CENTRE-BASED CHILD CARE AVAILABLE

North	25.6%
Ontario	20.7%

AVERAGE MINUTES PER DAY IN INTERACTIVE TALK-BASED CHILD CARE WITH CHILDREN

North	38.2
Ontario	39.6





ENVIRONMENT

The environment is the foundation upon which human societies are built and the source of our sustained wellbeing. On a broader level, environmental protection involves the prevention of waste and damage while revitalizing our ecosystems and working towards the sustainability of all of our resources.

The environment is the basis for our health, our communities, and our economy. Despite its fundamental importance to human existence and the natural resource wealth it provides to Canada, we often fail to appreciate the various ecosystem services provided by nature that sustain human wellbeing. Indeed, how great is our wellbeing if we cannot breathe the air or drink the water?

AIR QUALITY

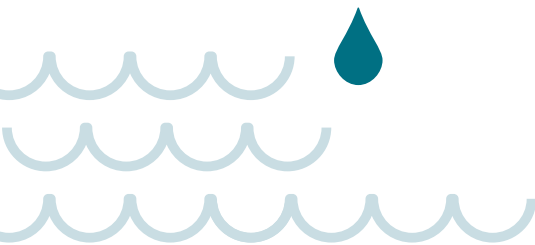
Ground level ozone — or “smog” — represents a potentially serious risk both to the environment (e.g., crop loss), to our health (e.g., respiratory issues), and to our health care system (e.g., increased hospital admissions). While ground-level ozone levels have been largely stable over the past two decades, they have increased in the province over the past year.

In the North region, ground-level ozone is 28.0 parts per billion (ppb), which is very slightly higher than the overall provincial level. While these levels are well below standards that place people at risk, we can take action to prevent ozone production by increasing “active transportation” (i.e., walking, riding bicycles) or taking public transit and ensuring industry meets recommended targets.



GROUND-LEVEL OZONE (PPB)

North	28.0
Ontario	27.4



pH LEVELS OF FRESH WATER

North	7.6
Ontario	8.2

Greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), which are a major contributor to climate change, have been declining slowly in recent years in Ontario. While much of this reduction is due to the slowing of manufacturing following the 2008 recession and especially the closure of coal-fired electricity generation plants, in recent years, the reduction of household emissions through conservation efforts also has been, on a proportional basis, a significant factor in helping to reduce overall emissions. Ontarians are doing their part.

Greenhouse gas emissions from the largest facilities in the North region were 8.5 megatonnes of CO² in the past year, which represents 18.6% of the total emissions for the province as a whole (45.6 megatonnes)⁵. Several other factors also affect the level of GHGs, including the intensity of economic activity and energy use due to variable climatic conditions throughout the year (e.g., increased use of air conditioning in the summer) — all of which are playing out in the North region.

WATER QUALITY

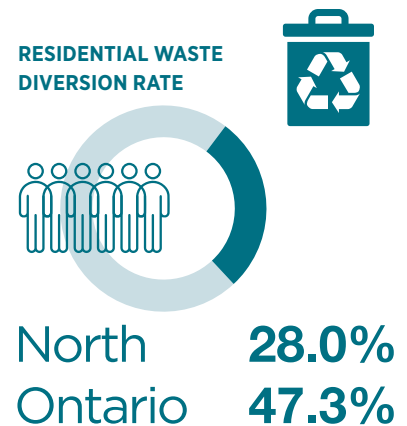
The relative abundance of fresh water in the province is a tremendous benefit enjoyed by all Ontarians. The quality of fresh water in Ontario overall, as measured by its pH level, is 8.2, which is slightly alkaline, but well within acceptable limits. The North region has the purest water in the province with a pH level of 7.6, placing it almost at the best possible level of 7.0 to 7.5 pH.

5. Data on greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) in Ontario's regions are taken from the Reported Facility GHG Data available from Environment and Climate Change Canada (<http://www.ec.gc.ca/ges-ghg/default.asp?lang=En&n=8044859A>), and represent only one part of total GHGs in the province; that is, only emissions generated by the largest operations in the province are reported.

WASTE REDUCTION

In Ontario, the percentage of all waste diverted from landfill, mainly through recycling programs, is about 25%. About 60% of all waste in Ontario is generated by the non-residential sector (e.g., factories, shopping malls, large institutions), yet it diverts only about 13% of the waste from landfill. In contrast, residential waste accounts for about one-quarter of the provincial total, yet Ontarians are diverting 47.3% of their waste from landfills, mainly through the Blue Box and Green Bin recycling programs, and this rate has been improving in recent years.⁶ However, recycling rates overall have remained largely the same over the past decade.

In the North region, the residential waste reduction rate is 28.0%, which is the lowest of any region in the province and well below the provincial rate of 47.3%. This lower rate is largely due to the lower availability of recycling programs throughout the region. However, as recycling programs expand across the province, we should expect to see even less waste directed to our landfills, and reduced impacts on the environment.



6. Government of Ontario. (2015). Strategy for a waste free Ontario: Building the circular economy. (Draft for consultation). Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer of Ontario. Available from: http://www.downloads.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/env_reg/et/documents/2015/012-5834_DraftStrategy.pdf



HEALTHY POPULATIONS

The healthy populations domain considers the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of the population. It examines life expectancy, lifestyle and behaviours, and the circumstances that influence health such as access to health care.

Healthy populations captures both the overall health of the population (“health status”) as well as factors that influence health (“health determinants”). This broad perspective is used because individuals’ lifestyles and behaviours are constrained and shaped by broader social factors such as how food is distributed and priced, how houses are constructed and located, how urban transportation is designed, how accessible health care and recreational services are, and how we interact with the natural environment.

SELF-REPORTED HEALTH

In terms of overall health, 53% of residents in the North region say their overall health is very good or excellent and 67.5% report that their mental health is very good or excellent. In both cases, these percentages are much lower than the provincial rates as a whole. In fact, residents’ ratings of their overall health and mental health are lower than anywhere else in the province, which is of concern when Ontarians’ ratings of their health, especially their mental health, have been declining somewhat in recent years. Ongoing monitoring therefore is critical in the region.



HEALTH RATED
AS VERY GOOD
OR EXCELLENT

OVERALL

North	53.0%
Ontario	59.2%

MENTAL

North	67.5%
Ontario	70.4%

PEOPLE WITH SELF- REPORTED DIABETES

North	9.3%
Ontario	7.4%

Similar to their ratings of their health, fewer than two-thirds of the residents in the North region are living with no health or activity limitations (61.2%), which is again the lowest rate of anywhere in the province and well below the provincial rate of 67.9%. Further, the incidence of self-reported diabetes in the North is the highest in the province at 9.3% of the population.

Clearly, there are serious health issues in the North region that exceed those being experienced elsewhere in the province.

PEOPLE GETTING INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATION

North	37.0%
Ontario	35.4%

HEALTH-RELATED BEHAVIOUR

Over the past decade, the number of Ontarians getting immunized against influenza each year has remained relatively unchanged at approximately one-third of the population. More than one-third of residents in the North region got their flu shot, which is slightly higher than the provincial rate.

TEENS WHO ARE SMOKING OCCASIONALLY OR DAILY

North	7.3%
Ontario	5.8%

Smoking is widely recognised as a health behaviour associated with a variety of illnesses that could otherwise be prevented. Preventing and reducing smoking at an early age, when such behaviour is typically adopted, is a strategy that ensures better health in later life.

Smoking rates among teens (aged 12 to 19 years) have been steadily decreasing across Ontario over the years and currently, only 5.8% now report smoking occasionally or daily. However, over 7% of teens living in the North report smoking, which is higher than anywhere else in the province, and is another health-related issue of concern for this region.

HEALTH CARE ACCESS

Ontarians' access to a regular health physician, such as a family doctor, is a useful indicator of the capacity and appropriateness of the primary health care system because such access is more effective in sustaining good health than episodic use of emergency care.

In the North region, over 4 in 5 residents have a regular health physician, which is sizeable proportion of the population, but it still falls over 7% short of the provincial rate. In fact, the North has the lowest rate of access to a physician than anywhere else in the province. Certainly, the size of the region and the availability of health professionals are in part factors, but nevertheless, this lower access points to a health inequity in this region.

PEOPLE WITH A REGULAR HEALTH PHYSICIAN



North	85.3%
Ontario	92.5%



LEISURE AND CULTURE

By participating in leisure and cultural activities, whether arts, culture, or recreation, we contribute to our wellbeing as individuals, to our communities, and to society as a whole. The myriad of activities and opportunities we pursue and enjoy benefit our overall life satisfaction and quality of life.

As forms of human expression, leisure and cultural activities help to more fully define our lives, the meaning we derive from them, and ultimately, our wellbeing. This remains true throughout our lives regardless of age, gender, or social group. The impact of participation in leisure and cultural activities is even greater for people in marginalized groups, such as those living with disabilities, living in poverty, and as members of a minority population.

LEISURE PARTICIPATION

Spending leisure time with others in pursuits of shared interest and in arts and cultural activities is an important way for people to connect, celebrate diversity, and develop and broaden their passions — all contributors to community social capital.

In the North region, residents spend an average of 12.2% of their time on the previous day engaged in social leisure activities, such as socializing with others at home, going out, and volunteering with civic and family organizations, among other activities. This percentage of time is somewhat lower than the average for Ontario and one of the lowest averages in the province. In contrast, residents of the North spend on average 4.5% of their time on the previous day participating in arts and cultural activities (e.g., going to music concerts, visiting museums and galleries), which is higher than the overall provincial average of 4.1%, and one of the highest rates in the province.



TIME ON PREVIOUS
DAY SPENT IN ...



SOCIAL LEISURE

North	12.2%
Ontario	13.0%

ARTS AND CULTURE

North	4.5%
Ontario	4.1%





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

North	31.2
Ontario	28.2

**HOURS SPENT VOLUNTEERING
FOR RECREATION / CULTURE
ORGANIZATIONS IN PAST YEAR**

North	25.9
Ontario	30.5

**PROVINCIAL PARKS PER
100,000 POPULATION**

North	25.6
Ontario	2.2

An active lifestyle has numerous physical, social, and psychological benefits, and in Ontario, over 90% of the population reports participating in some form of regular physical activity during leisure time. In the North, residents report participating in physical activity lasting at least 15 minutes at least once every day. Although only slightly higher than the provincial average of 28.2 times per month, this level of activity is the highest of any region in Ontario.

When people volunteer, especially for recreation and cultural organizations, they not only derive important personal benefits from their commitment to activities in which they have a passion, but the community also benefits from the activities and programs that volunteering provides to residents. In the previous year, people in the North region gave an average of 25.9 hours of their time to volunteering for recreation and culture organizations, which is significantly lower than the provincial average. These lower volunteering rates might explain, in part, residents' lower amounts of time spent in social leisure activities.

Taking regular holidays provides relief from daily routines, opportunities to bond with friends and family, and revitalisation. The longer the vacation, the greater these benefits. Residents in the North region report an average of 3.0 nights away per vacation trip in the previous year (to destinations at least 80 km away from home), which is slightly higher than the provincial average of 2.8 nights away. Time away on holiday has been steadily decreasing in recent years in Ontario, and if the trend continues, residents will receive fewer of its benefits.

PROVINCIAL PARKS

As part of their mandate, provincial parks in Ontario provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, as well as play an important role in the conservation of the natural environment.

Not surprisingly given the size of its land area and low population density, the North region has by far the highest number of provincial parks in the province — 196 parks representing almost two-thirds of the total parks system (65.1%). Overall, this represents 25.6 provincial parks

for every 100,000 people in the North, which is the highest level of provision than anywhere else in Ontario and over ten times higher than the provincial average.

Although provision is highest in the North region, visitation is the lowest in the province with each park hosting in the previous year approximately 14,400 visitors on average — less than half the provincial average of almost 33,000 visitors per park. The low levels of visitation in the North are again not too surprising given the small population in the region and how remote many of the parks are relative to the rest of the province.

LIBRARIES

As noted earlier, libraries provide much more than just content to advance people's education and interests. Indeed, they are important community hubs where people meet, engage in activities, and attend events, thereby strengthening community bonds. In this respect, for every 1,000 people in the North region, over 100 in-person visits are made in a typical week to the libraries, which is almost identical to the province overall.

In the past year, libraries in the North region offered 18.6 library programs of various types to every 1,000 people, which is one of the highest rates in Ontario. In contrast, the libraries offered 3.2 arts and cultural events and shows (e.g., Culture Days, poetry and story readings, art shows) per 10,000 people, which is lower than the provincial rate of 4.4 events. Like we saw earlier for educational programs, these figures for the number of programs and events being offered might appear small, but when one considers that for even a small community of 10,000 people, a total of about 186 programs and 32 events and shows are being offered each year to the residents.

By making free computers and internet connections available in public libraries, access to information and resources is provided, especially to people who might otherwise not have it due to financial constraints. Such access is clearly important in the North region where 15.1 internet connections are available in the libraries for every 10,000 people, which is more than twice the level of provision than almost all other regions and for the province as a whole (7.2 connections per 10,000 people).



WEEKLY IN-PERSON VISITS TO LIBRARIES PER 1,000 PEOPLE

North	104.2
Ontario	103.2

ANNUAL LIBRARY PROGRAMS PER 1,000 PEOPLE

North	18.6
Ontario	16.6

ARTS AND CULTURE EVENTS AND SHOWS PER 10,000 PEOPLE

North	3.2
Ontario	4.4





LIVING STANDARDS

Living standards examines average and median income and wealth, distribution of income and wealth including poverty rates, income fluctuations and volatility, and economic security, including labour market security, and housing and food security.

Our living standards should reflect our capacity to transform economic growth into stable current and future income streams for everyone. Economic growth does not automatically translate into better living standards. A higher average income, for example, may be achieved at the cost of increased social inequality or greater economic insecurity. In contrast, achieving greater job quality, reducing poverty, and providing basic affordable housing and food security to individuals and families will raise wellbeing for everyone.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

As noted in the earlier section on Demographics, the North region has the lowest employment rate (54.8%), the highest unemployment rate (9.4%), and the second lowest after-tax median income (\$65,374) of any region in the province. These characteristics might be suggestive of conditions of greater economic insecurity for its residents who may feel there are fewer opportunities for a secure and stable job and less access to the necessities of life like food and shelter.

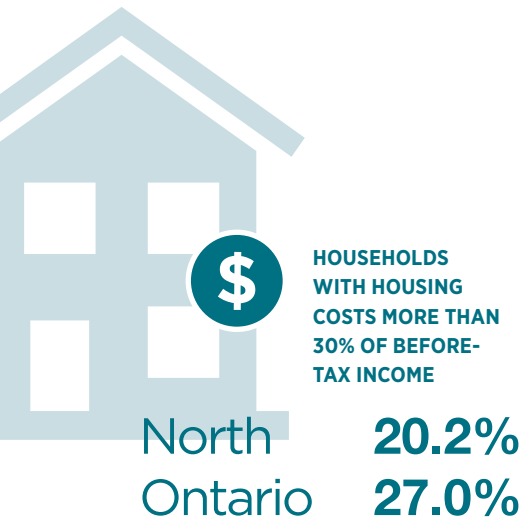
The percentage of persons in low income represents the proportion of Ontarians in families that are spending an additional 20% or more of their income than the average family on food, shelter, and clothing. The percentage of Ontarians in low income has edged up slightly in



PERSONS IN LOW INCOME



North 13.6%
Ontario 13.9%



recent years indicating that their economic security has lessened as well. In the North region, the percentage of people in low income (13.6%) is approximately the same as for the province overall, which reflects a small increase in the number of people struggling to make ends meet. This percentage represents just under 100,000 people living in the North region who are struggling economically.

Food insecurity occurs when nutritious food is not available to people, the amount of food is insufficient, and/or there are barriers to safe and effective food preparation, such as poor drinking water quality or sanitation issues. The numbers of people who are moderately or severely food insecure in Ontario has been rising in recent years, and now sits at 8.3% of the total population. Roughly the same percentage of residents in the North region are food insecure (8.4%), and this is rising in the North as well. This percentage represents approximately 65,000 people in the North region who are experiencing food insecurity.

HOUSING SECURITY

For housing to be considered affordable, housing costs should be less than 30% of a family's before-tax household income.

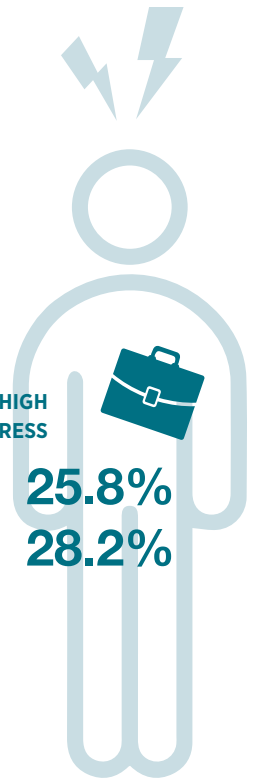
In contrast to trends in economic security, the North region has the fewest residents spending 30% or more of their income on housing (20.2%) than anywhere else in the province, and is well below the provincial rate. Housing is a major part of a family's expenses, so at least with respect to shelter, residents are more secure than elsewhere in the province, which might be linked to the high percentage of people in the region who own their own homes.

WORK-RELATED STRESS

High levels of stress attributed to work can be related to a variety of factors including poor job quality and low stability — and hence, security — as well as longer hours of work and poor working conditions. High levels of stress from work can have a serious affect on one's physical and mental health. One-quarter of working residents in the North region report feeling high levels of work-related stress, which is well below the rate for the province overall and one of the lowest among all regions in the province. Given the generally poorer health conditions of residents in the North, even this lower level of work-related stress is of concern.

PEOPLE REPORTING HIGH
LEVELS OF WORK STRESS

North	25.8%
Ontario	28.2%





TIME USE

Time use measures how people experience and spend their time. It considers how the use of our time affects physical and mental wellbeing, individual and family wellbeing, and present and future wellbeing. It examines the length of our workweek, our work arrangements, our levels of time pressure, and the time we spend with friends and in other free-time activities.

The implicit assumption with Time Use is the notion of balance. Most activities are beneficial to wellbeing when done in moderation, but are detrimental when done excessively or not at all. There are only 24-hours in a day, so too much time directed towards one activity can mean not enough or no time at all allocated for other activities that are also critical for our wellbeing. Not only does the amount of time matter, but the pace of and relative control over timing of activities throughout the day can affect overall quality of life.

TIME

How much time Ontarians devote each day to certain kinds of activities may be beneficial — or detrimental — to their wellbeing. While some people might have the ability to allocate their time to achieve greater work-life balance, too often, factors beyond their control dictate how that time gets allocated.

In the North region, more than 1 in 10 people are working 50 hours or more each week, well beyond the maximum 35 to 40 hours of most full-time employment. However, this is one of the lowest percentages in Ontario.

Despite the size of the region, residents in the North spend on average just over half an hour commuting to and from work each day. This commute time is the lowest in Ontario and almost 20 minutes shorter than the average for the province overall.



PEOPLE WORKING
50+ HOURS PER WEEK



North 12.9%
Ontario 14.3%

NORTH REGION TIME USE



AVERAGE COMMUTE TIME TO
AND FROM WORK (IN MINUTES)

North	36.6
Ontario	53.7

AVERAGE TIME SPENT PER DAY
WITH FRIENDS (IN MINUTES)

North	94.8
Ontario	90.1



Perhaps because fewer people are working long hours and commute times tend to be shorter, more so than anywhere else in Ontario, residents of the North are, on average, spending more time with friends each day. People spend on average five minutes more each day with friends than the provincial average of 90.1 minutes per day. While this difference might appear low, the cumulative effect of more time with friends can have a significant impact on people's wellbeing and connection to their communities.

TIMING

Timing considers when activities occur during the day, and how easy or difficult it might be for Ontarians to schedule activities like work, leisure, meals, or volunteer commitments. The more easily people can control their time, the greater their wellbeing.

Having regular, weekday work hours increases the sense of stability and security people feel about their jobs. In the North region, about 6 in 10 employees have regular, weekday working hours, which is the lowest percentage of any region in Ontario and well below the provincial number of almost two-thirds of employees. Further, the percentage of residents in the North who have access to flexible work hours (i.e., when they choose to begin and end their workday) also is the lowest of anywhere in the province. About one-third of the people have flexible working hours, which is far lower than the provincial rate of 46.1%. Overall, working people in the North region appear to have much less control over their time.

TEMPORALITY

Temporality focuses on the natural rhythms associated with time such as our sleep and waking time rhythms, transitions from day to night, and activities associated with the changing of the seasons.

Sleep is a biological necessity — we need good quality sleep in order to function. Adults require between seven to nine hours of sleep per day, and too much, too little, or poor quality sleep is detrimental to our wellbeing. Approximately one-third of people in the North region (32.5%) report getting between seven and nine hours of quality sleep, which is somewhat higher than the provincial rate of 30.5%. Regardless of this small difference, a greater concern is that only about a third of the population report that they are getting a decent night's sleep.

Only 16.5% of people in the North report high levels of time pressure, which is the lowest percentage of any region in Ontario. These lower levels of time pressure might be linked to the lower proportion of residents working long hours and the shorter commute times they face. Nevertheless, levels of time pressure have remained relatively stable in recent years and suggest the ongoing challenge of achieving work-life balance for many Ontarians.



WORKING PEOPLE WITH WEEKDAY WORK HOURS

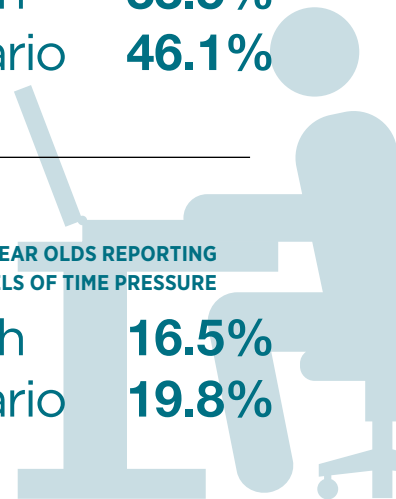
North	59.9%
Ontario	65.9%

WORKING PEOPLE WITH FLEXIBLE WORK HOURS

North	33.5%
Ontario	46.1%

15 TO 64 YEAR OLDS REPORTING HIGH LEVELS OF TIME PRESSURE

North	16.5%
Ontario	19.8%





APPENDIX A: METHODS

To create these regional reports on the wellbeing of Ontarians, the most recent data available come from three main sources. These sources of data provided demographic characteristics and indicators for each of the eight domains comprising the CIW's framework identified as critical to our overall wellbeing (i.e., *community vitality, healthy populations, democratic engagement, the environment, leisure and culture, education, living standards, and time use*).

- 1. National survey data and other federal sources** — wherever possible, indicators used for the CIW's national index comprising the eight domains are used. The most recent data, principally from Statistics Canada and other federal agencies (i.e., Ministry of Environment and Climate Change; Legislative Assembly of Canada; Elections Canada) are the main sources for creating portraits of wellbeing. Many of the indicators come from national surveys, including the Canadian Community Health Survey, the General Social Surveys (various cycles on Time Use; Victimization; Social Engagement; Canadian Survey on Giving, Volunteering, and Participating), and the Ethnic Diversity Survey;
- 2. Provincial data sources** — when national data were not available, we chose proxy indicators for several of the domains from provincial agencies and not for profit organizations. The agencies from which indicators were drawn included the Government of Ontario's Public Library Statistics; Government of Ontario's Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network; Ministry of Children and Youth Services; Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport's After-School Program; Ontario Provincial Park Statistics; and People for Education; and
- 3. Census of Canada** — primarily for the section describing the demographic characteristics of Ontarians, data have been taken from the most recent Census of Canada (2011) and augmented by selective use of data from the National Household Survey. The Census also provided the means to adapt selected indicators from national and provincial sources to per capita measures thereby allowing for direct comparisons between regions with quite different population sizes.

Almost all of the data from national sources are for the year 2014. We also used a few data sources from 2013 and at least two from 2015. For the section on demographics, we used the most recent Census of Canada (2011) along with selected indicators from the National Household Survey (2011), where appropriate. To ensure comparability across regions of different population sizes, some indicators have been converted to per capita measures (e.g., number of incidents per 100,000 people). In these cases, we base our population estimates on Statistics Canada guidelines.

The greatest limitation to securing indicators for all of the domains was availability of data at the regional level in Ontario. While indicators could typically be taken from national sources and reported for Ontario as a whole, they could not be disaggregated to the regional level. This limitation occurred for two main reasons. First, the national data simply may not have been available at the regional level, or second, when data were available, the sample was too small for valid reporting on the indicator. We addressed this limitation by seeking out provincial sources of data that could provide appropriate proxy indicators. Provincial sources were scrutinized carefully for conceptual fit, accuracy, and comparability across all provincial regions.

Once we identified, validated, and aggregated the data sources for the five regions of Ontario, portraits of wellbeing across Ontario emerged. These portraits offer a more comprehensive and interconnected understanding of different aspects of wellbeing and how they vary for residents in different regions across the province.

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR NORTH REGION AND ONTARIO

DEMOGRAPHICS

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	NORTH	ONTARIO
POPULATION	Percentage of provincial population	6.0	100.0
	Percentage of provincial land area	88.4	100.0
AGE	Median age in years	44.1	40.4
	Percentage of population under 15 years of age	15.6	16.9
	Percentage of population 50 years of age and older	41.0	35.1
FAMILIES	Percentage of population 15 years of age or older that is married or living common-law	58.9	57.7
	Percentage of families led by lone parent	16.7	16.7
	Percentage of lone-parent families led by females	76.5	80.5
HOUSEHOLDS	Average number of persons per family	2.8	3.0
	Percentage of population that owns their homes	71.5	71.4
	Percentage of private households occupied by Aboriginal peoples	12.8	2.3
LANGUAGE AND ETHNICITY	Percentage of population with English as first language	73.7	67.5
	Percentage of population with French as first language	16.4	3.8
	Percentage of population with another language as first language	10.0	28.7
	Percentage of population with knowledge of both English and French	23.6	10.9
	Percentage of visible minority population	1.9	25.5
EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME	Employment rate	54.8	59.0
	Unemployment rate	9.4	8.5
	After-tax median family income	\$ 65,374	\$ 71,715

APPENDIX B

COMMUNITY VITALITY

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	NORTH	ONTARIO
SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT	Percentage of population reporting somewhat/strong sense of belonging to community	72.3	68.1
	Percentage of population reporting participation in organised activities	55.9	55.2
	Percentage of population living alone	11.8	9.6
SOCIAL SUPPORT	Percentage of population with five or more close friends	49.2	53.7
COMMUNITY SAFETY	Crime Severity Index	69.1	50.0
	Percentage of population who feel safe walking alone after dark	76.5	79.2
SOCIAL NORMS AND VALUES	Percentage of population who provide unpaid help to others on their own	83.8	81.0
	Percentage of population who believe that many/most people can be trusted	55.5	57.3
	Percentage of population reporting experience of discrimination	7.7	9.6

DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	NORTH	ONTARIO
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION	Percentage of eligible population that voted in last federal election	67.1	67.8
	Percentage of population who volunteer for a law, advocacy, or political group	—	3.8
	Percentage with a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in federal parliament	33.3	39.6
POLITICAL LEADERSHIP	Percentage of female Members of Parliament (MPs) federally	18.2	31.4
	Percentage of female Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs)	18.2	34.6
COMMUNICATION	Percentage of total expenses used by Members of Parliament (MPs) to send communications to householders in their ridings	6.2	6.9

EDUCATION

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	NORTH	ONTARIO
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT	Percentage of population age 25 and older participating in education-related activities	—	5.2
	Percentage of 25 to 64 year olds in population with a university degree	16.4	28.5
MEASURING PROGRESS	Percentage of elementary schools measuring progress in student health or wellbeing	54.1	55.7
	Percentage of elementary schools measuring progress in citizenship skills	23.7	29.0
	Percentage of elementary schools measuring progress in creativity	15.6	19.7
	Percentage of elementary schools measuring progress in socio-emotional skills	41.5	44.4
	Percentage of elementary schools measuring progress in school learning environment	53.3	51.9
LIBRARIES	Average number of early literacy and early learning programs per 1,000 children	21.7	25.8
	Average number of other children's programs per 1,000 children	18.0	16.5
	Average number of careers, job help, and skills programs per 1,000 adult population	0.8	0.2
	Average number of adult learning programs per 1,000 adult population	2.5	2.7
CHILD CARE	Percentage of children aged 0 to 4 years for whom there is a regulated centre-based child care space	25.6	20.7
	Average minutes per day spent in interactive (talk-based) child care for children 0 to 14 years of age	38.2	39.6

ENVIRONMENT

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	NORTH	ONTARIO
AIR QUALITY	Ground level ozone (population weighted in parts per billion)	28.0	27.4
	Overall total GHG emissions (megatonnes of CO ₂ per year)	8.5	45.6
	Percentage of provincial GHG emissions (megatonnes of CO ₂ per year) contributed by region	18.6	100.0
WATER QUALITY	pH levels (based on 1 to 14 scale where 7 is considered neutral)	7.6	8.2
WASTE REDUCTION	Percentage of total residential waste diverted by municipalities (includes Blue Box and other materials)	28.0	47.3

HEALTHY POPULATIONS

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	NORTH	ONTARIO
SELF-REPORTED HEALTH	Percentage of population who rate their overall health as very good or excellent	53.0	59.2
	Percentage of population who rate their mental health as very good or excellent	67.5	70.4
	Percentage of population with no health or activity limitations	61.2	67.9
	Percentage of population with self-reported diabetes	9.3	7.4
HEALTH-RELATED BEHAVIOUR	Percentage of daily or occasional smokers among teens aged 12 to 19 years	7.3	5.8
	Percentage of population getting influenza immunization	37.0	35.4
HEALTH CARE ACCESS	Percentage of population with a regular health physician	85.3	92.5

LEISURE AND CULTURE

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	NORTH	ONTARIO
LEISURE PARTICIPATION	Average percentage of time spent on the previous day in social leisure activities	12.2	13.0
	Average percentage of time spent on the previous day in arts and culture activities	4.5	4.1
	Average monthly frequency of participation in physical activity lasting over 15 minutes	31.2	28.2
	Average number of hours in the past year volunteering for culture and recreation organizations	25.9	30.5
	Average number of nights away per vacation trip in past year to destinations at least 80 km from home	3.0	2.8
PROVINCIAL PARKS	Number of provincial parks per 100,000 population	25.6	2.2
	Average number of visitors ('000s) per provincial park in past year	14.4	32.9
LIBRARIES	Number of annual library programs in past year per 1,000 population	18.6	16.6
	Number of Culture Days, poetry and story readings, and arts shows in past year per 10,000 population	3.2	4.4
	Number of in-person visits made to the library in a typical week per 1,000 population	104.2	103.2
	Number of library internet connections per 10,000 population	15.1	7.2

APPENDIX B

LIVING STANDARDS

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	NORTH	ONTARIO
ECONOMIC SECURITY	After tax median income of economic families	\$ 65,374	\$ 71,715
	Percentage of persons in low income	13.6	13.9
	Percentage of households that are moderately or severely food insecure	8.4	8.3
HOUSING SECURITY	Percentage of households with shelter costs exceeding 30% of before-tax household income	20.2	27.0
WORK-RELATED STRESS	Percentage of population reporting quite a bit or extreme self-perceived work stress	25.8	28.2

TIME USE

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	NORTH	ONTARIO
TIME	Percentage of population reporting working 50 hours or more per week	12.9	14.3
	Average workday commute time (both ways) for individuals working for pay (minutes per day)	36.6	53.7
	Average amount of time spent with friends (minutes per day)	94.8	90.1
TIMING	Percentage of labour force with regular, weekday work hours	59.9	65.9
	Percentage of individuals working for pay with flexible work hours	33.5	46.1
TEMPORALITY	Percentage of population who report 7 to 9 hours of good quality essential sleep	32.5	30.5
	Percentage of 15 to 64 year olds reporting high levels of time pressure	16.5	19.8

OVERALL LIFE SATISFACTION

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	NORTH	ONTARIO
WELLBEING	Percentage of population reporting being somewhat to very satisfied with life	86.7	85.6

APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY

COMPOSITE INDEX

A composite index is a grouping of factors, measures, or other indices that have been combined in a standardized way, providing a useful statistical measure of overall performance over time.

CRIME SEVERITY INDEX

The Crime Severity Index measures changes in the level of severity of crime in Canada from year to year. The Index includes all Criminal Code violations including traffic, as well as drug violations and all Federal Statutes, and is calculated using Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR2) data. In the index, all crimes are assigned a weight based on their seriousness. The level of seriousness is based on actual sentences handed down by the courts in all provinces and territories. More serious crimes are assigned higher weights, less serious offences lower weights. As a result, more serious offences have a greater impact on changes in the index (Statistics Canada, 2015).

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS (GHGS)

Greenhouse Gases are any gaseous compounds in the atmosphere that absorb infrared radiation, which results in heat being trapped and held within the atmosphere. As trapped heat increases in the atmosphere, the greenhouse effect results, which leads to global warming. Some forms of human activity (e.g., burning fossil fuels, deforestation) lead to certain types of gas released into the atmosphere, which leads to more warming. Carbon dioxide is the primary gas responsible for the greenhouse effect, but methane, nitrous oxide, and water vapour also contribute to the effect.

GROUND-LEVEL OZONE

Ground-level ozone is a colorless and highly irritating gas that forms just above the earth's surface. It is called a "secondary" pollutant because it is produced when two primary pollutants react in sunlight and stagnant air — nitrogen oxides and volatile organic

compounds (i.e., carbon-containing gases and vapors such as gasoline fumes and solvents) — which come from both natural sources and human activities (e.g., burning fuels). Ground-level ozone irritates the respiratory tract and eyes, and exposures to high levels result in chest tightness, coughing, and wheezing, so people with respiratory and heart problems are at a higher risk. Ozone also causes agricultural crop loss each year in Ontario and noticeable leaf damage in many crops, garden plants, and trees.

(See: <https://www.ec.gc.ca/air/default.asp?lang=En&n=590611CA-1>).

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Affordable housing should cost less than 30% of a family's before-tax household income. Shelter costs include, as applicable, mortgage payments (both principal and interest), property taxes, condominium fees, and payments for electricity, fuel, water, and other municipal services (CMHC, 2015).

LOW INCOME CUT-OFF

Low income cut-off (LICO) is an income threshold below which a family will likely devote a larger share of its income on the necessities of food, shelter, and clothing than the average family. The approach is essentially to estimate an income threshold at which families are expected to spend 20% more than the average family on food, shelter, and clothing (Statistics Canada, 2015. See: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75f0002m/75f0002m2015001-eng.htm>).

pH LEVEL

pH level is a measure of the acidity of water and therefore its quality. Pure water is neutral and has a pH level of 7.0. As values fall below 7.0, water is increasingly acidic; as values rise above 7.0, water is increasingly alkaline. Changes in the pH level of water are important for the health of many organisms. Most organisms have adapted to life in water of a specific pH and may die if it changes even slightly. Factors that can affect the pH level include in the type bedrock and soil composition over which water flows; the amount of organic material in the water as it decomposes; and the release of chemicals into the water, typically from human sources.

WASTE DIVERSION RATE

The waste diversion rate is the percentage of the total amount of waste material that is kept out of landfills. In other words, the rate represents that part of all waste materials diverted as a percentage of the total amount of waste disposed.

CANADIAN
*i*ndex
OF WELLBEING

Measuring what matters

Making measures matter



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