

# A Profile of Wellbeing in Perth and Huron Counties: Benchmarking Indicators of Wellbeing based on the CIW

Prepared for:

Social Research and Planning Council  
operated by the United Way Perth Huron



Social Research &  
Planning Council



Operated by

**United Way**  
Perth-Huron

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July 2020



When referring to this report, please use this citation:

Smale, B., & Holliday, C. (2020). *A Profile of Wellbeing in Perth and Huron Counties: Benchmarking Indicators of Wellbeing based on the CIW*. A Report by the Canadian Index of Wellbeing prepared for the Social Research and Planning Council operated by the United Way Perth Huron. Waterloo, ON: Canadian Index of Wellbeing and the University of Waterloo.

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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.*

# Why We Need the Canadian Index of Wellbeing

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.

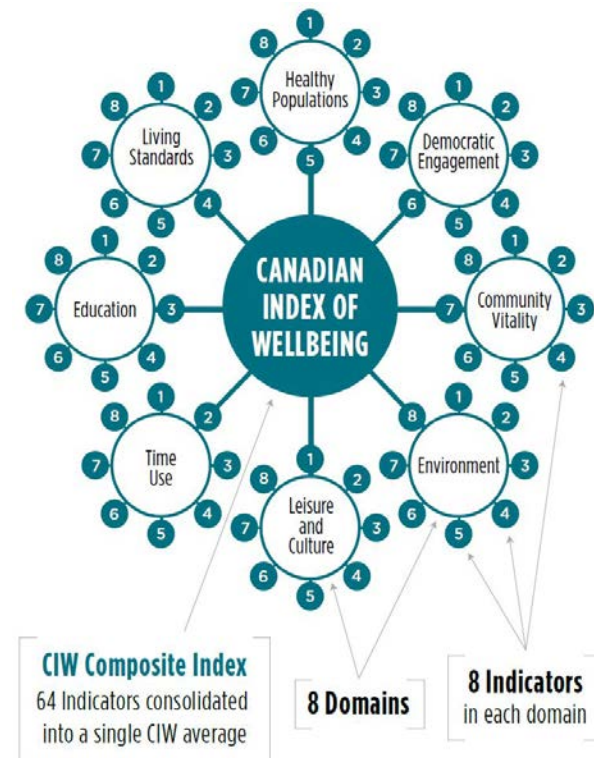
Increasingly, citizens and their governments are thinking “beyond GDP” as a measure of our progress and quality of life. Even though Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is an important measure of our economic performance, it does not capture those areas of our lives that we care about most like education, health, 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.

## Core Values and Domains Identified by Canadians

Since its inception and throughout the development of the CIW, the process has been designed to ensure everyday Canadians hear their own voices and see themselves reflected in the measure.

The CIW came about through the combined efforts of national leaders and organizations, community groups, research experts, indicator users, and importantly, the Canadian public. Through three rounds of public consultations, everyday Canadians across the country candidly expressed what really matters to their wellbeing. The process culminated in the identification of core Canadian values – including equity, diversity, sustainability, economic security – and eight domains of life that contribute to and affect the wellbeing of Canadians: *Community Vitality, Democratic Engagement, Education, Environment, Healthy Populations, Leisure and Culture, Living Standards, and Time Use* (see Figure 1). This framework shifts the focus solely from the economy to other factors that affect quality of life.

Figure 1. Canadian Index of Wellbeing Framework



- ✓ **Community Vitality** means communities that have strong, active, and inclusive relationships among people, private, public, and non-governmental organizations that foster individual and collective wellbeing.
- ✓ **Democratic Engagement** means being involved in advancing democracy through political institutions, organizations, and activities.
- ✓ **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.
- ✓ **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 our resources.
- ✓ **Healthy Populations** 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.
- ✓ **Leisure and Culture** considers how participating in leisure and cultural activities, whether arts, culture, or recreation, contributes 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.
- ✓ **Living Standards** examines Canadians' average and median income and wealth; distribution of income and wealth including poverty rates, income fluctuations and volatility; and economic security, including the labour market, and housing and food security.
- ✓ **Time Use** considers how people experience and spend their time. It examines how the use of our time affects physical and mental wellbeing, individual and family wellbeing, and present and future wellbeing.

Together, these eight domains provide a more complete picture of wellbeing, incorporating a comprehensive set of the key social, health, economic, and environmental factors contributing to overall quality of life. Teams of nationally and internationally renowned experts then identified eight valid, reliable, and relevant indicators within each domain that are directly related to wellbeing. By integrating the 64 indicators and eight domains and revealing their complex interconnections, the CIW composite index provides a comprehensive portrait of quality of life in Canada.

An ongoing cycle of public engagement, consultation, and refinement is one of the defining characteristics of the CIW. It ensures that the Index is rooted in Canadian values, grounded in community experience, shaped by technical expertise, and responsive to emerging knowledge. The CIW is not a static measure. As new issues emerge and new knowledge, understandings, and data become available, the CIW adapts to strengthen its measure of wellbeing without veering from the values on which it is grounded. Hence, validating and continually improving the CIW is an ongoing process.

*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?"*

# THE CIW: METHODS

To create this report on the wellbeing of Perth-Huron residents, Census Divisions (CDs) were grouped into two different types of geography based on two different criteria. First, rural areas of Ontario were identified based on the size and distribution of their populations in order to distinguish them from more urban areas. CDs, which are counties, regions and districts, or “upper tier” municipalities, are comprised of several census sub-divisions (CSDs), which are the incorporated towns or municipalities within the same CD. These areal units determined which areas were designated as “rural”, which included Perth and Huron. *Rural areas* of Ontario are comprised of those CDs where all of its CSDs, and therefore their population, fall outside of a metropolitan or principally urban area.<sup>1</sup>

Second, *West region* of Ontario is based on the 14 contiguous Census Divisions (or counties) comprising southwest Ontario: Brant, Bruce, Chatham-Kent, Elgin, Essex, Grey, Haldimand-Norfolk, Hamilton, Lambton, Middlesex, Niagara, Oxford, and of course, Perth and Huron counties.

The most recent data available were taken 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 profiles of wellbeing. Many of the indicators come from national surveys, including the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS)

and various cycles of the General Social Survey (GSS) focused on Time Use; Victimization; Social Engagement; and on Giving, Volunteering, and Participating;

2. **Provincial data sources** — when national data were not available, proxy indicators were identified for several of the domains that were available 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 Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture; 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 (2016), and when possible, updated projections. 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 areas with quite different population sizes.

## Data issues

The greatest constraint to providing data on indicators of wellbeing across Ontario was the lack of adequate coverage at the Census Division (CD) level. Even large national surveys conducted by Statistics Canada such as the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) and the General Social Survey (GSS), once disaggregated to the CD level, might not have provided enough data for the release of viable and reliable measures. For example, indicators used in the national and provincial level reporting of the CIW that could not be reported at the CD level within Ontario included: percentage of people

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<sup>1</sup> Rural Institute of Ontario. (2017). *Rural Ontario's Demography: Census Update 2016*. A report in the *Focus on Rural Ontario* series. Guelph, ON: Rural Ontario Institute. Available at: <http://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/knowledge-centre/focus-on-rural-ontario>



volunteering for a law, advocacy, or political group; feelings of a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the federal parliament; and the average numbers of hours in the past year volunteering for culture and recreation organizations. In each case, Statistics Canada suppressed the data due either to small sample sizes or extreme variability. This issue was especially acute in more rural areas of the province. Further, important indicators for the Environment domain, such as greenhouse gas emissions, air and water quality indices, and other biotic resource indicators, which are often reported nationally, are not available at lower levels of geography (such as CDs).

To supplement national data sources, consultations with data experts in the initial data discovery phase of the project identified potential indicators to highlight regional differences on various aspect of wellbeing. For example, data were obtained from: Elections Ontario on voting turnout for the Democratic Engagement domain; People for Education on schools measuring student progress for the Education domain; the Ontario Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture on library statistics for both the Education and the Leisure and Culture domains; and Canadian Urban Sustainability Practitioners (CUSP) on energy poverty for the Environment domain. With respect to promising data from other sources, the lack of viable coverage at the CD level also was a constraint as was the lack of timely updates. For example, data on the Early Development Index (EDI); the Air Quality Index, and for measures of biotic resources (i.e., fish toxicity) were not available.

In some instances, data – such as from the CCHS – have been compiled based on Ontario's health units, electoral districts, or school boards. In most cases, the geographic boundaries defining these zones are the same as provincial CDs, but in some cases, estimates were made to assign accurate measures to a CD when it did not match the other zone's boundaries. Overall, any error resulting from these estimates was small and randomized; in other words, once the CDs were aggregated to each of the three areas of Ontario, small errors would be minimized.

Finally, most of the data reported here are based on sources for the years 2016 to 2018, such as the CCHS, Elections Canada, and most of the indicators taken from provincial sources. The data from various cycles of the GSS cover the years from 2103 to 2015, and as noted earlier, demographic information comes from the 2016 Census of Canada.

# SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR PERTH and HURON COUNTIES

with comparisons to Rural areas and the West Region of Ontario, and to Ontario and Canada

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*Note:* Cells in the tables that follow are marked "N/A" when data are not available at the geographic scale or marked with " – " when not relevant (e.g., data are specific to the region and no provincial or national equivalent is reported). Some cells are flagged with "F" when data have been suppressed by Statistics Canada due to low reporting and hence unreliability. Detailed explanations are provided in the Excel datafile accompanying this report.

# DEMOGRAPHICS

Category	Indicator	COUNTIES		REGIONS		Ontario	Canada
		Perth	Huron	Rural	West		
Population	Total population (in 000s for Regions, Ontario, and Canada)	76,769	59,297	2,006	2,810	13,449	35,152
	Percentage of provincial population	0.6	0.4	14.9	20.9	–	–
	Percentage of provincial land area	0.2	0.4	83.4	3.9	–	–
Age	Median age in years	42.4	46.3	47.0	43.3	41.3	41.2
	Percentage of population under 15 years of age	18.0	16.8	15.5	16.3	16.4	16.6
	Percentage of population 50 years of age or older	40.9	46.0	46.4	41.4	38.2	38.5
Families	Percentage of population 15 years of age or older that is married or living common-law	60.8	62.9	61.1	57.7	57.3	57.6
	Percentage of families led by lone parent	13.1	11.0	14.8	16.9	17.1	16.4
	Percentage of lone-parent families led by females	76.5	75.0	76.3	79.3	80.4	78.3
Households	Average number of persons per family	3.0	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.9
	Percentage of population that owns their homes	73.2	78.0	75.2	71.4	69.7	67.8
Language and ethnicity	Percentage of population with English as first language	89.5	91.3	87.1	82.5	69.5	58.1
	Percentage of population with French as first language	0.6	0.8	6.8	2.0	4.3	21.4
	Percentage of population with another language as first language	10.6	8.4	7.1	17.1	29.0	22.9
	Percentage of population with knowledge of both English and French	4.0	2.7	12.3	6.5	11.2	17.9
	Percentage of visible minority population	3.6	1.5	2.7	11.7	29.3	22.3
	Percentage of population in private households with Aboriginal origins	2.4	2.5	9.3	4.1	3.9	6.2
Employment and income <sup>a</sup>	Percentage of labour force employed (employment rate)	67.0	61.0	55.3	58.1	61.4	62.0
	Percentage of labour force unemployed (unemployment rate)	4.0	5.3	7.5	6.9	7.4	7.7
	Percentage of labour force in long-term unemployment	2.4	3.2	4.4	3.9	4.3	4.4
	After-tax median family income	\$ 76,364	\$ 72,501	\$ 71,780	\$ 74,429	\$ 79,531	\$ 76,372

Note: <sup>a</sup> Data on employment drawn from the most recent Labour Force Survey rather than the 2016 Census of Canada.

## COMMUNITY VITALITY

Category	Indicator	COUNTIES		REGIONS		Ontario	Canada
		Perth	Huron	Rural	West		
Social engagement	Percentage of population reporting somewhat or strong sense of belonging to community <sup>a</sup>	79.5	78.9	73.4	71.0	70.8	68.9
	Percentage of population reporting unpaid, formal volunteering for groups or organizations with family and/or friends	F	F	30.6	N/A	28.8	28.4
Social support	Percentage of households occupied by a single individual	27.8	28.2	27.7	28.2	25.9	28.2
	Percentage of population with five or more close friends	64.5	55.5E	53.2	53.8	53.7	51.8
Social norms and values	Percentage of population providing unpaid help to others on their own	90.9	F	79.0	N/A	81.7	81.0
	Percentage of population that believe most or many people can be trusted	56.9	47.3E	58.0	57.3	57.3	53.5
	Percentage of population reporting experience of discrimination due to their ethnicity, race, or sexual orientation	F	F	12.1	N/A	14.9	13.4
Community safety	Crime Severity Index	34.5	67.3	65.3	69.9	60.0	75.0
	Percentage of population who feel safe walking alone after dark	90.2	86.3	82.4	80.3	79.2	78.7

Notes: <sup>a</sup> Based on Health Units, which approximate census divisions in most instances.

E According to Statistics Canada, data should be used with caution.

F According to Statistics Canada, data are too unreliable to publish.

## DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

Category	Indicator	COUNTIES		REGIONS		Ontario	Canada
		Perth	Huron	Rural	West		
Citizen participation	Percentage of eligible population that voted in the 2015 <i>federal</i> election	68.0	72.4	68.6	66.9	67.8	68.3
	Percentage of eligible population that voted in the 2018 <i>provincial</i> election	60.3	63.5	58.4	56.8	56.7	–
Leadership	Percentage of women MPs currently in <i>federal</i> Parliament	0.0	0.0	17.4	28.0	31.4	27.2
	Percentage of women MPPs currently in <i>provincial</i> Parliament	0.0	100.0	15.4	36.0	37.7	–
Communication	Percentage of total expenses used by MPs to send communications to householders in their ridings	3.6	1.7	3.1	3.5	3.4	3.1

# EDUCATION

Category	Indicator	COUNTIES		REGIONS		Ontario	Canada
		Perth	Huron	Rural	West		
Academic achievement	Percentage of population 25 years of age and older participating in education-related activities	F	F	N/A	N/A	4.3	4.0
	Percentage of population 25 to 29 years of age that have graduated high school <sup>a</sup>	84.2	85.4	86.5	89.3	91.9	89.7
	Percentage of population 25 to 64 years of age with apprenticeship or trades certificates	8.4	10.4	9.6	7.9	6.2	10.8
	Percentage of population 25 to 64 years of age with university degree	16.0	12.7	14.9	21.3	31.9	28.5
Measuring progress	Percentage of elementary schools measuring progress in <i>student health or wellbeing</i> <sup>b</sup>	62.5	50.0	72.5	50.7	55.7	–
	Pct. of elementary schools measuring progress in <i>citizenship skills</i> <sup>b</sup>	31.3	0.0	48.4	35.3	29.0	–
	Percentage of elementary schools measuring progress in <i>creativity</i> <sup>b</sup>	18.8	0.0	30.8	18.1	19.7	–
	Percentage of elementary schools measuring progress in <i>socio-emotional skills</i> <sup>b</sup>	12.5	25.0	57.6	39.4	44.4	–
	Percentage of elementary schools measuring progress in <i>school learning environment</i> <sup>b</sup>	25.0	75.0	67.6	50.7	51.9	–
Child care	Average amount of time spent in interactive (talk-based) child care with children 0 to 14 years of age (minutes per day)	F	F	86.4	N/A	119.2	123.6
	Percentage of children 0 to 3 years of age for whom there is a regulated/licensed centre-based child care space	16.6	18.5	22.8	24.4	29.8	–
Library programs	Average number of early literacy and early learning programs per 1,000 children 0 to 6 years of age	140.6	72.2	112.6	76.4	65.2	–
	Average number of other children's programs per 1,000 children 0 to 14 years of age	16.5	44.6	28.8	24.3	18.3	–
	Average number of all adult learning programs (i.e., career support and advice, job help, skills training) per 1,000 adult population	1.8	9.6	3.5	4.0	2.0	–

Notes: N/A = Data coverage is not sufficiently good to release figures for rural areas.

<sup>a</sup> Based on Health Units, which approximate census divisions in most instances.

<sup>b</sup> Based on school boards, which approximate census divisions in most instances.

F According to Statistics Canada, data are too unreliable to publish.

## ENVIRONMENT

Category	Indicator	COUNTIES		REGIONS		Ontario	Canada
		Perth	Huron	Rural	West		
Fresh water	pH levels (based on 14-point scale where 7 is considered neutral) <sup>a</sup>	8.3	8.3	8.0	8.3	8.1	–
Land	Area of land under cultivation (000s of hectares)	210	298	3,009	2,530	4,997	–
	Percentage of land <i>within</i> each area under cultivation	94.5	87.6	4.0	70.8	5.5	–
	Percentage of land under cultivation across province	4.2	6.0	60.2	50.6	100.0	–
Energy	Energy poverty – percentage of households spending 6% or more of after-tax household income on home energy services	30	40	41.3	30.0	27.3	–
Waste reduction	Percentage of total residential waste diverted by municipalities (includes Blue Box and other materials)	38.8	45.5	35.7	40.0	49.2	–

Note: \* 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. In Canada, the guideline for finished drinking water is within the range of 7.0 to 10.5, and pH values from 6.5 to 8.5 are recommended for the protection of aquatic life.

# HEALTHY POPULATIONS

Category	Indicator	COUNTIES		REGIONS		Ontario	Canada
		Perth	Huron	Rural	West		
Self-reported health	Percentage of population 12 years of age or older who rate their <i>overall health</i> as very good or excellent <sup>a</sup>	58.2	64.4	58.5	59.0	60.7	60.8
	Percentage of population 12 years of age or older who rate their <i>mental health</i> as very good or excellent <sup>a</sup>	71.1	69.9	68.1	67.2	69.1	69.4
	Percentage of population 12 years of age or older with health or activity limitations sometimes or often <sup>a</sup>	37.0	35.2	38.6	35.2	32.2	32.6
	Percentage of population 12 years of age or older with self-reported diabetes <sup>a</sup>	9.0	10.2	9.0	7.8	7.7	7.2
Health behaviour	Percentage of population 12 years of age or older who are daily or occasional smokers <sup>a</sup>	18.5	18.7	20.0	17.7	15.3	16.0
	Percentage of population 12 years of age or older getting influenza immunization in previous year <sup>a</sup>	35.9	37.6	34.6	34.4	34.4	32.0
Health care access	Percentage of population 12 years of age or older with a regular health care provider <sup>a</sup>	94.8	94.0	91.5	90.9	90.1	84.9
	Percentage of population 12 years of age or older who reported that their health care needs were unmet in past year <sup>a</sup>	N/A	4.8	9.9	9.2	10.3	11.2
	Percentage of population 12 years of age or older who reported that needed health care was not available in their area <sup>a</sup>	N/A	3.6 <sup>b</sup>	11.4	9.7	8.4	10.0

Notes: <sup>a</sup> Based on Health Units, which approximate census divisions in most instances.  
<sup>b</sup> Data point based on Perth-Huron Health Unit and assigned to Huron County here.



## LEISURE and CULTURE

Category	Indicator	COUNTIES		REGIONS		Ontario	Canada
		Perth	Huron	Rural	West		
Participation	Average percentage of time spent on the previous day participating in <i>leisure activities</i>	3.0E	F	3.9	N/A	3.7	4.0
	Average percentage of time spent on the previous day participating in <i>arts and culture activities</i>	F	F	2.5	N/A	1.5	1.7
	Percentage of population 18 years of age or older reporting at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week <sup>a</sup>	57.4	58.5	54.0	52.5	54.9	56.0
	Average number of nights away on a vacation trip in past year to destinations at least 80 km from home	2.12	1.41	1.49	1.38	1.65	1.74
Library opportunities	Number of annual library programs per 1,000 population	33.1	36.9	34.3	26.0	19.0	–
	Annual program attendance per 1,000 population	469.2	483.7	485.1	374.4	337.7	–
	Number of culture days, poetry and story readings, and arts shows per 10,000 population	2.6	2.0	6.0	6.3	5.4	–
	Number of in-person visits to the library per 1,000 population	80.6	62.2	109.8	92.8	99.5	–
	Library internet connections per 10,000 population	6.9	11.6	12.6	7.4	7.2	–
	Total circulation of all library materials per 1,000 population	158.8	104.9	170.4	151.7	175.5	–
Sector employment	Total labour force population aged 15 years of age and over in the arts, entertainment, and recreation industry [NAICS]	2.8	1.6	2.0	2.4	2.1	2.0

Notes: <sup>a</sup> Based on Health Units, which approximate census divisions in most instances.

E According to Statistics Canada, data should be used with caution.

F According to Statistics Canada, data are too unreliable to publish.

## LIVING STANDARDS

Category	Indicator	COUNTIES		REGIONS		Ontario	Canada
		Perth	Huron	Rural	West		
Economic security	After tax median income of economic families	\$ 76,364	\$ 72,501	\$ 71,780	\$ 74,429	\$ 79,531	\$ 76,372
	Percentage of persons in low income:						
	Percentage of persons in low income based on after-tax Low Income Measure (LIM-AT)	11.1	13.7	14.1	15.0	14.4	14.2
	Percentage of persons in low income based on after-tax Low Income Cut-Off (LICO)	4.6	4.3	5.3	8.3	9.8	9.2
	Percentage of persons in low income based on Market Basket Measure (MBM)	8.1	10.4	10.5	12.3	13.9	12.9
	Percentage of labour force employed (employment rate)	67.0	61.0	55.3	58.1	59.9	60.2
	Percentage of labour force unemployed (unemployment rate)	4.0	5.3	7.5	6.9	7.4	7.7
	Long-term unemployment rate <sup>a</sup>	2.4	3.2	4.4	3.9	4.3	4.4
Housing security	Percentage of households with shelter costs 30% or more of before-tax household income	20.2	20.4	22.0	23.5	27.7	24.1
Food security	Percentage of households that are moderately or severely food insecure	N/A	6.7	8.0	9.4	8.3	7.7
Work-related stress	Percentage of population 15 years of age and older reporting quite a bit or extreme self-perceived work stress	N/A	21.5 <sup>b</sup>	24.8	24.4	27.0	26.9

Notes: <sup>a</sup> Based on Health Units, which approximate census divisions in most instances.

<sup>b</sup> Data point based on Perth-Huron Health Unit and assigned to Huron County here.

## TIME USE

Category	Indicator	COUNTIES		REGIONS		Ontario	Canada
		Perth	Huron	Rural	West		
Time	Percentage of population 15 years of age and over reporting working 50 hours or more per week	F	F	21.9	N/A	20.2	19.3
	Average workday commute time one way for individuals working for pay (minutes per day)	18.5	21.2	22.1	22.9	28.8	26.2
	Percentage of employed labour force 15 years of age and over with commuting duration of 60 minutes or more	4.3	7.0	7.3	6.7	12.4	9.4
	Average daily amount of time spent with friends (minutes per day)	F	106.6E	70.4	N/A	69.0	71.5
Timing	Percentage of labour force with regular, weekday workhours	57.4E	F	63.4	N/A	66.7	67.4
	Percentage of individuals working for pay with flexible workhours	F	F	38.0	N/A	45.1	43.8
Temporality	Percentage of population 15 years of age or older who report 7 to 9 hours of good quality essential sleep	64.2	68.5	51.0	N/A	50.3	49.9
	Percentage of population 15 to 64 years of age reporting high levels of time pressure	F	F	16.1	N/A	19.0	16.5

Notes: E According to Statistics Canada, data should be used with caution.

F According to Statistics Canada, data are too unreliable to publish.

## OVERALL LIFE SATISFACTION

Category	Indicator	COUNTIES		REGIONS		Ontario	Canada
		Perth	Huron	Rural	West		
<b>Life satisfaction</b>	Percentage of population 12 years of age and older reporting being satisfied or very satisfied with life <sup>a</sup>	93.8	95.0	92.6	92.2	93.2	93.1

*Note:* <sup>a</sup> Based on Health Units, which approximate census divisions in most instances.

# DEFINITIONS

## Energy poverty

Energy poverty describes the experience of households that struggle to meet their home energy needs due to cost. When a household spends 6% or more of their after-tax income on home energy costs (e.g., electricity and heating), they are said to be experiencing high home energy cost burdens. Most households spend less than 3% of after-tax income on home energy costs.

## Measures of Low Income

### Low Income Cut Off (LICO)

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: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75f0002m/2015001/lico-sfr-eng.htm>).

### Low Income Measure (LIM)

The low income measure (LIM) is the most commonly used low income measure internationally. LIM is a fixed percentage (50%) of median adjusted household income, where "adjusted" means household needs are taken into account. Adjustment for household sizes reflects the fact that a household's needs increase as the number of members increases (Statistics Canada, 2015. See: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75f0002m/2015001/lim-mfr-eng.htm>).

### Market Basket Measure (MBM)

The Market Basket Measure (MBM) – now the official measure of low income used by the federal government – is a measure of low income based on the cost of a specific basket of goods and services representing a modest, basic standard of living. The MBM includes the costs of food, clothing, footwear, transportation, shelter and other expenses for a reference family of two adults aged 25 to 49 years with two children (aged 9 and 13 years). It provides thresholds for a finer geographic level than the LICO to better reflect, for example, different costs for rural areas in the different provinces. These thresholds are compared to disposable income of families to determine low income status, where disposable income is defined as the sum remaining after deducting the following from total family income: total income taxes paid; other mandatory payroll deductions (e.g., employer pension plans and supplementary health plans), child support and alimony payments made to another family; out-of-pocket spending on child care; and non-insured but medically prescribed health-related expenses (Statistics Canada, 2015. See: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75f0002m/2015001/mbm-mpc-eng.htm>).

### 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.

## 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. In Canada, the guideline for finished drinking water is within the range of 7.0 to 10.5, and pH values from 6.5 to 8.5 are recommended for the protection of aquatic life.



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