

This bulletin is a quick inventory of recent social research information. Its purpose is to promptly disseminate the most current external and internal research relevant to social policy.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Canadian Seniors by Statistics Canada, October 2021.

This article brings together insights on the health, social and financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Canadian seniors aged 65 years and older. The results discussed are based on data from the Canadian Vital Statistics Death Database, the Canadian Community Health Survey, the Labour Force Survey, the Canadian Perspectives Survey Series, and crowdsourcing data.

- Between the end of March 2020 and mid-May 2021, seniors aged 65 and over accounted for 64% of excess deaths and for 93% of the deaths attributed to COVID-19
- Between September and December 2020, 83% of seniors said they were “somewhat” or “very” willing to get a COVID-19 vaccine, compared with 76% of Canadians aged 12 to 64
- Seniors were more likely than younger Canadians to report “very good” or “excellent” mental health and less likely to report that their mental health was “somewhat” or “much” worse than before the pandemic
- Seniors were less likely to expect the pandemic to have a “major” or “moderate” impact on their ability to meet their financial obligations

Link to the report:

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/75-006-x/2021001/article/00008-eng.pdf?st=BUoKqPpK>

Baby Needs A New Home - Projecting Ontario's Growing Number Of Families And Their Housing Needs by Smart Prosperity Institute, October 2021.

Ontario's population grew by nearly one million people in the five years between July 1, 2016, and June 30, 2021, after growing by just over 600,000 persons in the previous five years. This dramatically increased the demand for housing, while the rate at which new homes were built stayed virtually unchanged. This increased demand, from young Ontarians that have started to, or would like to start, a family with no change in supply, contributed to rising home prices and a shortage of family-friendly housing across Southern Ontario before the pandemic. To estimate the size of this supply/demand mismatch, we calculate the number of households that would typically be formed, at a Census Division level, across Ontario, given the demographic profile of the population increase.

- We estimate that 413,753 households should have been formed, but only 349,039 new housing units, of all types, were built over those five years
- If those population projections prove prescient, and 2.27 million more people are added to Ontario's population between 2021 and 2031, we project that an additional 911,347 households should be formed over the next ten years
- Adding together the unformed households from 2016-21 due to the supply gap of homes, along with the formation of new households, we project, on net, an additional one million households to be formed in the next ten years, requiring one million new homes

Link to the report: <https://institute.smartprosperity.ca/sites/default/files/Baby-Needs-a-New-Home-Oct-1.pdf>

Thriving in the City for Families by Stephanie Elliott & Rebecca Cheff, Wellesley Institute, September 2021.

Wellesley Institute's Thriving in the City work seeks to help us progress towards a reality where all residents in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) have the resources and supports to thrive. It aims to: 1) clarify what a specified population group needs for their physical, social, and psychological well-being; 2) identify goods, resources, and services that would allow them to meet those needs; and 3) estimate the cost of health and well-being based on the identified goods, resources, and services.

- As a baseline, the framework focuses on a reference family of four living in the GTA, without any significant disabilities or chronic health conditions
- This reference family has two parents (same-sex or opposite-sex), between the ages of 25-49, with one preschool-age child (age 2.5-5), and one school-age child (age 6-12)
- Nine of these components were from the Thriving in the City work for single working-age adults: food and nutrition; shelter; transportation; health care; personal care; physical activity; social participation; professional development; and savings and debt
- After taking other expenses into account, many families cannot afford a safe and well-maintained two-bedroom home, let alone a three-bedroom one. Child care in the GTA is also among the most expensive in Canada. For preschool-age children alone, median fees for licensed care in Toronto, Mississauga, and Brampton are close to or exceed \$1000 per month

Link to the report:

<https://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Thriving-Families-Framework-Report.pdf>

COVID-19 Infection in Children: January 15, 2020 to June 30, 2021 by Public Health Ontario, July 2021.

This report provides a focused analysis of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases in children reported in Ontario, as per the Ministry of Health's case definition. [...] For the purpose of this report, children are defined as cases 17 years of age and under (i.e. up to the day before their 18th birthday). This report includes information on demographic characteristics, laboratory testing, severity of illness, acquisition exposures and variants of concern.

- Children account for 12.9% of the 545,398 confirmed COVID-19 cases reported in Ontario, yet they account for 18.7% of the Ontario population
- The cumulative rate of infection among children is approximately 1.6 times lower (2,523.7 per 100,000) than adults (3,932.0 per 100,000)
- Among children, rates were highest (3,367.6 per 100,000) for 14 to 17 years olds
- The proportion of severe outcomes, including hospitalizations, ICU admission, deaths and complications are much lower among cases in children compared to adults. Two deaths have been reported in children compared to 9,255 deaths reported among adults

Link to the report:

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/epi/2020/05/covid-19-epi-infection-children.pdf>

Toronto Street Needs Assessment 2021 by City of Toronto, October 2021.

The SNA is a point-in-time count and survey of people experiencing homelessness in Toronto led by the City's Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) in collaboration with community partners in the homelessness and allied sectors. The fifth Streets Needs Assessment was conducted in accordance with public health guidelines in April 2021. SSHA heard from more than 2,500 people experiencing homelessness about the services and supports that would help them get the housing and supports they need to end their homelessness.

- 7,347 people estimated to be experiencing homelessness
- 13% of respondents were refugees, and just 3% were refugee families
- People experiencing homelessness move between indoor and outdoor locations: 61% stayed in overnight sheltered services only; 37% slept in both overnight sheltered services and outdoors; 2% reported staying [in] outdoors/encampments only
- Indigenous people continue to be overrepresented (15%)
- Racialized individuals are overrepresented (almost 60%)

Link to the report: <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2021/ec/bgrd/backgroundfile-171729.pdf>

More information: <https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/community-partners/street-needs-assessment/>

Opportunity Knocks: Toronto City Council's Chance to Create Tens of Thousands of Affordable Homes by Social Planning Toronto, October 2021.

Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) presents an opportunity to have a greater impact on Toronto's long-standing housing crisis than we have had in decades. It has the potential to produce tens of thousands of affordable homes simply by requiring new residential developments include them. Our analysis quantifies the potential of a strong, evidence-based IZ policy to create much-needed new affordable rental housing. It also calculates the much smaller number of affordable rental housing units that would likely be produced if the City of Toronto implements its current draft IZ policy.

- Based on current renter household incomes in Toronto, the City's draft IZ policy would require affordable rental units to cost \$812 per month for a bachelor, \$1,090 for a 1-bedroom, \$1,661 for a 2-bedroom, and \$1,858 for a 3-bedroom
- Our research shows that 25,352 affordable rental housing units could feasibly be included in new residential developments currently proposed and under review
- The City could feasibly produce 3.5 times more affordable rental housing than the City's draft policy proposes, while still providing developers a motivating profit margin of at least 15% and landowners with at least 10% above the current value of their land

Link to the paper:

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/socialplanningtoronto/pages/2611/attachments/original/1635346488/Inclusionary_Zoning_report-OCT_27_2021-FINAL.pdf?1635346488

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Wellbeing Toronto: www.toronto.ca/wellbeing

City of Toronto Data, Research & Maps: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/data-research-maps/>