

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.

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**2021 Census geographic and reference products** by Statistics Canada, November 2021.

[T]he first suite of geographic and reference products released from the 2021 Census is now available. The products include boundary files, the Road Network File, the correspondence files and the Interim List of Changes to Municipal Boundaries, Status, and Names, January 2, 2016 to January 1, 2021. It also includes the newly created Dissemination Geographies Relationship File and the first video in the new census concept training video series. The first iterations of the 2021 Census Dictionary and the 2021 Guide to the Census of Population are also available. All products are accessible from the Census of Population web page.

- Each boundary file now includes the Dissemination Geography Unique Identifier (DGUID) for geographic areas
- “CMA/CA Boundary Files” and “Census Tract (CT) Boundary Files” will only be available February 9, 2022
- Each boundary file contains only the information relative to its specific geographic level. A relationship file that allows linking all geographies to their higher levels is available
- The 2021 Census Boundary Files are now available in File Geodatabase (.gdb), Esri® REST and Web Mapping Service (WMS) format

Link to the news release: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/211117/dq211117e-eng.htm>

Link to the reference guide: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/92-160-g/92-160-g2021001-eng.pdf>

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**Pedestrian Safety & Neighbourhood Equity** by Alissa Klingbaum, Wellesley Institute, September 2021.

Toronto's streets are a valuable public space for building community connections, accessing resources, and staying active. But these benefits can only be realized if streets are safe spaces for all users. Safety is particularly important for pedestrians. Not only are they the group most vulnerable to traffic collisions, but they are also the most universal – everyone travels as a pedestrian at some point along their transportation routes.

- Since the implementation of Toronto's current road safety strategy in 2017, over 700 pedestrians have been killed or seriously injured in traffic collisions
- The built environment pathway of disparities is supported by a body of literature – including from Toronto – that identifies marginalized areas as having poorer walkability, more high-volume and high-speed roadways, denser housing, and fewer traffic calming measures
- Researchers found that the significant negative relationship between pedestrian collisions and area-level income was largely mediated by roadway features like traffic volume, intersection geometry, and active transportation volumes

Link to the briefing note:

<https://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Pedestrian-Safety-Evidence-Brief-pdf-1.pdf>

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**Vertical Legacy – The Case For Revitalizing The GTA’s Aging Rental Tower Communities** by United Way Greater Toronto, Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership and Tower Renewal Partnership, November 2021.

[This report] builds on two decades of research by United Way and partners examining these interconnected issues—housing and homelessness, the rise of precarious employment, income inequality and growing spatial concentrations of poverty in the Greater Toronto Area’s (GTA) inner suburban high-rise tower neighbourhoods. This report draws primarily on available and customized 2016 Canadian census data on rental costs, household and neighbourhood income distribution, state of repair and overcrowding in high-rise rentals, and ethnocultural diversity of high-rise renters in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), with a focus on Peel, Toronto and York Region

- While the order of magnitude is significantly higher in Toronto, with approximately 1,715 legacy towers and over 182,000 units, findings are equally relevant for Peel, with approximately 330 legacy towers and more than 24,000 units, and York Region, home to approximately 60 legacy towers and 3,000 units
- In 2016, based on self-reported estimates by tenants, 11 per cent of high-rise apartment rental units in the City of Toronto, 9 per cent of high-rise apartment rental units in Peel Region and 6 per cent of high-rise apartment rental units in York Region were considered inadequate
- In the City of Toronto, almost a quarter or 23 per cent of high-rise apartment rental households are overcrowded. Peel Region has a slightly lower incidence at 20 per cent
- Despite their deteriorating and unsuitable conditions, legacy towers in the region are coveted for their relatively affordable rents. The highest savings gaps are found in the City of Toronto, where high-rise apartment tenants pay on average \$149 or 14 per cent less for their monthly rent than other renters in the primary rental market
- York Region has the highest rates of unaffordability, with 60 per cent of high-rise renters paying over the 30 per cent benchmark and 34 per cent over the 50 per cent benchmark

Link to the report: <https://www.unitedwaygt.org/file/2021-Vertical-Legacy-Full-Report.pdf>

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**Accessibility Findings from the Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017** by Rebecca Choi, Statistics Canada, October 2021.

According to the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD), there are 6.2 million Canadians aged 15 and older who have a disability. This factsheet presents findings from the 2017 CSD related to accessibility barriers that persons with disabilities may have encountered within the areas of transportation, the built environment, information and communication technologies (ICT) and employment.

- Among Canadians with disabilities aged 15 and older who considered themselves housebound, 17.8% said it was due to the unavailability of specialized transportation
- Among those with physical disabilities, 44.9% required at least one type of aid or assistive device or an accessibility feature within their home
- Among those who did not use the Internet, 18.2% of persons with disabilities said it was due to at least one information and technology communication (ICT) related reason
- Over one in ten Canadians with disabilities (11.7%) used a cellphone, smartphone or smartwatch with specialized features or a computer, laptop or tablet with specialized software or adaptations because of their condition

Link to the report: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2021002-eng.pdf>

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**Who Earns the Minimum Wage in Canada?** by Ben Eisen and Milagros Palacios, Fraser Institute, October 2021.

The extent to which minimum wage increases can help reduce poverty depends on many factors. One of the most important of these is the specific characteristics of minimum wage workers. For example, if we disregard the possible negative effects on employment levels, higher wage floors are more likely to be an effective anti-poverty tool if minimum wage workers are heavily concentrated in low-income households. Conversely, if a large share of minimum wage workers are secondary or tertiary earners in households that are not low-income, this would blunt the effectiveness of minimum wage increases. This paper seeks to contribute to the public discourse. Specifically, it examines the age and household income levels of minimum wage earners to help shed light on the question, “who earns the minimum wage in Canada?”

- We show that that 8.8 percent of all workers earn the minimum wage.
- [W]e find that 7.7 percent of all minimum wage earners in Canada live in households that are below the LICO after taxes and transfers. This means that 92.3 percent of minimum wage earners live in households that are above the LICO
- We find that 53 percent of all minimum wage workers are between the ages of 15 and 24. The share of minimum wage workers in this age group varies considerably from province to province
- [J]ust 2.2 percent of minimum wage workers are single parents with a child or children under the age of 18

Link to the report:

<https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/who-earns-the-minimum-wage-in-canada.pdf>

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**Measuring Social Capital at the Neighbourhood Level: Experimental Estimates of Sense of Belonging to the Local Community Measured at the Census Tract Level** by Jean-Francois Beaumont, Cynthia Bocci et al., Statistics Canada, November 2021.

Statistics Canada continues to use a variety of data sources to provide neighbourhood-level variables across an expanding set of domains, such as sociodemographic characteristics, income, services and amenities, crime, and the environment. Yet, despite these advances, information on the social aspects of neighbourhoods is still unavailable. In this paper, answers to the Canadian Community Health Survey on respondents’ sense of belonging to their local community were pooled over the four survey years from 2016 to 2019.

- Overall, applying small area estimation techniques to data pooled across successive years of the CCHS yields improved estimates of community belonging at the CT level
- CT-level estimates of population density, duration of residence, housing tenure, income, age and crime are significantly correlated and all, with the exception of income, are in the expected direction
- In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, evidence indicates that geographic areas with stronger social capital exhibited greater compliance with stay-at-home directives and lower excess mortality rates than areas with weaker social capital

Link to the paper: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/11-633-x/11-633-x2021007-eng.pdf>

Previous issues of the SPAR Monitor can be viewed online at: <https://bit.ly/3h42Zob>

Wellbeing Toronto: [www.toronto.ca/wellbeing](http://www.toronto.ca/wellbeing)

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