

The background of the entire page is decorated with a series of thick, curved, overlapping lines in various colors including olive green, purple, yellow, blue, teal, orange, red, and dark blue. These lines sweep across the page from the top left towards the bottom right, creating a sense of movement and energy.

# LIVING IN NIAGARA 2017

Critical Indicators for  
Reflecting on Life in Niagara

Niagara Connects is a Niagara-wide network of people working together to plan, learn, innovate and lead community action toward a stronger future for Niagara. Niagara Connects engages diverse players to collaboratively build evidence-informed action plans for transformative socio-economic change.

Strategic Focus Areas:

- **Build** community capacity to use Niagara-focused evidence (data, information, knowledge) to inform planning and decision-making
- **Facilitate** coordinated community action to create the conditions for a more vibrant Niagara
- **Strengthen** Niagara Connects as a value-add and sustainable enterprise in the Niagara-wide community



## LIVING IN NIAGARA-2017 REPORT

**Publisher:** Niagara Connects

**Editor:** Mary Wiley, Executive Director, Niagara Connects

**Niagara Research and Planning Council o/a Niagara Connects Board Members:**

Anne Hepplewhite, Chair; Jayne Morrish, Secretary; Melenie Neamtz, Treasurer; Charles Conteh, Director; Clare Cameron, Director; Duncan MacDuff, Director; Majid Hassas, Director; Monika Seymour, Director

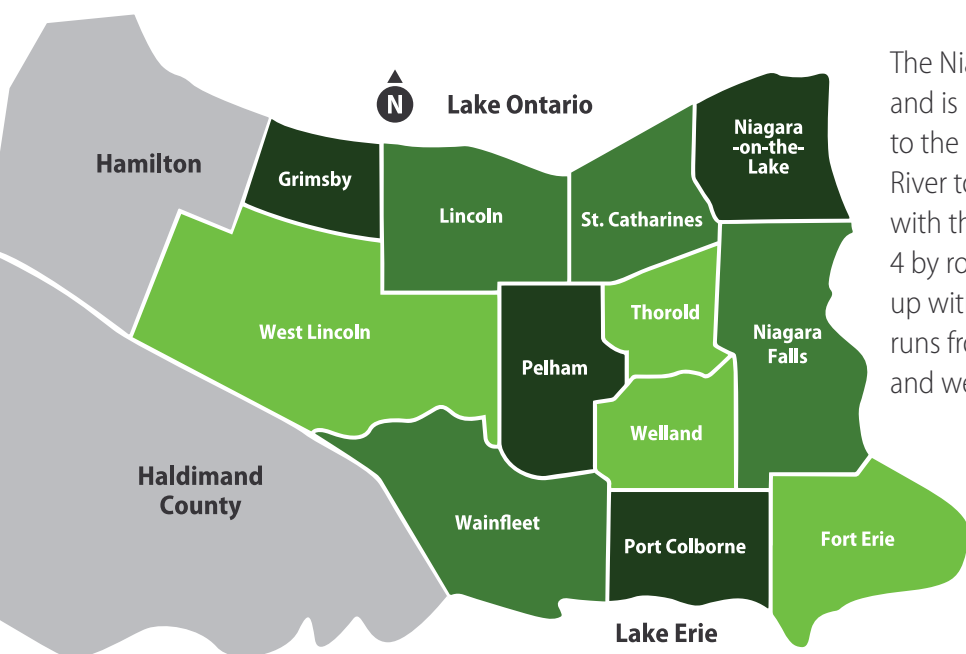
**Thank you to:**

- Community Expert Opinion Leaders in each of the 12 Living in Niagara Sectors, for sharing data, information, and knowledge to strengthen this report
- Niagara Connects Board Members for guiding overall direction of the report
- Niagara Connects team members: Sarah Webster (Sr. Knowledge Broker); Sara Johnston (Resources Coordinator); Paul Connor (Economics Advisor); and Catherine Mindorff-Facca (Sr. Associate; retired)
- Niagara Community Foundation for financially supporting production of this report
- Spritz Creative for design, website, IT, and Launch Video support

**GENERATING KNOWLEDGE THAT  
DRIVES COMMUNITY ACTION.**

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The Niagara Region covers 1,852 square kilometres, and is bordered on 3 sides by water: Lake Ontario to the north, Lake Erie to the south, and the Niagara River to the east. The river forms a shared border with the United States; there are 5 border crossings, 4 by road and 1 by rail. The road border crossings link up with the busy Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW), which runs from Fort Erie in the south, north to Niagara Falls and westward, crossing the Welland Canal, running parallel to the south shore of Lake Ontario, onward west to Hamilton. The QEW links Niagara as a part of the Golden Horseshoe, one of Canada's most densely-populated and economically diverse areas, stretching around the southwest end of Lake Ontario to include the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

# INTRODUCTION

People are taking action to improve life, every day, across Niagara. Diverse energy, like a moving fractal, is constantly pulsing, picking up momentum, and energizing our future.

The triennial Living in Niagara (LIN) report takes a snapshot of this action. It measures quality of life across the 12 LIN Sectors. Niagara Connects facilitates construction of the LIN report by gathering diverse players across the Sectors, to exchange relevant, reliable, Niagara-focused data, information, and knowledge.

The LIN report, its 12 Sectors, and its companion tool, [niagaraknowledgeexchange.com](http://niagaraknowledgeexchange.com) (NKE) are described, built and owned by the Niagara-wide community. Niagara Connects and the LIN report and NKE tools are cornerstones in building a culture of evidence-informed planning for Niagara.

Hundreds of people contribute to the report because they understand that we are all stronger when we intentionally work together, share our information, and re-examine it when combined into a broader, nuanced picture. Weaving our data and knowledge together allows us to align individual and collective planning. This is how we #Rethink Niagara: by collectively focusing on an upstream, proactive evidence-informed approach to planning that creates the conditions for a more vibrant future.

Each edition of the LIN report reflects progress in the way the Niagara-wide community gathers, shares and expresses its collective data. This fourth edition reflects:

- Recognition that the Niagara Region is located on the traditional shared territory of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Chonnonton\* peoples. The Chonnonton people have called these lands home for thousands of years and more recently, the Anishinaabe and the Haudenosaunee have been sharing the land as One Dish, One Spoon Treaty territory. In light of the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada Final Report in 2015, and its call for Canadians to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework, the Living in Niagara – 2017 report includes information shared by Indigenous organizations in Niagara. This information begins to describe the Indigenous people in this region in terms of demographics, cultural heritage, employment and education rates, resilience and the racism barriers that exist.
  - \* Pronunciation:  
Anishinaabe = A – nish – in – knob – eh  
Haudenosaunee = Hoe – dee – no – show – knee  
Chonnonton = Chuh – knot – tonne
- A common definition of data developed in 2016, that resonates with people working with data every day in Niagara - “A series of observations, measurements, or facts that can be analyzed and interpreted to create information to support focused planning and decision-making”.
- National context drawn from the 2016 Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) National Report, ‘How are Canadians Really Doing?’. The CIW tracks 64 Indicators in 8 Domains, from 1994 to 2014. There is alignment between CIW Indicators and the Living in Niagara Indicators, as they both align with the Social Determinants of Health.\*\*



- A total of 70 Community Expert Opinion Leaders (CEOLs)\*\* across the 12 LIN Sectors helped to strengthen the 2017 report. Part of the CEOLs' work is to reach consensus on a Sector Rating. For the 2017 report, the rating process was refined by creating two separate rating scales, and ordering the rating levels to reflect the report's assets-based approach. CEOLs in each Sector were asked to rank 'how Niagara is doing now', overall, in that Sector; and to discriminately and clearly rate the degree of progress currently being made in the Sector.

## How is Niagara Doing?

- Level 1** - We're doing great – let's build on our success
- Level 2** - We're doing well and headed in the right direction
- Level 3** - Of concern, requires attention
- Level 4** - Would benefit from corrective action

## How Much Progress is Currently Being Made?

- Amount A** - Considerable progress is being made
- Amount B** - Moderate progress is being made
- Amount C** - Some progress is being made
- Amount D** - No progress is being made

Visit [www.livinginniagarareport.com](http://www.livinginniagarareport.com) to view the full version of the report, find links to supporting data, and download resources such as *\*\*Living in Niagara report Purpose, Format and Construction Methodology*.

## Niagara Region Population, 1996 to 2016

Municipality	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Fort Erie	27,183	28,140	29,925	29,960	30,710
Grimsby	19,585	21,295	23,937	25,325	27,314
Lincoln	18,801	20,610	21,722	22,487	23,787
Niagara Falls	76,917	78,815	82,184	82,997	88,071
Niagara-on-the-Lake	13,238	13,840	14,587	15,400	17,511
Pelham	14,393	15,275	16,155	16,598	17,110
Port Colborne	18,451	18,450	18,599	18,424	18,306
St. Catharines	130,926	129,170	131,989	131,400	133,113
Thorold	17,883	18,045	18,224	17,931	18,801
Wainfleet	6,253	6,260	6,601	6,356	6,372
Welland	48,411	48,405	50,331	50,631	52,293
West Lincoln	11,513	12,265	13,167	13,837	14,500
<b>Totals</b>	<b>403,554</b>	<b>410,574</b>	<b>427,421</b>	<b>431,346</b>	<b>447,888</b>

**Source:** Statistics Canada.

# OVERALL OPPORTUNITIES SUGGESTED FOR ACTION

Themes emerging from the Living in Niagara – 2017 report for Niagara-wide action to build a stronger future include:

- 1. Collaborate to Strengthen Niagara's Trajectory** – Gather around a common agenda focused on a vibrant future, by sharing in development of metrics, measurement, common language, commonly-held concerns, and great ideas.
- 2. Build True Partnerships** – Engaged partners share data, communicate, contribute and are proactive. True partnerships offer opportunities to share expertise and resources; innovatively address complex issues; and contribute to each other's success.
- 3. Data is a Valuable Resource** – Support true partnerships by continually asking ourselves how gathering, sharing, analyzing and talking about data can change the way we make decisions about investing resources.
- 4. Niagara is Experiencing Growth** – Projections show that by 2041, the region's population will grow by 160,000 people, and the number of jobs will increase by 150,000. Managing this growth will require paying close attention to inclusion and socio-economic equality.
- 5. Quality of Jobs** – Invest in people and in increasing quality of jobs in Niagara by weaving together data with a common focus on growing Niagara's talent pool, and offering workers a continuum of opportunities to build toward the next level of employment.
- 6. Adult Literacy in the Modern-Day Context** – Building a map of Niagara that describes modern-day adult literacy and workplace competencies will inform coordinated planning for increased prosperity.
- 7. Equitable Access to Health Care Services** – Health equity is being examined through voices of lived experience at the neighbourhood level in Niagara.
- 8. Mental Health and Addictions** – Mental wellbeing throughout the lifespan continues to emerge as a critical factor across all 12 Living in Niagara Sectors.
- 9. See Older People Differently** – Just as others do in the population, older people live meaningful lives. Age-Friendly principles of inclusivity apply to everyone in our community.
- 10. Systems Integration** – Broad systems change is affecting and will continue to influence decision-making and resource allocation at the local level in Niagara.

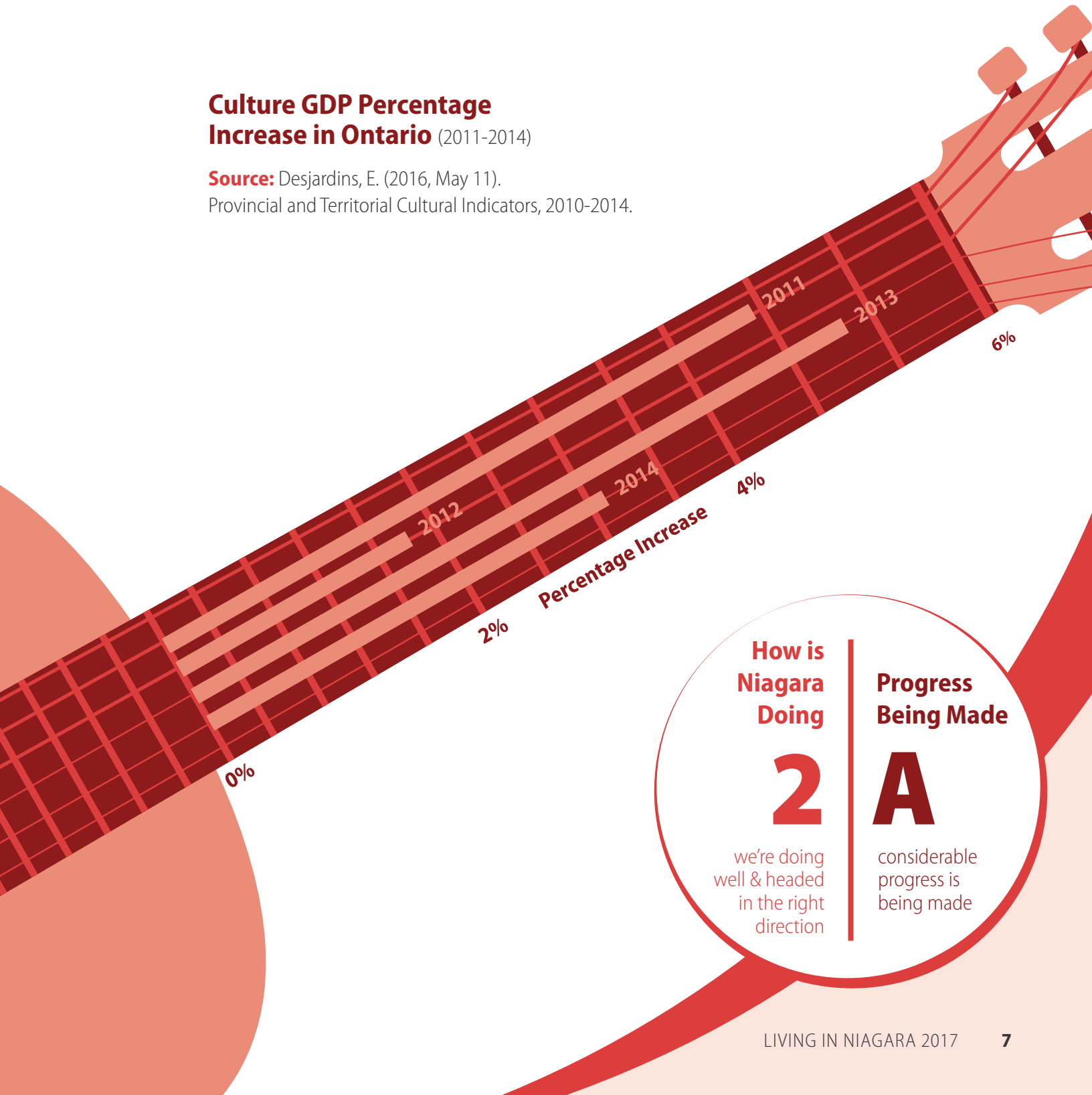


# Arts, Culture and Heritage

The presence and creative expressions of the arts, culture and heritage provide vibrancy for the community and an atmosphere of vitality, diversity and inclusion.

## Culture GDP Percentage Increase in Ontario (2011-2014)

**Source:** Desjardins, E. (2016, May 11).  
Provincial and Territorial Cultural Indicators, 2010-2014.



How is  
Niagara  
Doing

**2**

we're doing  
well & headed  
in the right  
direction

Progress  
Being Made

**A**

considerable  
progress is  
being made



## NATIONAL CONTEXT

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing 2016 national report shows that the arts and culture sector is showing strong signs of recovery from the 2008 recession. Canadians are increasingly participating in the arts and demonstrating interest in Canada's National Parks and Historic Sites. However, levels of volunteering for culture activities and overall spending and participation in arts and culture have room for improvement.

**Source:** Canadian Index of Wellbeing National Report, 2016

## HAPPENING NOW!

- Since 2015, Niagara Region has invested over \$587,000 in innovative, collaborative arts and culture projects through the Niagara Investment in Culture Program.
- The \$60 million FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre (PAC), a four-venue facility that includes a 775-seat main theatre and event space, opened in St. Catharines in October, 2015. The PAC hosted over 1,100 ticketed events, sold over 150,000 tickets, and welcomed over 200,000 patrons in its first year. The Foster Festival is the PAC's resident summer theatre festival, showcasing the work of internationally renowned Canadian playwright Norm Foster.
- Two new monuments mark the critically important contributions of Indigenous people to Canada during its formative years. Landscape of Nations: The Six Nations and Native Allies Commemorative Memorial was unveiled in 2016 at Queenston Heights park. This \$1.4 million memorial project was a joint investment by the federal, Ontario, and local governments, the Six Nations Legacy Consortium, and many donors. In 2017, the Monument of Peace at Decew House Heritage Park in Thorold was unveiled. It helps us to remember the role First Nations warriors played in escorting Laura Secord to the British garrison stationed at Decew House.
- Grimsby, Niagara-on-the-Lake and St. Catharines participated in the Doors Open Ontario program in 2017. For St. Catharines, it was a new one-day event that attracted 5,636 residents and visitors to explore a total of 24 sites including buildings, places, businesses and institutions.
- During the 2017 pan-Canadian Culture Days event, a total of 61 Activities were offered across Niagara.



## WHAT'S EMERGING

- 1** In celebration of the 150th anniversary of Confederation, the Niagara Community Foundation offered a total of \$120,000 in Canada 150 grants for local projects that build community, inspire a deeper understanding of Canada, and encourage participation in a wide range of initiatives. These funds were offered as part of a collaboration between Community Foundations of Canada and the Government of Canada.
- 2** A 2017 national Vital Signs Arts and Belonging report shows that youth with arts-rich experiences participate and are more engaged; and quality arts programming for people over age 65 reduces social isolation, helps maintain community ties and improves physical and mental health.
- 3** Niagara Falls History Museum is working in partnership with the Niagara Regional Native Centre to present Reclaiming Cultural Identity workshops and talks on Wampum Belts, Indigenous Beadwork in Niagara and Creation Stories for Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants. Education is seen as the key to facing the truths of history and forging a path together.
- 4** Arts groups are collaborating with the community. The Foster Festival Drama Club for Kids is partnering with Boys and Girls Club of Niagara, the Niagara Children's Centre, and the Kristen French Child Advocacy Centre. Branch Out Theatre created plays for HEART, a project led by McMaster DeGroote School of Medicine Niagara Campus students, to focus on homelessness and access to health care in Niagara.
- 5** The Welland Canal Fallen Workers Memorial was unveiled in November, 2017 at Lock 3, to memorialize the 137 men whose deaths were documented during the 18-year construction of the fourth canal (1913 to 1935). The \$1.2 million memorial was made possible with funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage, Niagara Region, the City of St. Catharines and significant donations from the marine industry, local businesses and the labour community.

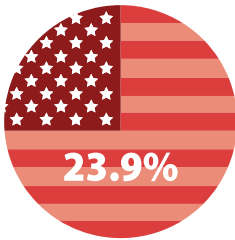
**Tourism in Niagara** (2014)

**Source:** Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2014

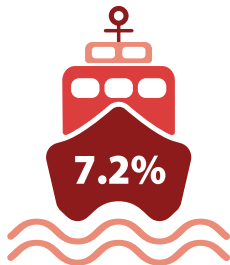


from  
Canada

67.5% from Ontario  
1.5% from rest of Canada



from  
USA



from  
overseas



Same-Day Visits  
**7,982,500**



Overnight Stays  
**4,684,400**



Total Visitor Spending  
**\$1.94 billion**



## INDICATORS

### **Involvement In and Time Spent on Arts, Culture and Heritage Activities in Niagara**

- Library Use
- Arts, Culture and Heritage Activities and Groups in Niagara

### **Mapping of Arts, Culture and Heritage Assets in Niagara**

### **Contribution of the Cultural Sector to the Economy**

- Contribution of Cultural Tourism to the Economy
- Consideration of Arts, Culture and Heritage in Economic Strategies and Local Development Plans

## SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS

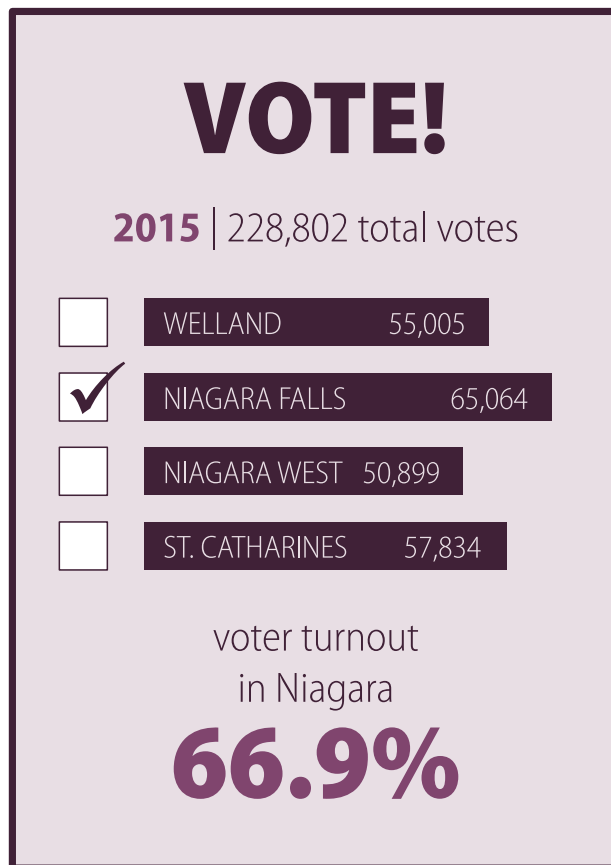
- Invest in developing and beginning to talk together about metrics and evaluation that track progress and impact of the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector in Niagara. This will support evidence-informed decision-making and enable comparisons over time.
- Strengthen existing partnerships and identify opportunities to build new ones within Arts, Culture and Heritage networks in Niagara, by engaging Sector players in working together to build a connectivity map.
- Acknowledge and provide evidence about how investment in Arts, Culture and Heritage is an essential element in building up Niagara's social health and economy.
- Create an action plan to address barriers that exist to people being able to access Arts, Culture and Heritage activities and programming in Niagara.
- Encourage local leadership to invest directly into an independent entity that builds the overall capacity of the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector in Niagara.

Visit [www.livinginniagarareport.com](http://www.livinginniagarareport.com) to view the full report, including links to supporting data and resources.



# Community Belonging

A sense of community belonging is vital to the health, wellbeing and prosperity of individuals, families, neighbourhoods and our region as a whole. Social engagement and interaction among people of all ages in Niagara brings us together to build a stronger future.



## Voter Turnout (2015)

In the 2015 federal election, there was a significant spike in voter turnout in Niagara and across Canada as a whole. While previous municipal, provincial, and federal elections saw a voter turnout in the range of 40-60%, the 2015 federal election drew nearly 70% of eligible voters across Canada, and 67% of eligible voters in the four electoral districts in Niagara.

**Source:** Elections Canada.

42nd General Election: Official Voting Results

How is  
Niagara  
Doing

**2**

we're doing  
well & headed  
in the right  
direction

Progress  
Being Made

**C**

some progress  
is being made





## NATIONAL CONTEXT

Sixty-seven per cent of Canadians express a strong sense of community belonging. Compared to 20 years ago, we spend 45 fewer minutes a day socializing with others, and the average amount of time we spend with friends has dropped by 28.2%. Canadians have reduced the amount of time they spend volunteering for culture and recreation organizations by almost 30% since 1998. Across Canada, voter turnout is increasing, with the gap between older and younger voters narrowing slightly. While numbers have room to grow, more people are volunteering for political and advocacy groups, and more women are serving as Members of Parliament.

**Source:** Canadian Index of Wellbeing National Report, 2016

## HAPPENING NOW!

- More than 30 organizations in Niagara who engage volunteers belong to RAVA (Regional Association of Volunteer Administrators). RAVA members promote implementation of best practice strategies in volunteer program management, including recruitment, screening, training, placement, supervision, recognition and evaluation.
- Voices of youth and older people are being engaged in local municipal planning. The Town of Pelham, City of Welland and City of Port Colborne are designated as members of the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. A total of 7 local municipalities have Seniors Advisory or Age-Friendly Committees, and/or Youth Advisory Committees.
- **211** received 151,337 calls about community services in the Niagara region from 2014 to 2016. The majority of calls were from women. Most callers were seeking income support, health and legal related assistance.
- From 2014 to 2016, the Niagara Community Foundation (NCF) received a total of \$6,144,697 in gifts, and awarded grants to community projects totalling \$3,870,000. In the same period, the 3 United Ways in Niagara raised a total of \$16,364,000 to invest in over 125 local programs for positive community change.
- In 2015 in Niagara, federal election voter turnout numbers increased to 67%, in line with the national trend. In the 2014 provincial election in Niagara, 54.4% of those eligible voted; and in the 2014 municipal election, 41.3% voted.

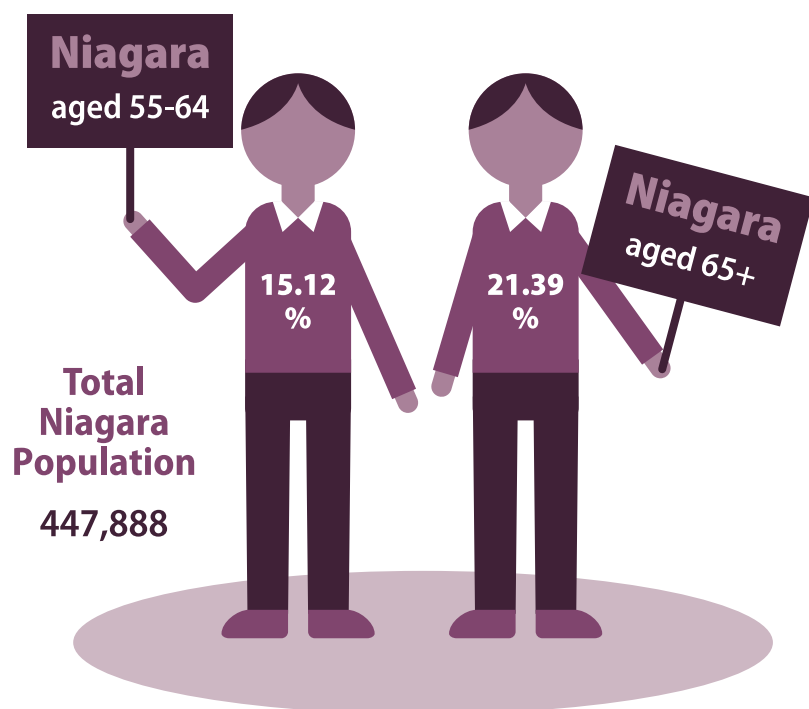
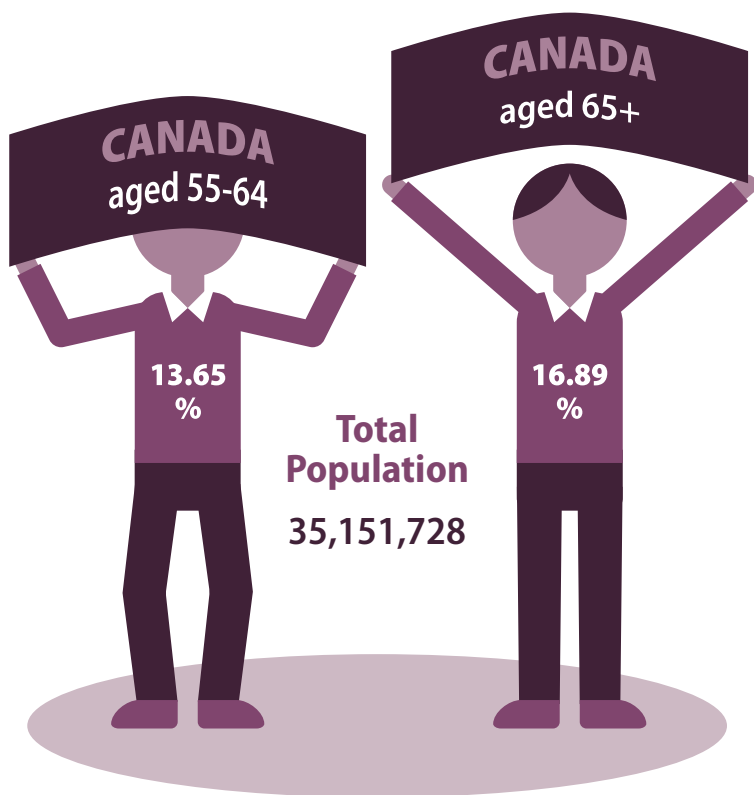


## WHAT'S EMERGING

- 1** From 2015 to 2017, Community Foundations of Canada examined national patterns and experiences of belonging and inclusion. When people in communities feel they belong and trust each other, we are healthier; neighbourhoods are safer; people give more of their time and money to support the community; social inclusion improves; and we are more resilient in the face of community emergencies.
- 2** The Age-Friendly Niagara Network is engaging diverse partners to implement the Niagara Aging Strategy and Action Plan by focusing locally on inclusion of people of all ages through WHO (World Health Organization) livable community principles: transportation, housing, prosperity, safety, and health.
- 3** Senior Pride Network Niagara began in response to a Spring 2016 Niagara-wide environmental scan that documented a dearth of programs and services aimed at older LGBT citizens, including training for service providers.
- 4** In October 2017, the Boards of the 3 United Way agencies in Niagara announced their intent to merge into a single agency. The intent is to increase fundraising capacity, reach in the community and impact in the region.
- 5** A variety of initiatives are working to increase inclusion in the community and economy in Niagara. Some focus areas include: refugee mental health; community gardens; youth engagement; neighbourhood prosperity; volunteer income tax preparation; inter-generational skills mentoring; and reclaiming Indigenous cultural heritage.

## Percentage of Older People in Niagara (2016)

Source: Statistics Canada.



Geographic Area/ Total Population	Population Aged 55-64	Population 65+
Fort Erie 30,710	17.78%	23.74%
Grimsby 27,314	14.39%	19.28%
Lincoln 23,787	13.73%	21.02%
Niagara Falls 88,071	14.87%	20.27%
Niagara-on-the-Lake 17,511	19.10%	30.92%
Pelham 17,110	16.57%	24.34%
Port Colborne 18,306	17.04%	24.64%
St. Catharines 133,113	14.16%	21.69%
Thorold 18,801	14.36%	16.01%
Wainfleet 6,372	17.34%	18.36%
Welland 52,293	15.24%	21.28%
West Lincoln 14,500	13.97%	14.97%

# INDICATORS

**Charitable Giving**

**Economic Contribution of Volunteers**

**Participation in Social Activities**

**Religious Affiliation**

**Sense of Community Belonging**

**Trust in Others**

**Volunteering**

**Voter Turnout**

# SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS

- Support inter-sectoral collaboration to address inequality, through weaving together data from existing initiatives. This will illuminate innovative solutions to reduce or remove barriers so that people can participate in the economy and community.
- Examine results of research to describe precarious employment in Niagara from the perspective of how it affects people's ability to engage with the community.
- Build on inter-generational initiatives already underway, to better connect youth and older people through shared learning, reciprocal mentoring opportunities and social connections.
- Gather information to describe the socio-economic breadth and depth of the charitable and non-profit sectors in Niagara, including the impact of volunteers.
- Describe the impacts of social isolation on health and wellbeing in Niagara.

Visit [www.livinginniagarareport.com](http://www.livinginniagarareport.com) to view the full report, including links to supporting data and resources.



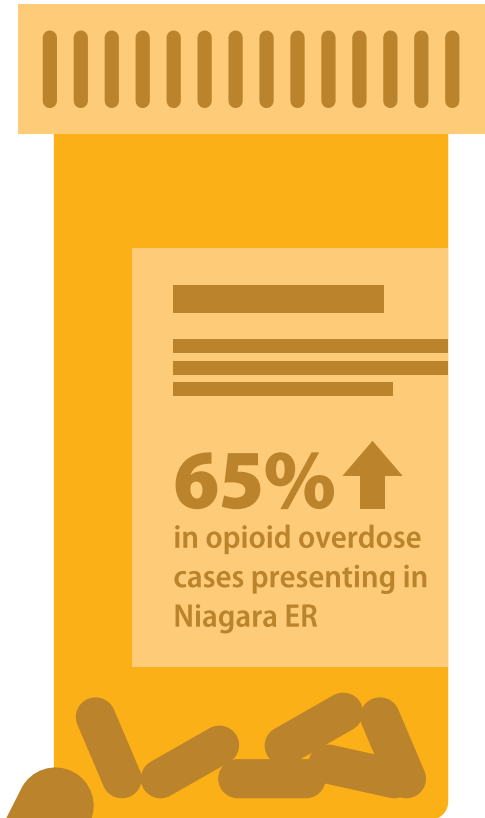
## Crime, Safety and Security

Our perception of safety at home, in our neighbourhood and on the road contributes to wellbeing and enjoyment of life. When we trust our surroundings and the people in our community, we build social connections and a vibrant Niagara.

### Opioid Crisis (2016/2017)

Niagara Health reports that from January to August 2017 there was a 65% increase in opioid overdose cases presenting in Niagara emergency rooms over the same time frame in 2016. Positive Living Niagara's StreetWorks program, which distributes naloxone, reports that for the entire year of 2016 there were 147 occasions a kit was used to reverse an overdose. Already in the first half of 2017, there were 190 kits reported used in an emergency opioid overdose situation.

**Source:** Niagara Region Public Health





## NATIONAL CONTEXT

The national Crime Severity Index has fallen 78.2% over the past 20 years, and the overall crime rate in Canada fell by 54% between 2003 and 2014. Almost 78.7% of Canadians report feeling safe walking alone after dark in their communities; on this measure, over 90% of men feel safe compared to 67.8% of women.

**Source:** Canadian Index of Wellbeing National Report, 2016

## HAPPENING NOW!

- Crime rates in Niagara continue to decrease, in line with the national trend.
- The Niagara Woman Abuse Screening Tool was co-created by 16 Niagara organizations, to align with a provincial initiative. Launched in 2014, the tool provides information about how to support abused women suffering with addictions and/or mental wellness issues; how addictions and mental health organizations can support and safely plan for women dealing with current or historical abuse and trauma; and detailed Niagara-specific referral lists.
- In 2016 the new Niagara Regional Police Service headquarters opened in Niagara Falls, consolidating five existing police facilities and district operations for Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake.
- The Niagara Youth Court Screening Initiative (NYCSI) tool was launched in 2015 by the Niagara Youth Justice Service Collaborative of 35 agencies, to create pathways to care for youth. The Collaborative supported development of a special Youth Court in St. Catharines, where, in the first year they screened 81 First Appearance Youth. Eighty per cent of these individuals identified with mental health and/or addiction issues. In 2017 NYCSI was extended to the Welland court.
- The Partnership to End Child Abuse in Niagara (PECAN) is a volunteer-run organization that has partnered with 14 local agencies that provide services for victims of child abuse. In 2017, PECAN launched <http://endchildabuseniagara.com/> as a one-stop site to easily access information about available programs, to assist people in helping if they suspect a child is a victim of abuse.





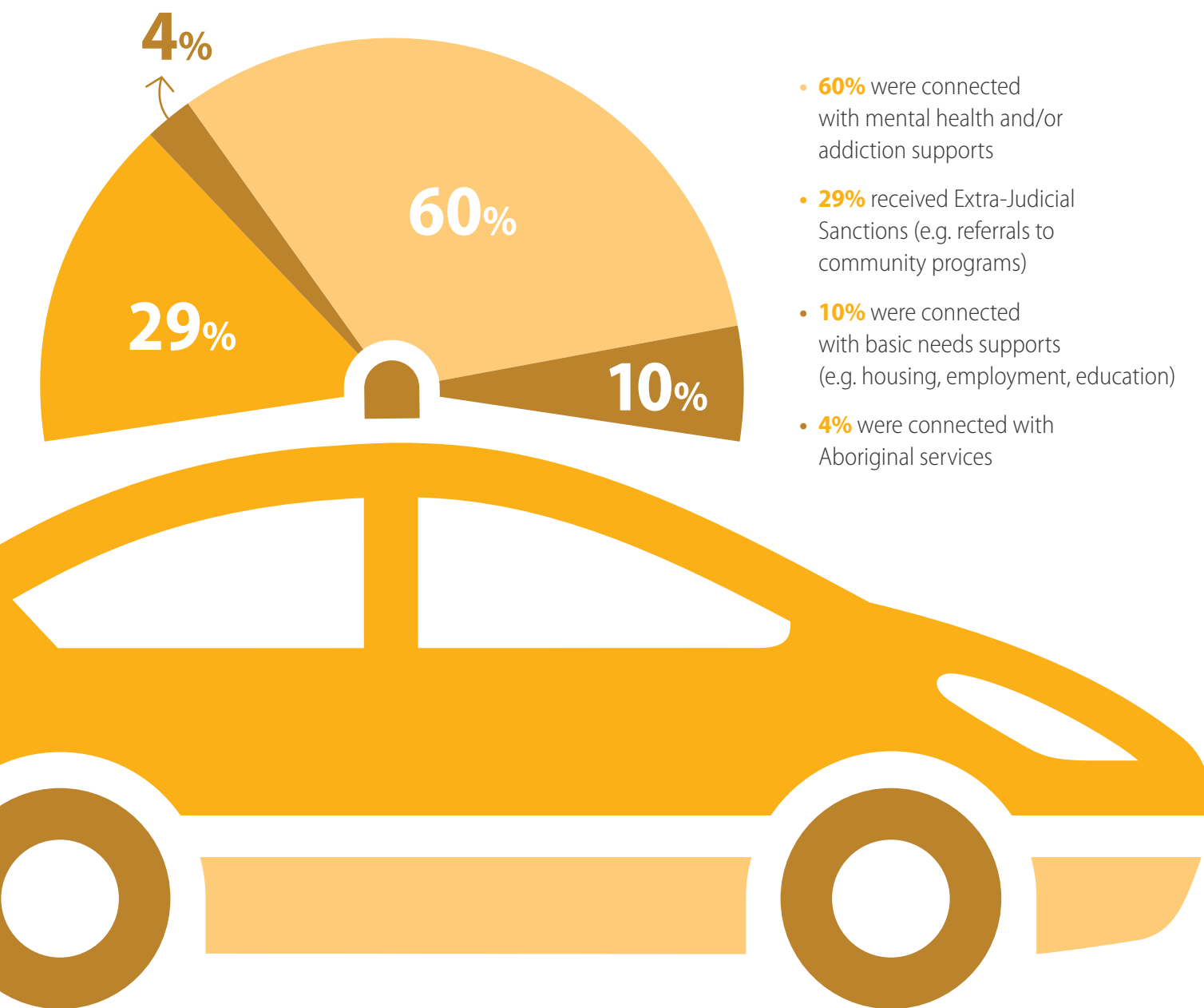
## WHAT'S EMERGING

- 1** Niagara EMS (Emergency Medical Service) is transitioning toward a Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH) model that coordinates with other health care sectors and measures impact based on outcomes, rather than the conventional response time model. EMS developed a Community Paramedic Program to support individuals in Niagara who had been frequently calling 911, to be less reliant on the ambulance system for their primary health care resources.\*
- 2** Niagara Health reports that from January to August 2017 there was a 65% increase in opioid overdose cases presenting in Niagara emergency rooms over the same time frame in 2016. Positive Living Niagara's StreetWorks program, which distributes naloxone, reports that for the entire year of 2016 there were 147 occasions a kit was used to reverse an overdose. Already in the first half of 2017, there were 190 kits reported used in an emergency opioid overdose situation.\*  
  
\* This information is also reported in the Health and Wellness Sector
- 3** The "PORTal" project being piloted in Port Colborne brings the Niagara Regional Police Service and other community partners together to increase community safety and connect people to required social services. They do this by collaboratively identifying individuals experiencing an acutely elevated risk of harm to themselves, their family and/or the community so that appropriate intervention strategies can be implemented to reduce or eliminate this risk.
- 4** An increasing number of inter-agency partnerships are being formed, that combine complementary front-line worker skills to de-escalate emergency situations, help individuals access required mental health and addictions services, and free up police and ambulance services to respond to other calls.
- 5** Indigenous organizations in Niagara are working with the justice system to provide culturally-appropriate services such as the Three Fires Community Justice Program of the Niagara Regional Native Centre (NRNC), and the Aboriginal Criminal Court Worker Program of both the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre and the NRNC.

## Niagara Youth Court Screening Initiative (NYCSI) (2015/2016)

Between May 2015 and July 2016, the Niagara Youth Court Screening Initiative (NYCSI) team of 8 service providers screened 81 First Appearance youth. Of those youth, 80% identified with mental health and/or addictions issues; 77% were boys; youth aged 16 and 17 were overrepresented; and 9% self-identified as Aboriginal.

**Source:** Niagara Youth Court Screening Initiative, 2016.





## INDICATORS

### Crime in Niagara

- Overall Crime Rates and Violent Crime Rates
- The Nature of Crime and Crime Investigations
- Hate Crimes in Niagara
- Youth Crime
- Criminal Code Violations and Incidents

### Domestic Violence and Child Abuse

- Calls to Police for Domestic Violence
- Child Abuse
- Coalition to End Violence Against Women

### Emergency Services

- Calls to Police, Ambulance and Fire
- Police Officers per 100,000 Population in Niagara
- EMS Response Times
- EMS Community Paramedic Program and Mobile Integrated Healthcare model

### Feeling Safe and Secure in Niagara

- Elder Abuse
- Information and Safety Programs in Schools and the Community
- Homelessness
- Mental Health and Addictions

### Motor Vehicle Collisions and Fatalities

- Motor Vehicle Collisions
- Impaired Driving
- Distracted Driving

Visit [www.livinginniagarareport.com](http://www.livinginniagarareport.com) to view the full report, including links to supporting data and resources.

## SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS

- Strengthen impact of the Niagara Youth Court Screening Initiative (NYCSI) tool in St. Catharines and Welland, by emphasizing timely access to mental health and addictions services required by screened individuals.
- Build on the benefits of integration between law enforcement and agency partners, to achieve balance between community safety measures and early identification of vulnerable individuals who require mental health and addictions services.
- Continue to improve our understanding of the direct role factors such as food insecurity, lack of affordable housing, employment precarity and under-employment play in child abuse and domestic violence. This includes the impact lack of financial resources has on people remaining in unsafe domestic situations.
- Support the work of the Niagara Suicide Prevention Coalition to decrease traumatic outcomes for individuals and families dealing with mental health and addictions challenges.
- In alignment with Niagara Mental Health and Addictions Charter Principles, enhance working relationships between health system and social service organizations, to ensure a continuum of responsive services is available to meet the needs and requirements of individuals facing mental health and addictions challenges.
- Pay attention to efforts underway to describe human trafficking in Niagara and take action to reduce its effects on individuals and the community.



# Economic Prosperity

Building an accurate description of prosperity for Niagara requires looking both through traditional economic growth lenses; and looking at data in and across the 12 Living in Niagara quality of life Sectors. Niagara appears poised for growth. Projections show that by 2041, the region's population will grow by 160,000 people, and the number of jobs will increase by 150,000. In light of the national trend toward more jobs available at both lower and higher income levels, it will be important to pay attention to effects on 2 groups: those who are precariously employed; and mid-income earners who will have fewer financial resources for their families, and less spending power.

## Top 5 Sectors by Employment (2016)

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016



### Retail Trade

27,035



### Accommodation & Food Service

23,350



### Health Care & Social Services

23,080



### Manufacturing

17,170



### Construction

14,850

How is  
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Progress  
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progress is  
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## NATIONAL CONTEXT

The 2016 Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) National Report, 'How are Canadians *Really* Doing?' tracks 64 Indicators in 8 Domains, from 1994 to 2014. CIW findings point to the massive gap between Canada's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and the wellbeing of Canadians. To address inequality in income, health and access to engaging in the community, several policy directions are recommended:

- Provide a universal basic income as part of social assistance to reduce income inequality
- Adopt a pan-Canadian education strategy
- Focus on an 'upstream' approach for health promotion
- Leverage community resources through collaboration
- Provide universal access to leisure and culture
- Improve social and environmental data collection

**Source:** Canadian Index of Wellbeing National Report, 2016

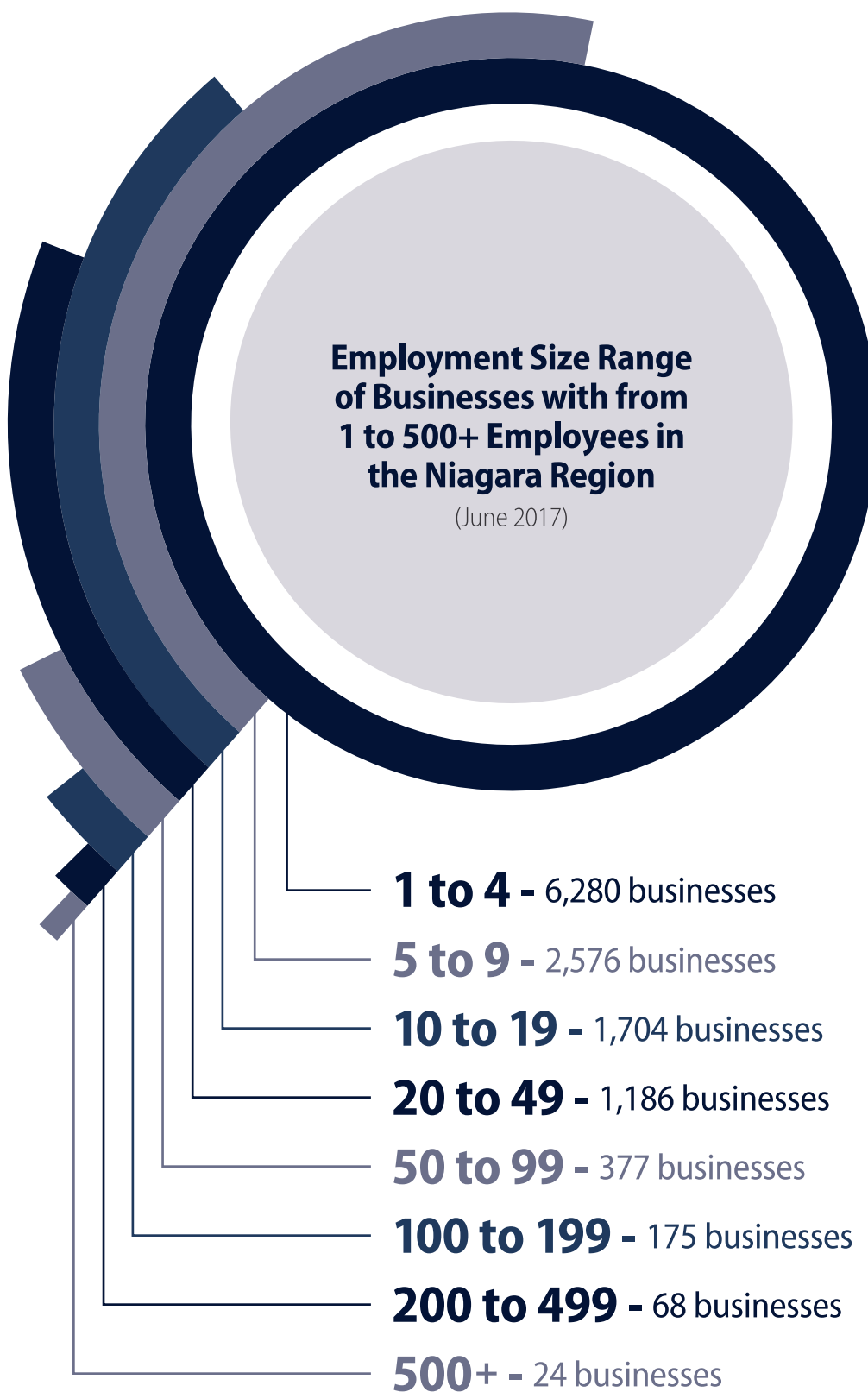
## HAPPENING NOW!

- Indigenous organizations in Niagara are describing their community in terms of employment and education rates, demographics, cultural heritage, resilience and racism barriers that exist. This information is shared to support employers seeking to hire and retain Indigenous employees, Indigenous job-seekers, and people building toward a stronger future.
- Small to medium-size enterprises (SMEs) in Niagara have access to a variety of resources to support growth and increased productivity, such as: Niagara Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) support for export development; horticultural automation research at Vineland Research and Innovation Centre; onsite work spaces for companies at the Niagara College Walker Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre in Welland; digital equipment, and opportunities to collaborate at the Generator at One and iHub in St Catharines; and Health and Bioscience research support at Goodman School of Business Biolinc at Brock University.
- The 2016 Census of Agriculture shows there are 1,827 farms covering 218,251 acres in Niagara, with gross farm receipts of over \$838 million; and 2,615 farm operators who are on average 56 years of age. 2016-2017 Niagara Employment Inventory data will align with that for the other 6 regions in the Golden Horseshoe, to strengthen the agri-food business cluster that generates an estimated \$12.3 billion in economic activity in Niagara, Hamilton and the GTA.
- Niagara Region is a partner in the SWIFT Network project to build an ultra high-speed fibre optic Internet network to support business growth in rural areas; secure provincial and federal government investment in improving Niagara's information infrastructure; and better connect rural residents with online information and services.
- Data is being developed as a valuable resource for Niagara. The 2015 provincial GO Open Data conference was hosted in the region; 8 municipalities are among the organizations sharing datasets on [niagaraopendata.ca](http://niagaraopendata.ca); and Niagara Connects is facilitating construction of the Niagara Data Repository and Refinery tool.



## WHAT'S EMERGING

- 1** Niagara-focused evidence that describes Living Wage, Cost of Living and rates of income precarity is being examined in light of Ontario's minimum wage increase; and the national trend toward a decreasing number of jobs for mid-income earners and more jobs available at both lower and higher income levels.
- 2** Niagara is experiencing industrial growth and related employment and training opportunities. The new General Electric manufacturing facility slated to open in Welland in 2018, and greenhouses transitioning to cannabis production are two examples.
- 3** A review of 2006 and 2014 income quintile data for Niagara in support of the #Rethink Niagara initiative shows there are still approximately 65,000 people living on \$12,000/year or less, and this costs all of us, collectively in Niagara, at least \$1.38 billion a year in both direct and indirect economic costs.
- 4** Niagara groups are aligning priorities with various adjacent regions through: Niagara-Hamilton Trade Corridor research to support development of the Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan; Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance work to strengthen the significant agri-food cluster in Canada's most densely-populated region; and a Buffalo-Niagara-Hamilton exploration of opportunities for cross-border innovation and trade.
- 5** Work is underway through the #Rethink Niagara initiative, to build a nuanced map of Niagara that describes adult literacy in all of its present-day forms, including digital competencies, communication skills, problem-solving ability and financial literacy.



**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Counts, June, 2017 Establishment Counts

# INDICATORS

## Economic Development in Niagara

- Economic Performance and Growth
- Number of Businesses in Niagara
- Organizations Contributing to Economic Development in Niagara

## Income and Earnings in Niagara

- Low Income Measure in Niagara
- Income Levels in Niagara
- Market Basket Measure (MBM)
- Food Security, Food Bank Use, Hunger Count in Niagara
- Social Assistance in Niagara
- Number of Personal and Business Bankruptcies in Niagara
- Niagara Poverty Reduction and Prosperity Initiatives

# SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS

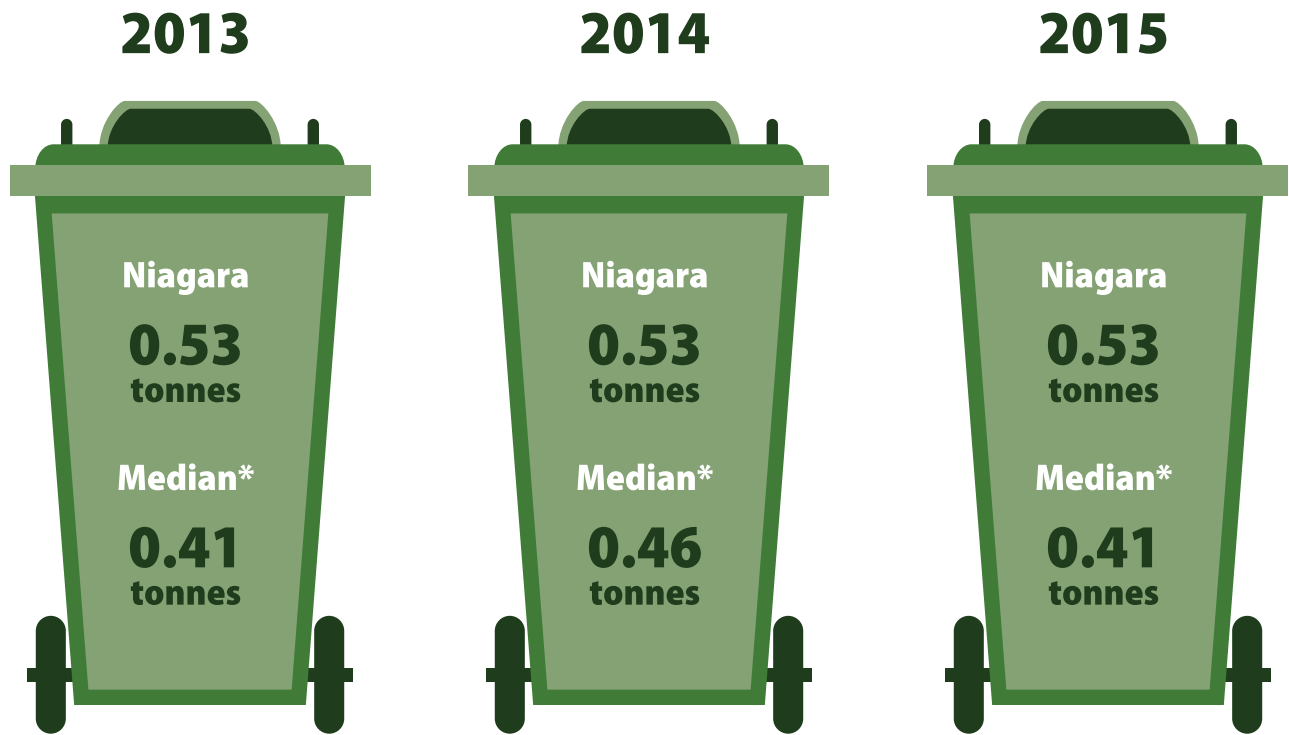
- Create the conditions for increasing quality of jobs and productivity, and growing the talent pool that attracts businesses to Niagara. Do this by focusing on building a continuum of opportunity that allows people to get to the next level of employment and advance on career pathways.
- Continue to engage Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in building a more inclusive Niagara in all aspects, by working together to increase respect, understanding, and participation of Indigenous people in community, social and economic relationships.
- Pay attention to new ways people in Niagara are building economic prosperity, through increasing numbers of Independent Workers; online connectivity and global digital reach; social enterprise; and demographic trends that support inclusivity, social succession and inter-generational mentoring and investment.
- Build on Data and Knowledge Niagara Reference Group work to describe how data is being used by people, organizations, businesses and networks in Niagara.
- Advance #Rethink Niagara by weaving together data from existing initiatives, to remove or reduce barriers so that people can participate in the economy and have the capacity to be able to build up their own financial security.

Visit [www.livinginniagarareport.com](http://www.livinginniagarareport.com) to view the full report, including links to supporting data and resources.



# Environment

Niagara's unique geography and environment contribute to residents' and visitors' quality of life and provide an iconic setting for specialized business opportunities. When we appreciate, understand and protect our natural assets, and take a thoughtful approach to waste management and climate issues, we are building a sustainable future.



**\* median across 15 Canadian Municipalities**

## Tonnes of Residential Solid Waste Diverted per Household (2013-2015)

The infographic above examines the tonnes of residential solid waste diverted per household, from landfills in Niagara and the median across 15 Canadian municipalities that report data on this measure.

**Source:** Municipal Benchmarking Network Canada 2015 Performance Measurement Report.

**How is  
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## NATIONAL CONTEXT

Over the past 20 years in Canada:

- Residential use of energy has reduced by 20%, with 82% of Canadians taking measures to reduce energy consumption
- The total land base in Canada devoted to farmland fell by 7.0%
- Absolute Greenhouse Gas emissions increased by 11.7%, leaving Canada far from the trajectory required to reduce emissions to a rate that avoids dangerous climate change.

**Source:** Canadian Index of Wellbeing National Report, 2016

## HAPPENING NOW!

- The Niagara Source Water Protection Committee is on track to meet Ontario Clean Water Act requirements. Seventy per cent of policies set to address significant drinking water threats have been implemented in accordance with timelines. The remaining thirty per cent are in progress.
- In 2016, a total of 18 businesses representing 13% of Niagara's workforce were Carbon Project members. They learned how to reduce their Greenhouse Gas emissions and environmental impacts, while benefiting from increased efficiency and education.
- The 2016 Census of Agriculture in Niagara shows there are 1,827 farms (187 fewer than 2011), covering 218,251 acres (4,660 less than in 2011), and most are under 70 acres in size. Since 2011, the number of livestock farms reduced, and greenhouse vegetable production increased. The average age of Niagara farmers is 56, compared to 57 for the Golden Horseshoe and 55 for Ontario and Canada.
- Community gardens are being established in neighbourhoods across Niagara, offering opportunities for people to gain skills and knowledge about food, connect with others, and enjoy nature.
- The Niagara River Remedial Action Plan (RAP) Group reports that over the past 50 years, major clean-up efforts have reduced discharges of pollution and toxic chemicals. The river has been successfully remediated from one of the most degraded places in North America to one of improved health recognized for its contribution to global biodiversity. The goal is to see the Niagara River (Ontario) delisted as a Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement Area of Concern by December, 2019.





## WHAT'S EMERGING

- 1** The Niagara Agricultural Policy and Action Committee is developing a Niagara Agriculture Irrigation Strategy to strengthen farmers' ability to produce viable crops in drought conditions.
- 2** Greenhouse cannabis production is increasing in Niagara, and in 2018 Niagara College will launch a Graduate Certificate program in Commercial Cannabis Production. This is Canada's first such postsecondary credential; it will prepare graduates to work in the licensed production of Cannabis, which is used as a therapeutic drug (Marijuana); fiber (Hemp) and as a source for seed oil (Hempseed).
- 3** Pollinators' role in a vibrant food system is being addressed through introduction in 2016 of a new Commercial Beekeeping program at Niagara College, and the work of the Niagara Beeway, which focuses on restoring biodiversity.
- 4** In 2015, the Brock University Herbarium became a member of the national herbarium research network Canadensys, which collects, stores and shares data on plant, animal and fungal species in Canada. The network is part of the Canadian Biodiversity Information Facility (BIF), and the Global BIF. Through the herbarium, people at Brock are strengthening plant species inventories and monitoring, to improve understanding of plant diversity in the region.
- 5** Protecting the environment is one of eight response goals in the 2016 Niagara Region Emergency Preparedness Plan, which aligns with provincial requirements. The plan includes prevention of fuel related threats that could negatively impact water treatment plants along the Welland Canal.

## Farms in Niagara (2016)

Niagara is part of the agri-food business cluster in the Golden Horseshoe that generates an estimated \$12.3 billion in economic activity in Niagara, Hamilton and the GTA.

**Source:** Statistics Canada

# 1,827 farms in Niagara

Businesses led by  
**2,615 farm operators**  
who are on average  
**56 years of age**



covering  
**218,251 acres**

with gross farm receipts  
of over **\$838 million**

# INDICATORS

## Air

- Quality

## Climate Change

- Climate Change Planning
- Climate Change Community Action

## Land

- Agriculture
- Greenbelt Plan
- Green Space
- Land Use Planning

## Waste

- Costs of Garbage Disposal
- Quantity of Residential Waste

## Water

- Quality
- Quantity

# SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS

- Support work underway to build socio-economic resilience for Niagara in the face of advancing climate impacts, such as development of a regional agriculture irrigation strategy that optimizes farmers' ability to efficiently respond to drought impacts.
- Gather diverse players working in the area of the environment in Niagara, to develop measures of progress that support a balanced approach to creating resiliency for a stronger future. Align this work with measuring progress toward implementing recommended actions from the various Climate Action and Sustainability Action Plans previously published in the region.
- Describe the Niagara-wide continuum of planning for green space, tree planting to improve air quality, and valuing our region's natural capital. Opportunities exist to empower people in Niagara to see they can strengthen their own future and be more connected to their community by taking everyday actions to contribute to a healthy environment.
- Gather information to understand the Niagara-wide landscape for biodiversity preservation and recovery. This will show biodiversity's vital role in economic and social development, and help planning in Niagara to align with provincial and national strategies related to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.
- Identify opportunities arising from Niagara food systems mapping completed in 2015-2016, to strengthen the ways a healthy secure sustainable food system contributes to a stronger future for Niagara.

Visit [www.livinginniagarareport.com](http://www.livinginniagarareport.com) to view the full report, including links to supporting data and resources.



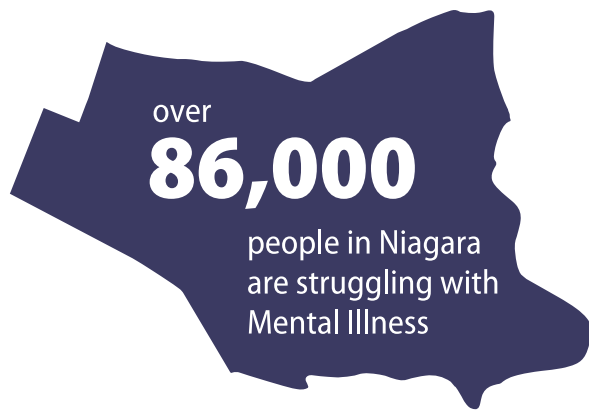
# Health and Wellness

Our health is determined by the conditions in which we are born, grow, learn, live, work and age. Strong cross-Sectoral linkages exist between Health and Wellness and all other Living in Niagara Sectors. There is an increasing focus on making a positive impact on people's lives and the vitality of Niagara through promotion of wellness, prevention of illness, early identification, integration and equitable access to services.

## Mental Wellness and Workplace Productivity

(2011/2014)

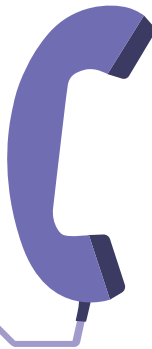
According to the Mental Health Commission of Canada, 1 in 5 Canadians had a mental illness in 2011.



Based on national  
estimates approximately

**6,200**

Niagara residents call in  
sick every week due to  
mental illness

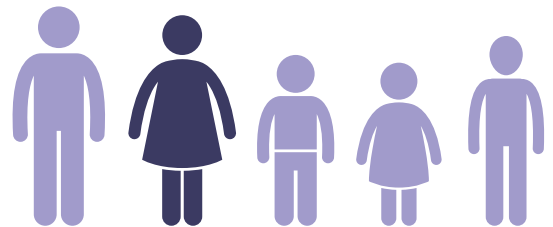


**Source:** Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)

45 people per year  
die by suicide in Niagara  
(1 every 8 days)

**Source:** Niagara Suicide Prevention Network (2014)

**Approximately  
1 in 5 people employed  
in Niagara have a  
mental illness**



that is over  
**40,000**  
people

**How is  
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## NATIONAL CONTEXT

In Canada over the past 20 years, people are living longer (women 83.6 years and men 79.4 years), fewer teens than ever are smoking, and flu shot rates are up. However, since 1994, diabetes has more than doubled; Canadians' ratings of both their overall and mental health have declined; 1 in 5 people have a health or activity limitation; and fewer people have a family doctor.

**Source:** Canadian Index of Wellbeing National Report, 2016

## HAPPENING NOW!

- Between May 2014 and September 2017, the Niagara Mental Health and Addictions Access Line served over 5,790 registered individuals with over 10,900 calls; connected more than 3,000 individuals to a mental health or addictions service provider (over 87% within 1 day); and more than 4,730 callers indicated that they feel better at the end of the call.
- Forty-five people per year die by suicide in Niagara (1 every 8 days). The Niagara Suicide Prevention Coalition provides training in safeTALK (Tell, Ask, Listen and KeepSafe) and ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training).
- The Niagara Dental Health Coalition surveyed 1,334 adult residents who are clients of social service agencies across Niagara in 2017. Sixty-nine per cent of respondents cannot afford to pay for dental care; 30% had not visited a dentist in 3 or more years; and 28% had visited a hospital emergency room, family doctor, or a walk-in clinic for dental emergencies.
- The Niagara Falls Community Health Centre and the Centre de sante communautaire in Welland offer the 10-week Caring for My COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) program. In the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network (HNHB LHIN) area, 1 in 10 people over age 35 has COPD; and difficulty breathing due to COPD is a leading cause of emergency department visits and hospitalization.
- Eight of the twelve local municipalities in Niagara are classified as areas of high physician need by the province. While over 70 new family physicians have been recruited to Niagara since 2011, more than 30% of family doctors in the region are over 60 years of age, leading to a focus on succession planning to support primary care renewal.



## WHAT'S EMERGING

- 1** Implementation of the 2016 Patients First Act by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is changing planning and delivery of health care services in Niagara. In 2017, the HNHB LHIN began coordinating home and community care; in 2018 modernized public health standards will take effect; and Anchor Tables for the Niagara and Niagara Northwest LHIN Sub-Regions will guide priorities for Sub-Region collaboration.
- 2** Equitable access to health care is being examined by a number of groups, including the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network; the Indigenous Diabetes Health Circle; newcomer service providers; and the HEART project that articulates the views of homeless individuals in Niagara.
- 3** From April 2016 to March, 2017, a total of 3,450 children and youth were referred through Contact Niagara for children's mental health, developmental and/or autism services.
- 4** Niagara EMS (Emergency Medical Service) is transitioning toward a Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH) model that coordinates with other health care sectors and measures impact based on outcomes, rather than the conventional response time model. This includes a Community Paramedic Program to support individuals in Niagara who had been frequently calling 911, to be less reliant on the ambulance system for their primary health care resources.\*
- 5** Niagara Health reports a 65% increase in opioid cases presenting in emergency rooms from January to August 2017, compared to the same time frame in 2016. Positive Living Niagara's StreetWorks program, which distributes Naloxone kits, reports that for the entire year of 2016 there were 147 occasions a kit was used to reverse an overdose, and in the first half of 2017 alone, there were 190 kits reported used in an emergency opioid overdose situation.\*

\* This information is also reported in the Crime, Safety and Security Sector

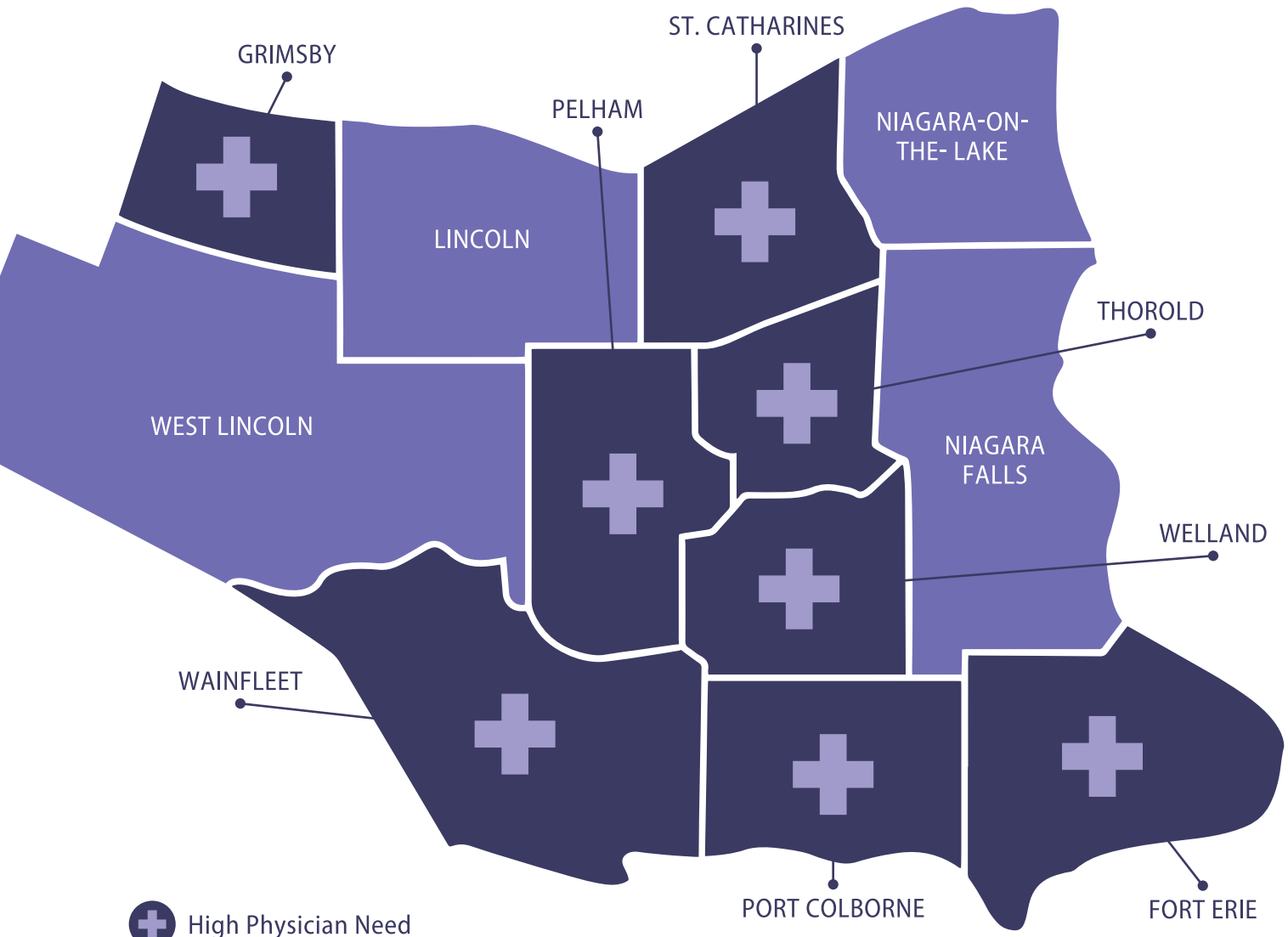


## Areas of High Physician Need in Niagara

The Niagara Physician Recruitment and Retention Program was established in 2001 to promote family practice opportunities and to attract and retain physicians in Niagara. The program works in collaboration with the municipalities of St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Welland, Thorold, Fort Erie, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Port Colborne, Wainfleet, Pelham, Grimsby, Lincoln and West Lincoln and operates under the Organizational and Foundational Standards Division of Niagara Region Public Health. Several local municipalities (8 of 12) in Niagara are classified as Areas of High Physician Need by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Since 2011, over 70 new family physicians have been recruited to Niagara. Given that more than 30% of the family doctors in the region are over 60 years of age, developing succession planning strategies to support primary care renewal in Niagara is a high priority.

**Source:** Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care; and Niagara Region Public Health



# INDICATORS

## Chronic Disease and Injury

- Perceived Ratings of Mental Well-Being and Stress
- Obesity Rates in Niagara
- Prevalence Rates of Chronic Conditions in Niagara
- Injury Rates
- Cancer Rates in Niagara

## Health Services in Niagara

- Number of Specific Health Facilities in Niagara
- Hospital Standardized Mortality Ratio and Hospital Readmissions
- Number of Physicians and Specialists
- Wait Times for Emergency Room Visits, Diagnostic Imaging and Surgeries in Niagara
- Emergency Response Times in Niagara

## Lifestyle Indicators in Niagara

- Substance Use Rates
- Physical Activity Rates
- Nutrition Rates
- Dental Health Rates

## Population Level Outcomes

- Life Expectancy in Niagara
- Low Birth Weight and Mortality of Babies in Niagara
- Teen Pregnancies

# SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS

- Support Niagara Opioid Overdose Prevention and Communication Network efforts to address growing numbers of opioid cases in Niagara and raise awareness of harm reduction resources.
- Intentionally build and strengthen partnerships between doctors, nurse practitioners, health sector agencies and community-based agencies, with a focus on promotion of wellness, and prevention of illness.
- Strengthen the business case for the Integrated Community Lead model of care. Incentivize consistency in planning for transitions to services.
- Address ageism in Niagara by shifting the story about older people to a true picture of what it means to grow older in today's context. Recognize these people as contributors to supporting the health care system and the overall wellbeing of the community.
- Build on work underway to improve access and programming experiences for those children and youth and their families who are seeking mental health supports. Continue to strengthen partnerships between core mental health service agencies for children and youth and other community partners, to implement the provincial Moving on Mental Health plan in Niagara.

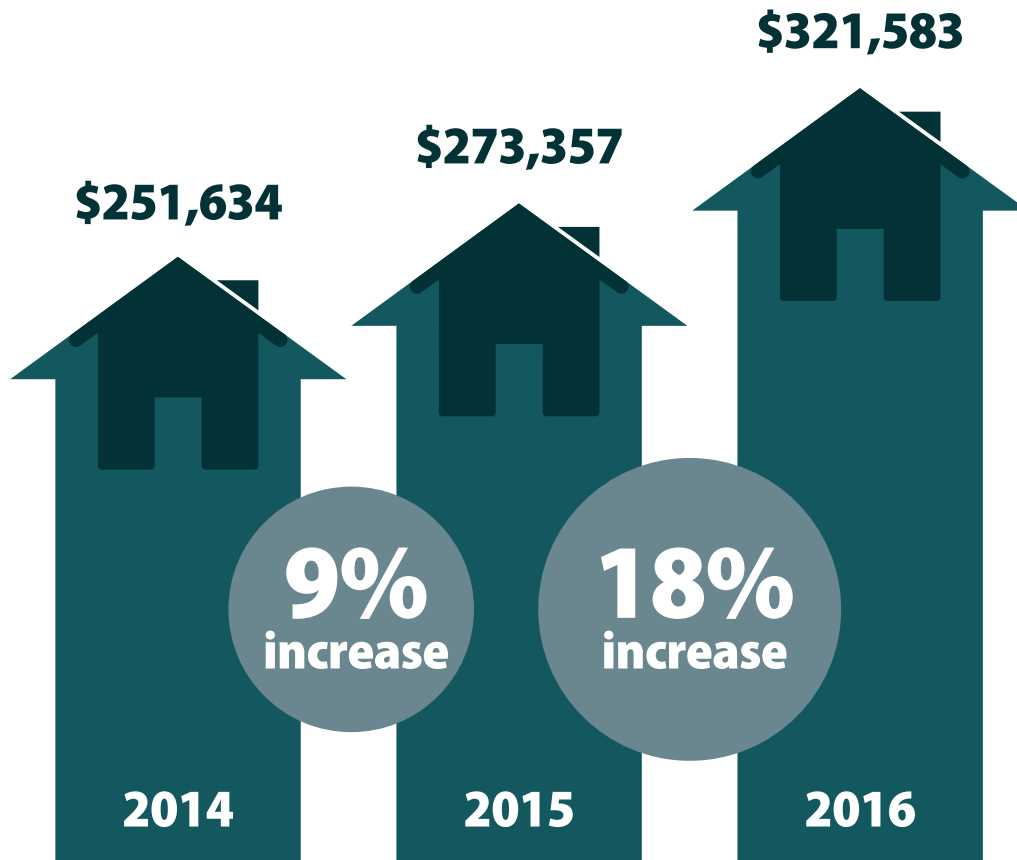
Visit [www.livinginniagarareport.com](http://www.livinginniagarareport.com) to view the full report, including links to supporting data and resources.





# Housing and Shelter

The availability of affordable, safe and reliable housing and shelter in a community supports the health and well-being of its people. It is important to have a secure place to call home, where you build a collective history with others.



## MLS Price Growth in Niagara (2014-2016)

In 2017 in the Niagara region, CMHC notes that MLS price growth continues, but is growing at a more modest pace. The average MLS price for all of 2017 is forecast to be in the \$384,700 to \$392,300 range. The MLS average listing price for 2018 is forecast to be between \$375,600 and \$387,400. For 2019 the forecast is between \$380,700 and \$400,000. Overall migration and new housing starts are expected to slow as affordability continues to erode.

**Source:** CMHC Housing Market Outlook, Fall 2017

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## NATIONAL CONTEXT

Over the past 20 years, housing has become less affordable for Canadians as they devote a greater proportion of their net income to meet their housing needs. Despite increases in family incomes between 1994 and 2014, shelter costs in Canada rose by 6.3%.

**Source:** Canadian Index of Wellbeing National Report, 2016

## HAPPENING NOW!

- 'A Home for All' Taskforce formed in 2015 to enact Niagara Region's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan. Focus areas include: Housing First; Prevention of homelessness; Housing Affordability Innovation; Service Hubs; and a No Wrong Door approach to service.
- Between 2015 and 2016, average home listing prices in Niagara grew by 18% (over \$52,000), with 3 local areas experiencing the strongest price growth: Port Colborne/Wainfleet (52%), Niagara Falls (30%), and Fort Erie (26%). For households seeking to own or rent a home, this erodes affordability. Required income for home ownership is increasing at a faster pace than earned income, and increased pressure is put on the already-limited supply of rental units.
- In 2016 and 2017, Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) received over \$23 million in federal-provincial funding to support initiatives such as social housing energy efficiency retrofits, construction of 125 new affordable housing units in Thorold, Niagara Falls and St. Catharines, and support for low income homeowners with renovations to improve the health and safety of their homes.
- In 2017, one hundred new Housing First subsidies with case management supports were established across the region; Niagara Region awarded continued and new funding to 50 homelessness programs and supports across the region; and the Hope Centre in Welland continued to develop as a hub of multiple services and support including homelessness prevention, shelter, mental health and addictions supports and a food bank.
- In 2016, Niagara was one of 22 communities selected by the province to receive Survivors of Domestic Violence Portable Housing Benefit Pilot Program funds. Over 2 years, \$652,476 of federal-provincial funding is being allocated to provide 50 qualifying households with a portable rent benefit to access accommodation that best meets their housing needs. As of March, 2018 this will continue as a permanent housing program delivered by the province with NRH participation.



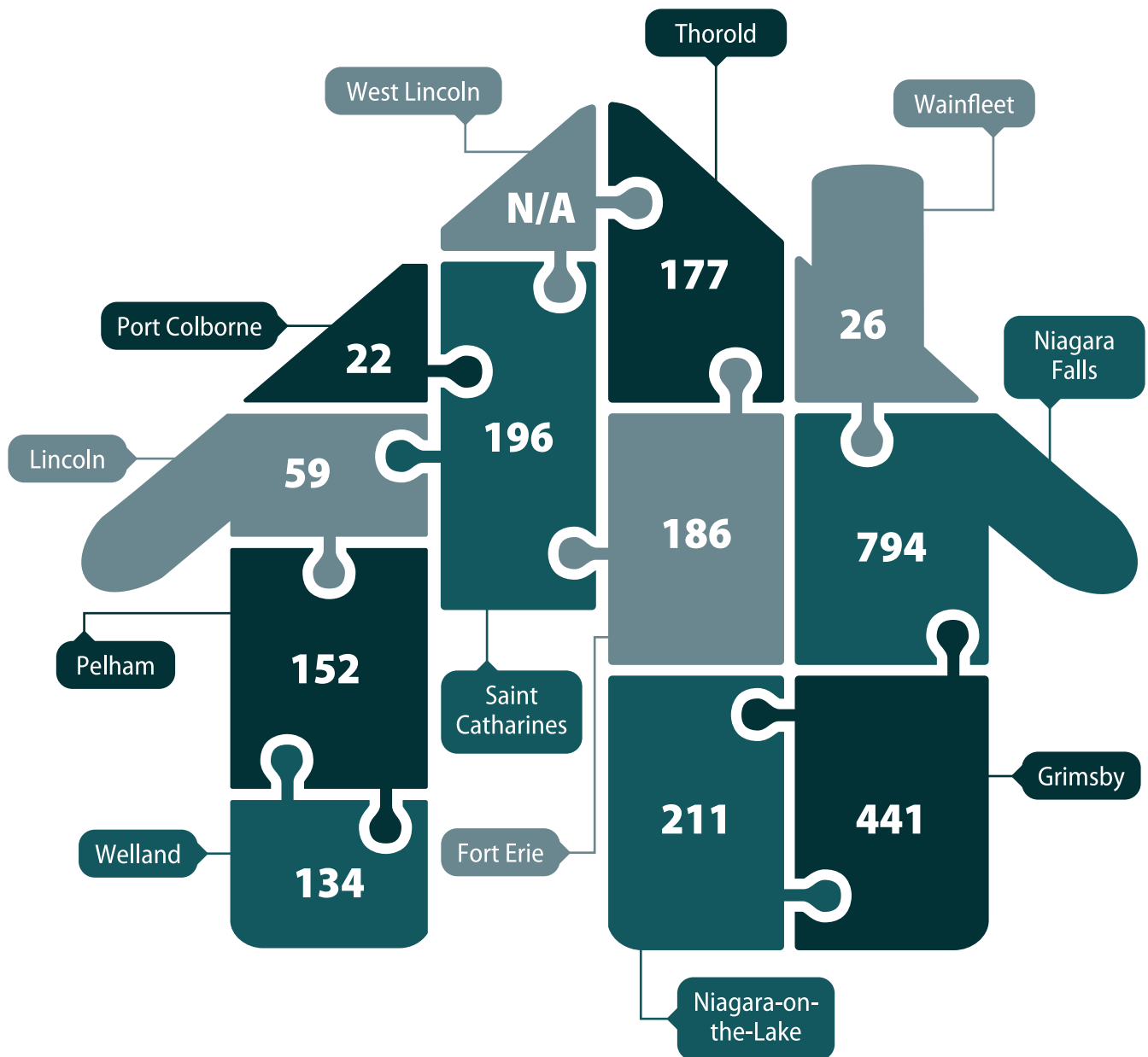
## WHAT'S EMERGING

- 1** As of September 2017, there were more than 4,900 households waiting for Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) housing across Niagara, compared to 6,016 in 2013.
- 2** The Indigenous Homeward Bound program being developed at both the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre and Niagara Regional Native Centre in Niagara-on-the-Lake is a 4-year holistic job-readiness program that integrates supports such as safe, affordable housing, childcare, skills training and college education to help under-housed and homeless single mothers change their lives. Developed by WoodGreen Community Services in Toronto, the Homeward Bound model demonstrates an 80% participant success rate and a \$4.00 return to society for every dollar invested in the program.
- 3** In 2017, the RAFT partnered with the District School Board of Niagara to pilot the Upstream project, to prevent youth homelessness by reaching at-risk youth in school. Upstream is based on a successful Australian model that proves at-risk youth can be turned around if they are caught in time and referred to appropriate supports and services.
- 4** The provincial government announced \$5.4 million over 3 years of new 'Home for Good' funding in 2017, to bring 23 new and 40 community-based Supportive Housing units to Niagara.
- 5** The HEART project articulates the views of homeless individuals in Niagara regarding the significant healthcare challenges they face around: access and discharge from hospitals; adequate and comprehensive psychiatric and mental health services across service providers; and availability and continuity of care from family doctors.
- 6** Age-Friendly leaders are highlighting the socio-economic benefits of the shift toward alternative housing arrangements that offer affordability, accessibility and supportive services. This provides residents the opportunity to grow older in their home or community, and maintain their social connections and familiarity with their neighbourhood, its businesses and its services.

## New Housing Starts in Niagara (2016)

This infographic shows the number of housing starts by local municipality in Niagara in 2016. Note, there is no available information on West Lincoln.

**Source:** Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)



# INDICATORS

## Housing Availability

- Housing Demand Trends
- New Housing Starts
- Vacancy Rates

## Housing Affordability

- Spending 30% of Income on Housing and Shelter
- Average Market Rent
- Average Monthly Rent Trends
- Purchase Price of a Home in Niagara
- Market Absorption Rate
- New Housing Price Index

## Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention

- Wait Times and Availability of Affordable and Subsidized Housing in Niagara
- Core Housing Needs
- Homelessness and Use of Shelters
- Housing Initiatives

# SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS

- Pay attention to HEART project suggestions for patient-centered health system reforms that will impact homeless individuals in Niagara, by reducing barriers to access, strengthening systems of support, and creating the conditions for health equity.
- Strengthen linkages through sharing of data and measurements between groups addressing aspects of complex issues of housing and homelessness in Niagara, including the A Home for All Task Force, the Niagara Mental Health and Addictions Charter Action Network, the Age-Friendly Niagara Network and the Coalition to End Violence Against Women.
- Develop and understand return on investment in the housing and homelessness sector by weaving together information gathered through HIFIS and other system data. HIFIS (Homeless Individuals and Families Information System) was launched in 2017 as a data collection and case management tool for all providers of homelessness services in Niagara.
- Identify creative opportunities to offer a spectrum of housing options, including incentives for developers to create these options.
- Focus on reducing ongoing long wait lists for affordable housing in Niagara.

Visit [www.livinginniagarareport.com](http://www.livinginniagarareport.com) to view the full report, including links to supporting data and resources.



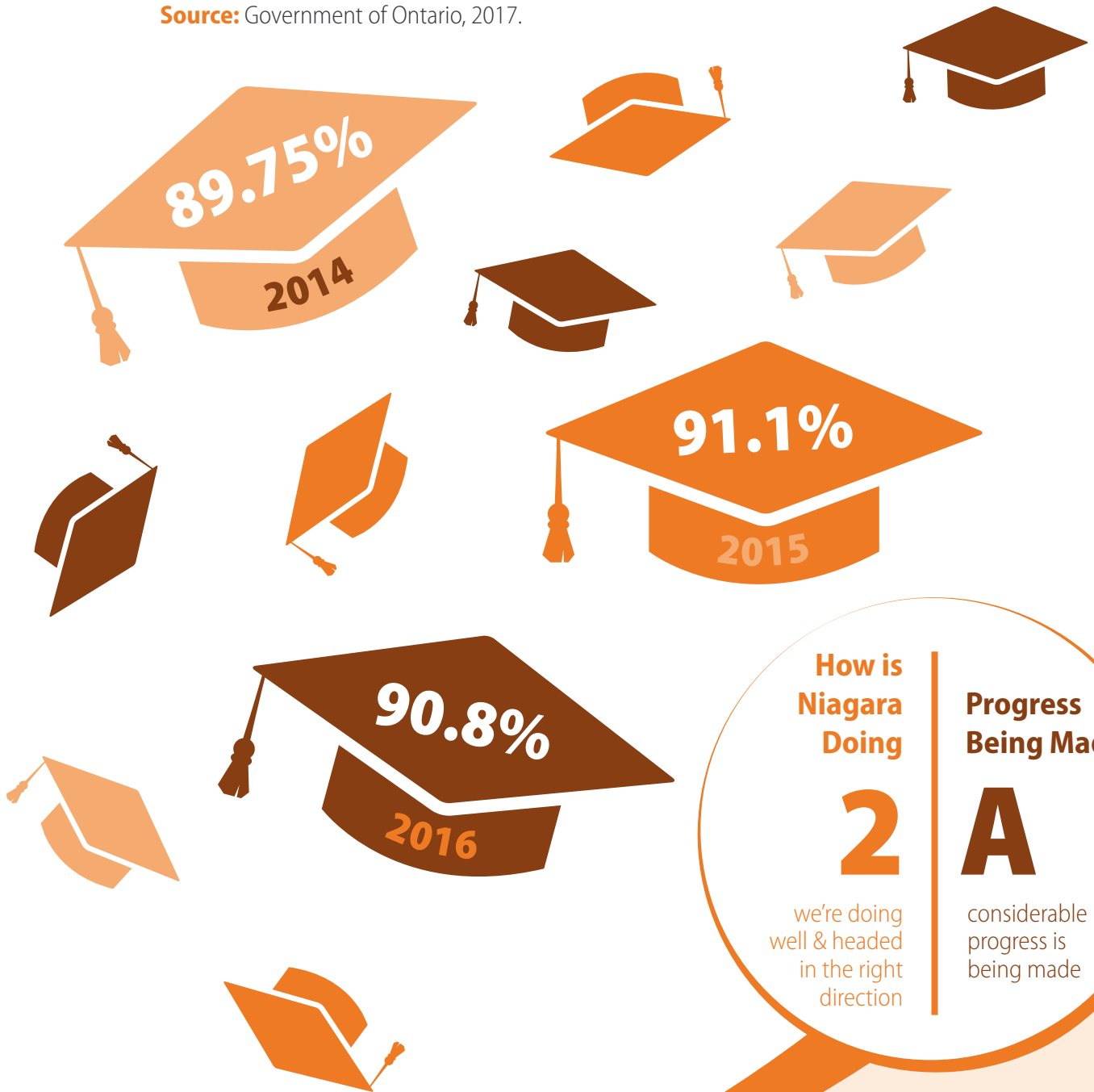
# Learning and Education

Creating strong education systems and equitable access to lifelong learning opportunities is foundational to Niagara's growth and prosperity.

## Five-Year Graduation Rates, Niagara (2014-2016)

Five-year secondary school graduation rates in Niagara are above the provincial average, at 90.8% in 2016; this rate is supported by students' access to alternative learning opportunities, co-op programs and Specialist High Skills Majors.

**Source:** Government of Ontario, 2017.





## NATIONAL CONTEXT

The 2016 Canadian Index of Wellbeing report shows that between 1994 and 2014:

- advances in education in Canada have matched growth in GDP (gross domestic product);
- across Canada there is a shortage of regulated, centre-based child care;
- resources for elementary school children have improved;
- high school and university completion rates continue to increase;
- undergraduate student tuition fees have almost tripled; and
- more adults are participating in education-related activities.

**Source:** Canadian Index of Wellbeing 2016 Report

## HAPPENING NOW!

- Collaborative, systematic approaches are being taken to identify young children at risk of developmental delay, and provide related supports. This aligns Niagara with the provincial goal to promote early learning and development; support parents and caregivers; and provide referrals to specialized services.
- Five-year secondary school graduation rates in Niagara are above the provincial average, at 90.8% in 2016. This rate is supported by students' access to alternative learning opportunities, co-op programs and Specialist High Skills Majors.
- EQAO Math and Grade 10 Ontario Secondary School literacy testing results in Niagara are improving; this aligns with the provincial trend. EQAO testing provides a regular snapshot of Ontario elementary and secondary student achievement in reading, writing and math.
- Brock University and Niagara College are increasing experiential education and work-integrated learning opportunities for students, in partnership with employers in Niagara and beyond.
- Access to a broad range of learning opportunities exists for adults, whether they are seeking education attainment, essential workplace skills, inter-generational exchange, or social engagement.





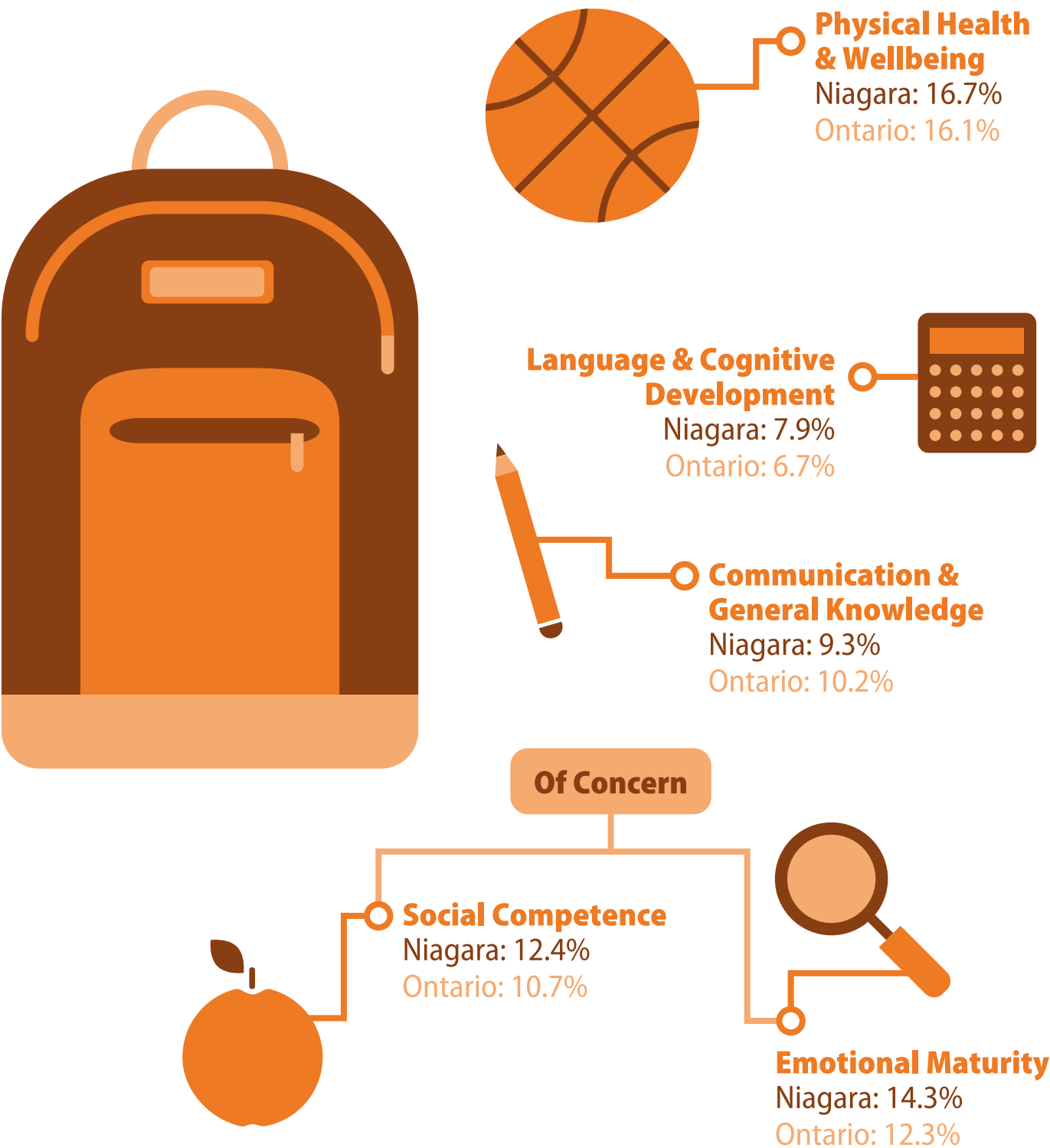
## WHAT'S EMERGING

- 1 There is increasing focus on early intervention to strengthen student self-regulation, with an emphasis on teaching skills in full day Kindergarten.
- 2 Young students are being encouraged to plan for post-secondary education in their future. Attention is also being paid to making financial support accessible for youth without the necessary personal resources to participate in college or university studies.
- 3 Initial work is underway to describe adult literacy, in all of its modern forms, in Niagara; this relates to a renewed provincial look at Literacy and Basic Skills programs, and the #Rethink Niagara focus on reducing or removing barriers to people who are not yet participating from being able to build up their own ability to be financially secure.
- 4 Since 2014, Niagara College international student enrolment has increased from 2,350 to over 3,000 students from more than 80 countries. Brock International student numbers have reduced from 2,350 in 2014, to 1,903 students from 96 countries in 2016.
- 5 Brock University and Niagara Catholic District School Board are partnering to deliver a new dual credit course, to give thirty Grade 12 students an early introduction to kinesiology for which they will receive academic credit at both the secondary school and university level.

# Early Development Instrument (EDI) Results, Percent of Students Vulnerable in each Domain (2015)

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a community-level measurement tool that focuses on the developmental health and wellbeing of Senior Kindergarten children in 5 domains.

**Source:** Niagara Region Public Health.



## INDICATORS

**EQAO Scores**

**Early Years Learning**

**Levels of Education Attainment**

**Literacy Levels and Literacy Training**

**School Enrolment Trends and  
Presence of International Students**

**Technology Use and its Influence on  
Education and Learning**

**Student Mental Wellness**

## SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS

- Continue to focus on increasing secondary school and post-secondary graduation rates, and student access to experiential and work-integrated learning opportunities.
- Take a holistic approach to reducing barriers to people achieving post-secondary education, by building awareness of the opportunity at an early age. Address complex factors affecting individual student success, including lack of access to resources such as adequate nutrition, technology and necessities of life.
- Support development of a comprehensive picture of adult literacy in its modern forms at the neighbourhood level in Niagara, to inform coordinated community planning for increased individual, family and neighbourhood prosperity.
- Strengthen work underway to promote mental wellness throughout the lifespan in Niagara, as a critical success factor in developing a resilient community and productive workforce.
- Emphasize access to a range of lifelong learning and education options, to enhance people's capacity to be adaptable in the modern workplace, and to live meaningful lives at all ages.

Visit [www.livinginniagarareport.com](http://www.livinginniagarareport.com) to view the full report, including links to supporting data and resources.



# People Getting Started

Very young children and their families, youth and new graduates, and newcomers to Canada require community support and resources to get started. Investment in creating positive conditions for early childhood development, young people starting out, and new immigrants and refugees strengthens these people's ability to contribute to a vibrant Niagara.

## Geographic Distribution of Immigrants in Canada (2011-2016)

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016.

### ADMITTED UNDER:



**60.3%**  
economic category



**26.8%**  
family class



**11.6%**  
refugees

**1,212,075**  
in Canada

**4,990**

**in St. Catharines–Niagara CMA\***  
(Census Metropolitan Area)

**How is  
Niagara  
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we're doing  
well & headed  
in the right  
direction

**Progress  
Being Made**

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\* Does not include Grimsby and West Lincoln



## NATIONAL CONTEXT

The rate of Canadian children aged 0 to 5 having access to regulated, centre-based child care has more than doubled, from 11.5% in 1994 to 24.1% in 2014. Early childhood education plays a vital role in later educational achievement, provides a foundation for lifelong learning, and improves overall health.

Nine out of ten students complete high school in Canada. In 2014, 28% of Canadians held a university degree, compared to 17% in 1994. On both of these measures, Canada ranks 4th among OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries.

Reported experiences of discrimination based on ethnicity in Canada have decreased from 13.3% in 2002 to 8.0% in 2014. Of those Canadians who did experience discrimination based on ethnicity, most (37.5%) were under the age of 35. With more than 1 in 4 members of a visible minority reporting experiences of discrimination, Canadians still have work to do to ensure an inclusive society.

**Source:** Canadian Index of Wellbeing National Report, 2016

## HAPPENING NOW!

- The Niagara Infant Mental Health Committee is raising awareness about impacts of early childhood mental health among professionals working with very young children, such as registered early childhood educators, home visitors, child welfare workers, public health nurses, and social workers.
- Since 2013, Niagara has not had a waitlist for parents applying for financial assistance with child care costs, unlike a number of communities across the province.
- Before-and after-school programs are offered at many elementary schools in Niagara. In September, 2017 the provincial government began requiring school boards to offer such programs (for children 4 to 12 years old) where there is sufficient demand from parents and families.
- Healthy active play initiatives that improve children's mental and physical health and encourage creativity and collaboration are being offered in Niagara. Examples include the Healthy Kids Community Challenge which focuses on reducing obesity; and new naturalized playgrounds at some childcare centres, which promote play in a natural environment.
- Niagara Region is supporting what is happening in the Niagara-wide community by emphasizing attraction of immigrants and retention of youth ages 20 to 34, within its 2015-2018 strategic focus to increase economic prosperity.
- Due to strong newcomer support infrastructure that exists in Niagara, the Niagara Refugee Assistance Committee gathered 40 organizations to prepare for Syrian refugee families' arrival in late 2015. Comprised of government, education institutions, settlement agencies and faith groups, the committee focused on housing, health care, fundraising, volunteers and private sponsors to support settlement.





## WHAT'S EMERGING

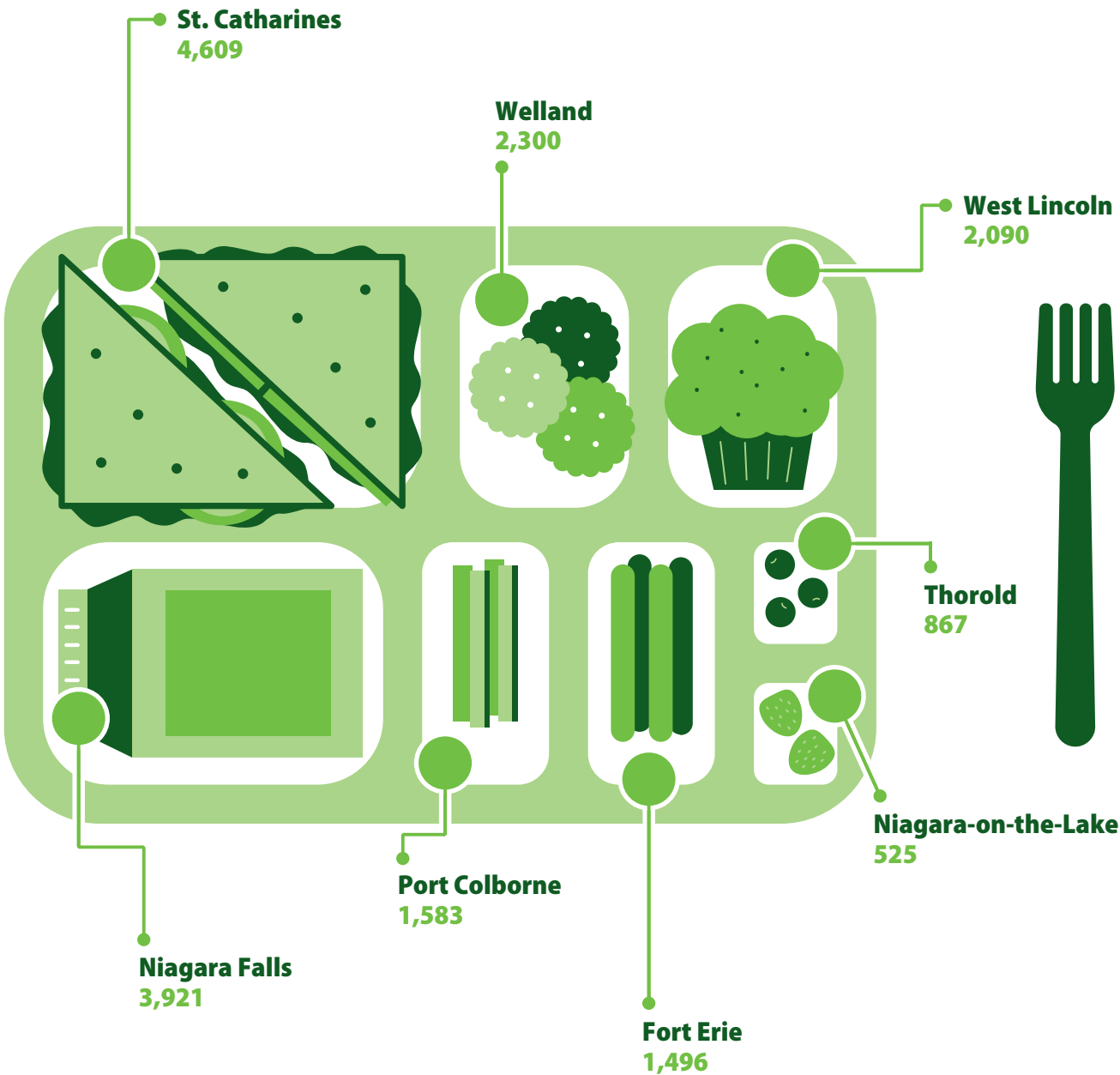
- 1 The Niagara Children's Planning Council is gathering information to support a strategy to increase mental health well-being for children from birth to age 12, by 2025.
- 2 Niagara Region Community Services is coordinating planning and implementation of the provincial government Ontario Early Years Child & Family Centres (OEYCFC) system in Niagara, to promote early learning and development; support parents and caregivers; and provide referrals to specialized services.
- 3 A total of \$6.8 million in federal and provincial funds is being invested to support a target of 460 new licensed child care spaces for children aged 0-4 years in Niagara. The intent is to increase quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility and inclusivity in the licensed childcare system.
- 4 Evidence is showing that youth retention efforts in Niagara would be strengthened by broadening the focus to include people in the 35 to 44 age cohort and their young families.
- 5 Work is underway to describe challenges related to access to mental health services for refugees and other newcomers in Niagara.

# Niagara Nutrition Partners

## Number of Students Served (2015-2016)

Niagara Nutrition Partners (NNP) is a region-wide initiative providing co-ordinated nutrition programs (breakfast, snack and lunch) in elementary and secondary schools, as well as community based programs. NNP is able to offer support to nutrition programs through provincial grant programs and local fundraising efforts.

**Source:** Niagara Nutrition Partners





## INDICATORS

**Starting Out as a Child in Niagara**

**Starting Out as a Youth or New Graduate in Niagara**

**Starting Out as an Immigrant, Refugee or International Student in Niagara**

## SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS

- Advance efforts to strengthen newcomer integration in Niagara, through cultural and language facilitation; access to mental health services; empowerment of women; and increasing inclusion.
- Augment collaborative work being done to better understand the importance of infant mental health; to increase children's mental health well-being; and to increase access to mental health services by integrating these efforts with the broader work of the Niagara Mental Health and Addictions Charter Action Network.
- When examining evidence related to retention of people in the 35-44 age cohort, look through the lenses of improving quality of jobs, and getting started as a young family in Niagara.
- Focus on an upstream approach to providing equitable access to mental health services for everyone in Niagara, including newcomers who require language- and culturally-appropriate supports.
- Build on momentum from collaborative work done by the Niagara Refugee Assistance Committee, to support Syrian refugee settlement.



Visit [www.livinginniagarareport.com](http://www.livinginniagarareport.com) to view the full report, including links to supporting data and resources.



# Recreation and Sports

Having access to recreation and sport facilities and participation opportunities enriches the lives of residents of all ages, and helps to attract visitors to Niagara. There are strong links between this Sector and many others, most notably Health and Wellness, Community Belonging and Economic Prosperity.

## Bike Friendly Municipalities (2017)

**Source:** Ontario Share the Road Cycling Coalition, 2017. Bicycle Friendly Communities.



**How is  
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we're doing  
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## NATIONAL CONTEXT

Since 1994, Canadians' overall participation in at least 15 minutes of physical activity such as walking, cycling, exercise, sports, gardening and dancing has risen steadily, from 21 to 28 times per month (an overall increase of 31.2%).

Canadians under age 25 are the most physically active, and older people are increasingly embracing active lifestyles.

**Source:** Canadian Index of Wellbeing National Report, 2016

## HAPPENING NOW!

- 2016 statistics show that in Niagara we have a total of 404 kilometres of trails; 167,559 square metres of outdoor recreation facility space; and 910,406 square metres of indoor recreation facilities.
- Niagara is increasingly attracting large national and international sporting events, including the 2015 Junior and Senior Canadian Wrestling Championships at Brock; rowing and canoe/kayak sprint events for the 2015 Pan Am Games; the 2015 World Dragon Boat Racing Championships; the 2016 International Ice Hockey Federation U18 Women's World Championship; 2017 Scotties Tournament of Hearts Canadian Women's Curling Championship; and the annual Royal Canadian Henley Regatta.
- Niagara is one of 45 Ontario communities participating in the Healthy Kids Community Challenge, engaging diverse partners to implement activities to reduce and prevent childhood overweight and obesity. In Niagara, the Challenge is supported by a \$1.125 million investment from the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.
- The Niagara River Lions, the 9th expansion team of the National Basketball League of Canada, launched its inaugural season in December, 2015 at the Meridian Centre.
- A number of new sport facilities are being constructed across Niagara, including a 2-pad arena in Pelham, a new skate park, arena and wellness centre in West Lincoln, and upgrades to the Thorold Community Arenas.



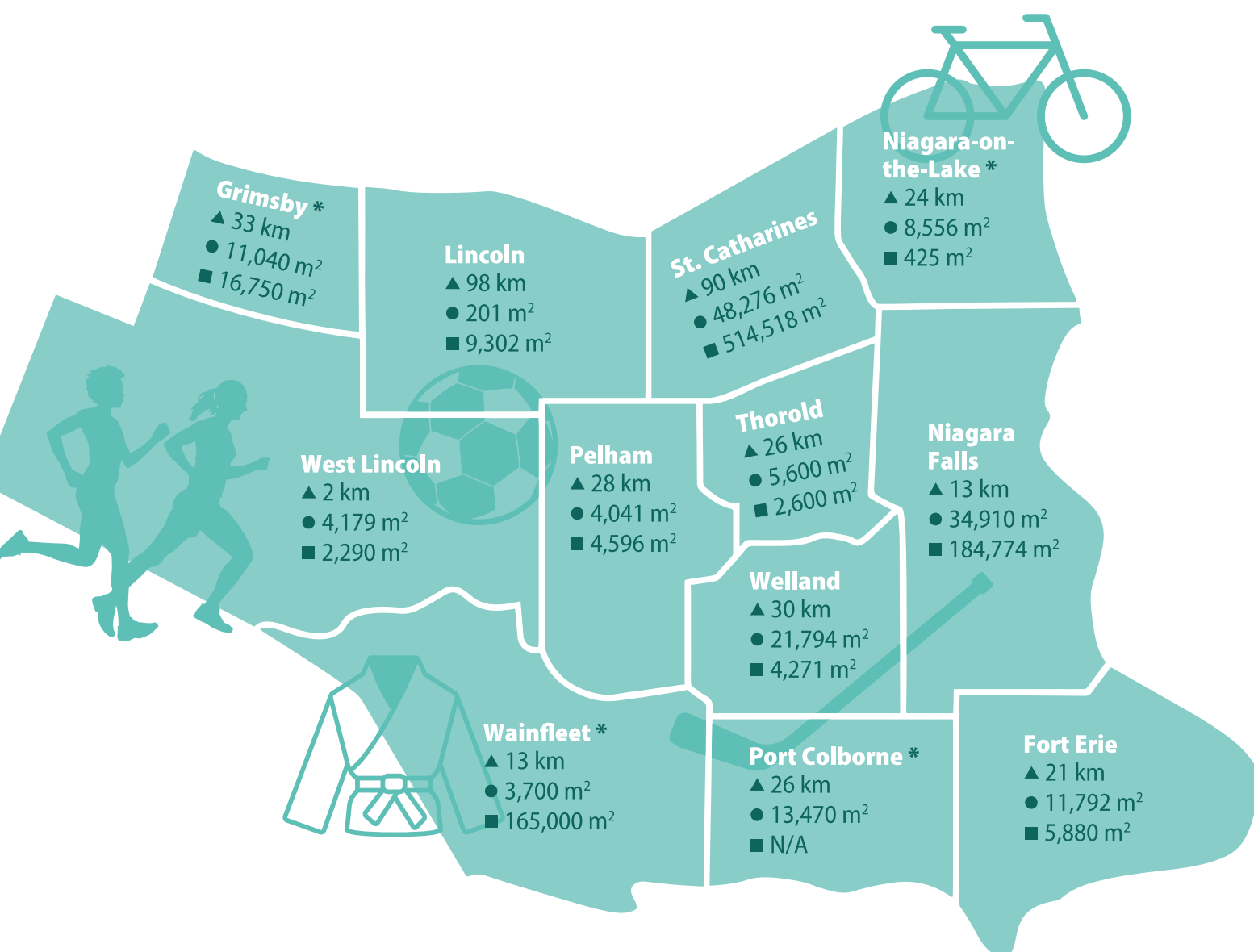
## WHAT'S EMERGING

- 1 More than 50% of Canadians are involved in community-level sport as participants, spectators, volunteers, coaches or officials. A 2015 Community Foundations of Canada community belonging report produced in partnership with True Sport Foundation shows that 85% of Canadians agree that participation in sport builds stronger communities; benefits individuals who participate; brings people together; builds social capital; and fosters inclusion of excluded groups.
- 2 Health, economic and environmental benefits of Active Transportation (AT) are being recognized across Niagara. There are AT citizen advisory groups in 11 local municipalities; the Niagara Cycling Tourism Centre is working with local business areas to strengthen support for cycling infrastructure; Brock University students are advocating for safe routes to walk or cycle to campus; and the 2016 Cycling Tourism Report shows approximately 98,000 cyclists visit Niagara annually, spending \$229 per visit.
- 3 The 2021 Canada Summer Games, the country's largest multi-sport event, will be hosted in Niagara, bringing anticipated legacy sport equipment, facilities and upgrades to existing facilities. The Games are projected to bring \$2 million in economic stimulation; 1,500 jobs (\$76 million in salaries and wages); 30,000 visitors; 5,000 athletes; and 1,500 media representatives to Niagara.
- 4 Data about recreation and sport facilities in Niagara is being openly shared. Rel8ed.to, a Niagara-based data analytics company, provides an open data set of 458 Sports Clubs and Facilities in the Niagara region, which includes 180 indoor and 278 outdoor facilities. Of these, the top 5 categories by facility type are golf (150); ice hockey (58); martial arts (49); soccer (39); and baseball (36). The niagaraopendata.ca portal hosted by Niagara Region includes 15 data sets describing golf courses, public trails, parks, campgrounds, public beaches, arenas, marinas and bike routes in the region.

## Recreation Space by Local Municipality in the Niagara Region (2015/2016)

2016 statistics show that in the Niagara Region we have a total of 404 kilometres of trails; 167,559 square metres of outdoor recreation facility space; and 910,406 square metres of indoor recreation facilities.

**Source:** Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, FIR2016 Data by Municipality.



- ▲ Kilometres of trails (municipally & privately owned)
- Square metres of outdoor recreation facility space (municipally owned)
- Square metres of indoor recreation facility space (municipally owned)
- \* Figures from 2015

# INDICATORS

Facilities and Participation

Economic Impact

Coordinated Planning

## SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS

- Encourage the Data and Knowledge Niagara Reference Group and Niagara Connects to work with Canada Summer Games 2021 organizers to identify opportunities to gather, share and learn from event-related data. This will help to measure the Games' impact, and support planning for the future.
- Build our understanding of the time and expertise people invest in volunteering to support sport activity; the importance of volunteering to the recreation and sports ecosystem in Niagara; and how volunteering in recreation and sports relates to the broader landscape of volunteer activity in the region.
- Pay attention to national data showing that women are far less likely to participate in sport than men, and mothers' participation in sport has a positive effect on children's participation rate. Relate this to Niagara efforts to promote healthy, active lifestyles to reduce and prevent childhood overweight and obesity.
- Support making sport programs accessible for families living on low income. National data shows that Canadian families spend on average \$953 annually for one child to play in organized sport.
- Focus on fun, fair play, and inclusive values to encourage people of all ages to enjoy the benefits, competencies and sense of belonging that come from participating in recreation and sport activities.

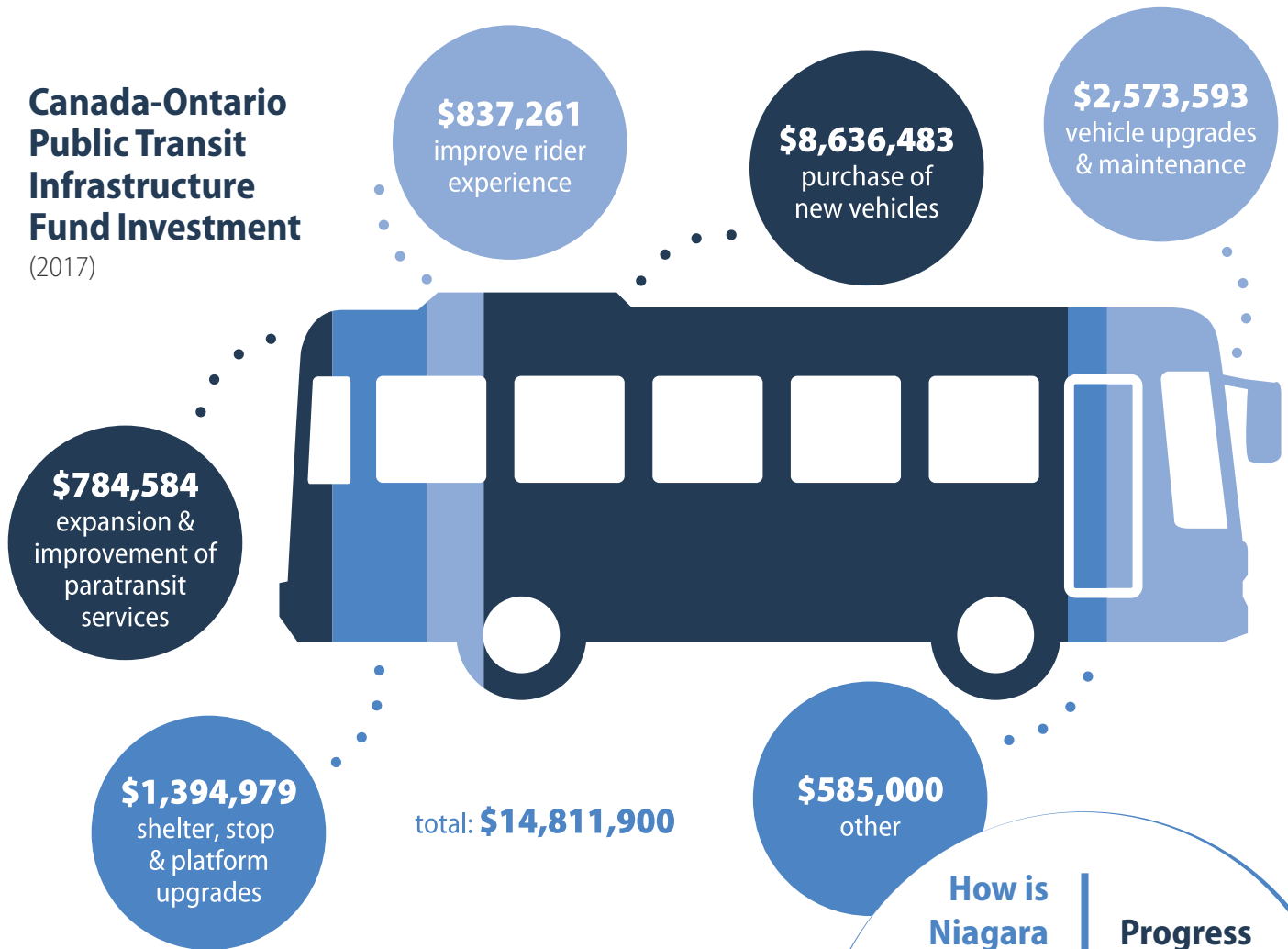
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# Transportation and Mobility

The ability of people to access various modes of transportation in our rural-urban mix region is fundamental to prosperity and wellbeing for all. Niagara's attractiveness as a place to live, work, learn, play, visit, put down roots, raise a family and grow older is affected by availability and accessibility of transportation assets.

## Canada-Ontario Public Transit Infrastructure Fund Investment (2017)



In 2017, a total Canada-Ontario Public Transit Infrastructure Fund investment of \$14,811,900 across 8 municipalities in Niagara was announced.

**Source:** Infrastructure Canada, 2017

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## NATIONAL CONTEXT

The 2016 Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) National Report tracked Indicators from 1994 to 2014, including time spent on work-related activities. During that period, the average daily commute time to and from work for Canadians with paid employment increased from 42.6 minutes to over 52 minutes. Thus, compared to 20 years ago, Canadians are spending almost 20 additional minutes per day (about 80 hours per year) commuting.

**Source:** Canadian Index of Wellbeing National Report, 2016

## HAPPENING NOW!

- Niagara Region's first-ever Transportation Master Plan (TMP) was approved by Regional Council on July 20, 2017. The TMP presents a 25-year strategy to guide planning, development, renewal and maintenance of a multi-modal transportation system consistent with projected needs, and aligned with anticipated growth and vision for a sustainable Niagara.
- In 2017, Niagara Region, in collaboration with the City of Welland, City of Niagara Falls, and City of St. Catharines, achieved a triple majority vote to secure consolidated transit service. Now, the Region is developing a shared transit solution for Niagara which includes future transit infrastructure improvements, such as the implementation of daily GO train service.
- Across the region, there are 11 Active Transportation advisory groups in local municipalities. These groups include a balance of citizens, municipal staff, and elected officials. Through support of these groups, six municipalities have achieved bike-friendly community status and one has achieved walk-friendly community status.
- In 2015, the business case was completed for the Getting There model for centrally-dispatched access to health and human services for the most vulnerable people in Niagara. The case was collaboratively built by 30 Niagara agencies, and it is based on the Huron-Perth Easy Ride consortium model.
- The Niagara Police Services Board legalized Uber in Niagara as of July 01, 2016, and made it legal for taxis to operate anywhere in the region; previously, taxis could only operate in the local municipality where their licence was issued.



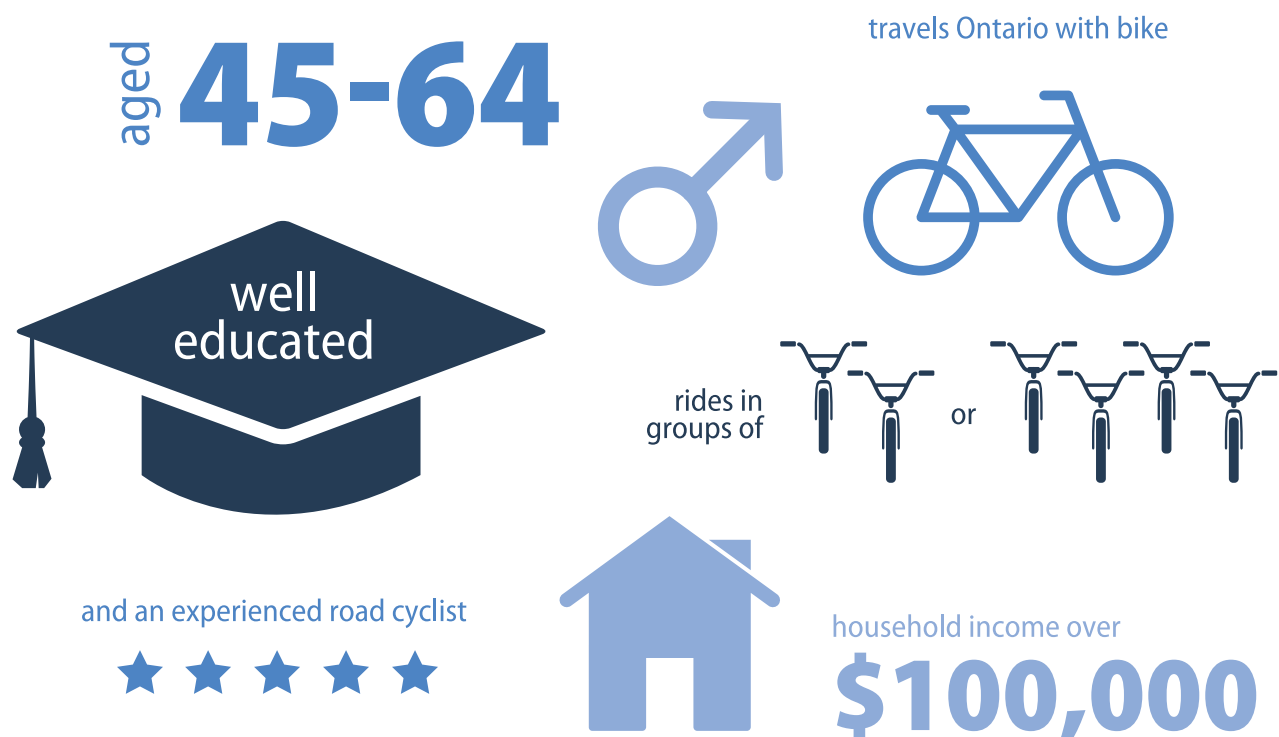
## WHAT'S EMERGING

- 1** The 2017 Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan (TMP) includes a focus on moving people and goods. The focus on people aligns with work already completed by the Age-Friendly Niagara Network, the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network, and the Niagara Region Active Transportation Subcommittee and Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- 2** In response to growing demand and opportunities, the Niagara Cycling Tourism Centre and Venture Niagara are working with local business improvement areas in the region to strengthen support for infrastructure that encourages cycling, such as bicycle lanes, bicycle parking, and promotion of Niagara as a cycling tourism destination.
- 3** Niagara Region is undertaking an amendment to the Regional Official Plan to support the goals, vision, and recommendations identified in the Niagara Region TMP. This amendment is necessary to ensure that the Region's transportation policies conform to the policies and objectives identified within the Ontario government's Places to Grow program.
- 4** The TMP includes a Key Action Step to develop the Business Case for transfer of the Niagara Ride Share (NRS) program to Niagara Region. In 2015 NRS began connecting people living in the same area so they can share a ride to work, school or appointments. By 2017, the program had logged 628 total participants and 136 connections. NRS is coordinated by Bridges Community Health Centre, with funding support from the Niagara Prosperity Initiative.
- 5** In 2016, the province confirmed GO Train service to three station locations: Grimsby (by 2021); St. Catharines (by 2023); and, Niagara Falls (by 2023), with a fourth potential future station location in the Town of Lincoln (Beamsville). In consultation with Metrolinx, Niagara Region has initiated a mobility hub study for one local hub in each of those four areas, to focus on full connectivity with expanded GO rail service.
- 6** Elementary schools in Niagara are putting the national School Travel Planning program into action, by getting whole communities working together so students who live near their school can walk or bike there.

## IN 2012



## MOST FREQUENT ONTARIO CYCLE TOURIST (2015)



**Source:** Niagara Cycling Tourism Report, 2016, Niagara Tourism Partnership

# INDICATORS

## Collision Rates in Niagara Municipalities

### Affordability and Accessibility of Transportation in Niagara

- Cost of Gasoline
- Public Electric Vehicle Charging Stations in Niagara
- Commuting and Distances to Work
- Student Investment In and Use of Public Transit
- Use of Buses and Public Transportation
- Active Transportation in Niagara
- Ride-Sharing and Centrally-Dispatched Access Models

### Transportation Planning in Niagara

### Transportation Routes and Volume

# SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS

- Pay attention to how data is collected, shared, used, and leveraged to inform next steps for Transportation Demand and System Management elements of the 2017 Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan (TMP).
- Ensure implementation of actions identified in the 2017 Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan (TMP). Consider creating a Transportation Demand Management/ System Management position to coordinate ongoing implementation of the TMP.
- Further develop consolidated transit service in the Niagara region, including future transit infrastructure improvements that align with implementation of daily GO train service.
- Continue to address road safety behaviors with a focus on reducing distracted and impaired driving.
- Follow through on the 2017 TMP focus on Transportation Choice by ensuring investments around choice align with what's accessible for people in Niagara.
- Build on work already done to systematically increase access to health and human services for vulnerable people in Niagara, by continuing to invest in advancing the *Ride Share* and *Getting There* models.

Visit [www.livinginniagarareport.com](http://www.livinginniagarareport.com) to view the full report, including links to supporting data and resources.



## Work and Employment

People doing paid and unpaid work contribute to economic growth and Niagara's overall living standard. The capacity of individuals and their families to participate in the economy and community is related to access to quality jobs, workers' ability to make a living wage, and how readily employers are able to find employees with skills that match jobs being offered.



Cost of Living for a family of four in 2017 is  
**\$71,294**



### Living Wage and Cost of Living in Niagara (2016/2017)

In 2016 and 2017, the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network gathered data to calculate Living Wage and Cost of Living levels for Niagara. Both were calculated using nationally-validated methodologies. In 2017 the Living Wage for Niagara region is \$17.57/hour, up slightly from \$17.47 for 2016.

The conservatively-estimated Cost of Living for a family of four with two children in 2017 is \$71,294, a \$5,858.49 (9%) increase over the 2016 amount.

**Source:** Niagara Poverty Reduction Network

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## NATIONAL CONTEXT

The 2016 Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) National Report tracked Indicators from 1994 to 2014, including time spent on work-related activities. Compared to 20 years ago, on average, Canadian workers are spending more time commuting; working fewer hours per week; and are more likely to have flexible work hours.

Two trends are highlighted:

- Over 30% of Canadian workers in the lowest income households do not have regular, daytime Monday to Friday work hours. This affects daily routines, access to services, and time for family, community and adequate sleep.
- Since 2008, more Canadians - especially women - are working part-time due to lack of availability of more secure, full-time employment. Significantly more people (13.1%) are working less than 30 hours a week – not by choice. Prior to 2008, this number had been falling steadily.

## HAPPENING NOW!

- Since 2014, the size of Niagara's labour force has increased by 4.3%, and unemployment rates fell to 7.1% in 2016, well below the recession period peak of 10.4% in 2009.
- Numbers of people in Niagara on Ontario Works (OW) support are showing early signs of stabilizing compared to post-recession levels, with a 2016 year-end OW caseload average of 10,826.
- National methodologies are now being applied to calculate Niagara Living Wage and Cost of Living levels. In 2017 the Living Wage is \$17.56/hour, and the conservatively-estimated Cost of Living for a family of four with two children is \$71,294, according to Niagara Poverty Reduction Network reports.
- There is a focus on building future workforce capacity by engaging secondary and post-secondary students in experiential education opportunities.
- Between 2008 and 2016, over \$4.8 million, or just over 40% of Niagara Prosperity Initiative (NPI) funds, invested by Niagara Region in neighbourhood-based projects, supported child/youth education programs, back-to-school programs, and development of job-specific skills.

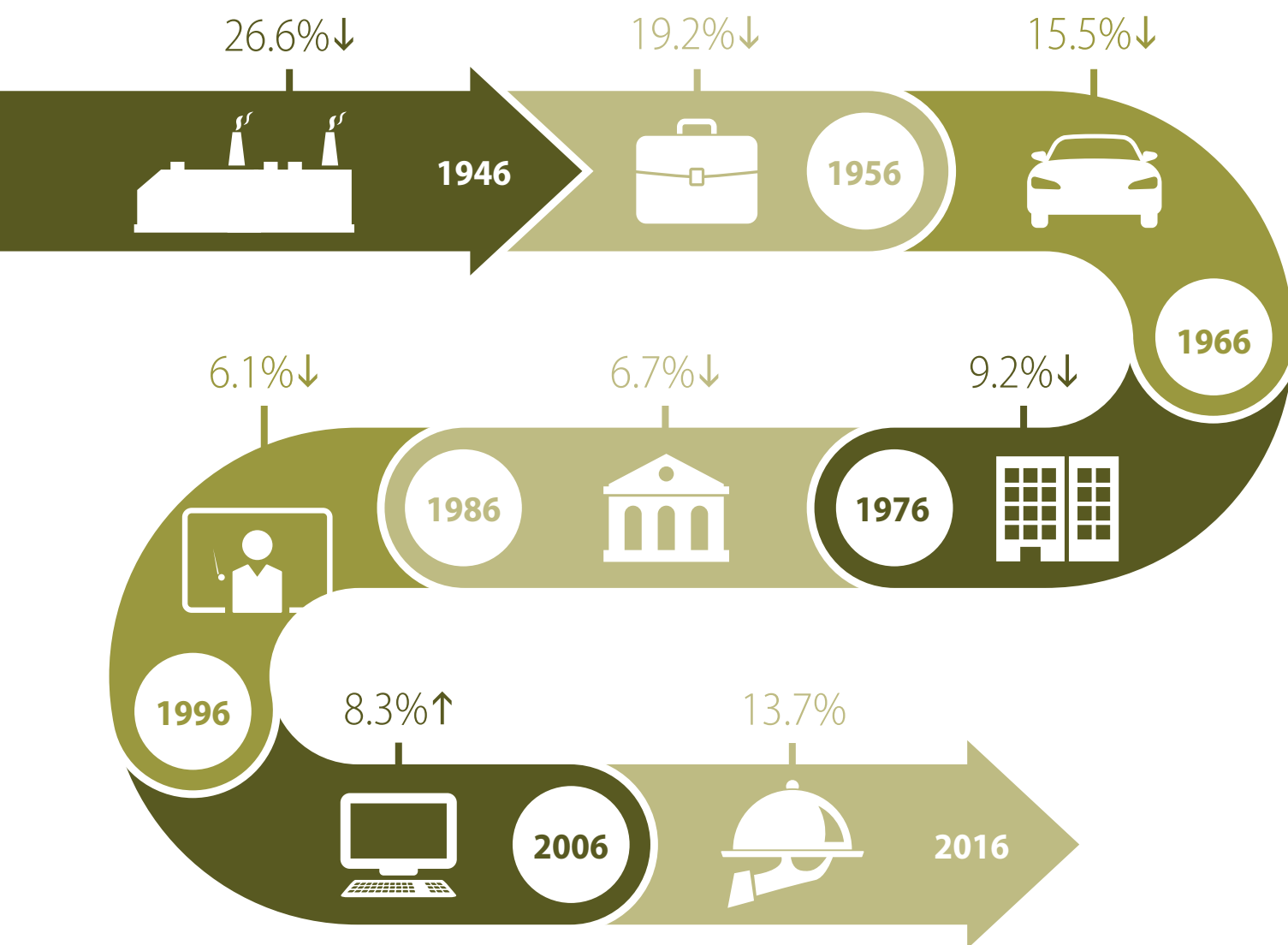


## WHAT'S EMERGING

- 1** Research is underway to describe precarious employment in Niagara, modelled after a study by McMaster University and United Way (UW) Toronto & York Region. UW of Niagara Falls and Greater Fort Erie and the Social Justice Research Institute at Brock University are leading this research, with funding support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.
- 2** Niagara Region Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities, and the 8 Employment Ontario Agencies in Niagara are leveraging opportunities to integrate service planning across the employment system. This improves coordination and better aligns, and, where appropriate integrates service responses for both job seekers and employers.
- 3** The Niagara Job Development Committee includes 20 community-based agencies working together. They promote a common approach to assisting Niagara's employers with hiring, by providing well-prepared job seekers and training supports and services. This committee is increasing employment opportunities, enhancing capacity for service delivery and coordination, and strengthening responsiveness to employers' needs.
- 4** The #Rethink Niagara initiative is engaging people, organizations and businesses in sharing data and planning, to reduce or remove barriers so that people can participate in the economy and build up their own ability to be financially secure. When people experience financial security, they are freed up to be customers, employees, employers or business owners, and to engage in the community.



## Labour Force Participation Rate of People Aged 65 and Older, Canada (1946-2016)



**Source:** Statistics Canada

# INDICATORS

## Employment Services in Niagara

### Jobs in Niagara

- Average Income
- Employment and Unemployment Rate
- Ontario Works (OW) Caseloads in Niagara
- Precarious Employment
- Employment Sectors in Niagara
- Time Spent Working and Commuting to Work
- Youth Employment and Unemployment Rates

### Labour Force in Niagara

- Labour Force Characteristics
- Proportion of Working-Age People in Niagara
- Labour Force Participation of Seniors

### Niagara-wide Coordination and Planning

- Workforce Planning
- Literacy and Basic Skills Programs
- Niagara Prosperity Initiative Investment

### Workplace Injuries and Workplace Psychological Health and Safety

- Workplace Injuries in Niagara
- Psychological Health and Safety and Workplace Productivity

# SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS

- Support collaborative data-sharing and planning to help strengthen quality of jobs and reduce employment precarity in Niagara.
- Advance work being done to build a map of Niagara that describes adult literacy rates in the context of modern-day workplace competencies.
- Encourage students and jobseekers to see entrepreneurship as a viable career path or as a shorter-term option that may lead to full-time employment.
- Build upon work already done to describe the relationship between workplace mental wellness and productivity in the Niagara context.
- Pay attention to changes made through the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy, to ensure community members are informed so that they are able to leverage increased funding for OSAP, child care, the energy support program and health benefits for youth up to age 24.

Visit [www.livinginniagarareport.com](http://www.livinginniagarareport.com) to view the full report, including links to supporting data and resources.

The work of Niagara Connects, the Living in Niagara report and Niagara Knowledge Exchange (NKE) tools is supported by the following Subscribers. They invest annually, to receive customized support for community engagement, knowledge exchange, research and focused opportunities to contribute to shared learning and exchange.

These community partners are leaders in building a Niagara-wide culture of gathering, sharing and learning from data, information and knowledge. This supports evidence-informed planning for a stronger future.

- Age-Friendly Niagara Network
- Brock University
- Canadian Mental Health Association Niagara Branch
- Centre de santé communautaire Hamilton/Niagara
- City of St. Catharines
- Contact Niagara
- Distress Centre Niagara
- District School Board of Niagara
- FACS Niagara
- Niagara Catholic District School Board
- Niagara College
- Niagara Community Foundation
- Niagara Falls Community Health Centre
- Niagara Health System
- Niagara Region
- Niagara Regional Native Centre
- Niagara Suicide Prevention Coalition
- Pathstone Mental Health
- Quest Community Health Centre
- The Niagara FASD Coalition
- United Way of St. Catharines & District



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*This initiative is made possible by the Community Fund for Canada's 150th, a collaboration between Canadian community foundations, the Government of Canada, and extraordinary leaders from coast to coast to coast.*

*Cette initiative est rendue possible grâce au Fonds communautaire pour le 150e anniversaire du Canada, qui est une collaboration entre les fondations communautaires canadiennes, le gouvernement du Canada et des leaders extraordinaires de l'Atlantique au Pacifique à l'Arctique.*



Find the full version of the report,  
including measures and links to supporting  
data and resources at:

**[www.livinginniagarareport.com](http://www.livinginniagarareport.com)**