

BRANT'S  
**VitalSigns**<sup>®</sup>  
2024

A Publication of  
Brant Community Foundation



**Brant Community Foundation**

Building our Community. Investing in the Future.

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Cover photo by Michael Croucher

» The Brant Community Foundation acknowledges the communities we serve are located on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee peoples, and we offer our respect for the longstanding relationships with local Indigenous communities, the Six Nations of the Grand River and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We are all stewards of these lands and waters where we now gather, live, learn, serve and play.

# Welcome to Vital Signs

From Brant Community Foundation

It gives us great pleasure to present the Brant Community Foundation's 2024 Vital Signs Report. This is the second edition of our community checkup featuring recent demographic information. Vital Signs is a program of Community Foundations of Canada led by local community foundations across the country. We are providing this report so that together, we can appreciate the community vitality and issues we face.

We last produced Vital Signs in 2018, and since then we have experienced some challenging times. Presenting the 2024 Vital Signs allows us to examine the current data points within the key indicators that paint a picture of our community's wellbeing. These include the gap between the rich and the poor, the economy, getting around, the environment, belonging and engagement, health, safety and more.

We are fortunate to work with an advisory committee composed of community leaders and data and research experts. Their combined knowledge, advice and leadership has resulted in a substantive and consequential report for the communities we serve.

We are thankful to the community organizations that provided input, financial support and encouragement as we produced this community resource.

We know from our past report that Vital Signs is a research tool highlighting local trends that people can count on. It can start conversations, promote civic engagement, strengthen collaboration and inform philanthropic investment in our community. We hope through this publication, you will gain an appreciation of our communities and their strengths and unique challenges.

At Brant Community Foundation, our vision is a strong and vital community that has the resources to enrich the quality of life locally. Please read on to consider how you can make a difference.

**Paula Thomlison**  
Chair

**Anne Marie Peirce**  
Executive Director



# About Brant's Vital Signs

When the report refers to the Brant Community Foundation's communities, we are referring to Brantford, the County of Brant, Six Nations of the Grand River, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Those communities are included within the Brant Census Division. Sometimes data is only available for the Brantford Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), which includes all the same areas as the Brant Census Division except for the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

# Canadian Vitality Trends

## IMPACT ON BRANT COMMUNITY FOUNDATION COMMUNITIES

Many major events and trends have shaped Canada's, Ontario's and Brant Community Foundation's (BCF's) communities' vitality since our 2018 Vital Signs report, including:

- » Canada's population growth as a result of immigration rather than fertility rates,
- » Declining children and youth well-being,
- » Increasing demands for non-profit supports, but decreasing capacity to provide supports,
- » Climate change,
- » A global pandemic, which contributed to:
  - » Economic instability
  - » Sharp increases in the cost-of-living.

## IMMIGRATION

Canadian fertility rates are less than 2 per woman, which means most communities would be shrinking if not for immigration. Immigrants make up far less of BCF communities than they do for Ontario, but BCF communities' immigrant population is increasing at a rate about 2.5 times faster than for Ontario.



of BCF's population are immigrants in 2021. (30% in Ontario)<sup>1</sup>



immigrant population increase in BCF communities between 2016 to 2021. (+9% in Ontario)<sup>1</sup>

## YOUTH WELL-BEING

Across Canada, youth mental health has been steadily declining for the last decade; particularly, for females aged 12 to 17.



of Ontario youth (12 to 17) rate their mental health as very good or excellent in 2022. (-22% since 2015)<sup>2</sup>



for males. (-16% since 2015)<sup>2</sup>



for females. (-28% since 2015)<sup>2</sup>

Back in 2015, the percentage of youth that rated their mental health as very good was worse in Brantford and the County of Brant than in Ontario.



In 2015-2016, 57% of youth (12 to 19) in Brantford and the County of Brant said their mental health was very good or excellent. (74% in Ontario)<sup>3</sup>

While more recent data is not available for the Brantford area, the trend of declining youth mental health is likely to be impacting the area.

## SOCIAL SUPPORTS

Community Foundations of Canada's 2023 National Vital Signs report notes that "when people engage in communities, they gather, share and work together to find collective solutions. People engage in communities through social connections but also through groups, volunteering, and financially supporting the charitable sector."<sup>4</sup>

Over the last decade, in Canada:



Community group participation decreased by 21 percentage points.<sup>5</sup>



Volunteering decreased by 12 percentage points.<sup>5</sup>



The percentage of people donating steadily declined to an all time low in 2021.<sup>5</sup>

Similar trends exist across Ontario. Since the start of the COVID 19 pandemic, demand for non-profit services sharply increased.<sup>6</sup>



In 2023, 76% of Ontario non-profit respondents reported an increase in demand, compared to 47% in 2020.<sup>7</sup>

## ENVIRONMENT



Globally, greenhouse gases are altering the earth's climate. Across Canada<sup>8</sup> and Ontario,<sup>9</sup> extreme precipitation, temperature, and wind events have become more common. These trends will likely impact infrastructures and population health while our communities adapt to the challenges of the climate and biodiversity crisis.

## ECONOMY

The COVID 19 pandemic resulted in significant economic swings across Canada. As initial government benefits flowed into the economy, both low-income and high-income earners' income and wealth increased, despite high unemployment. However, that was countered with corporations (particularly food and oil), landlords, and homeowners increasing prices.<sup>10</sup> More recently, rises in the cost-of-living have slowed, while workers have experienced wage gains.<sup>11</sup>

Those trends have impacted Brant, but Brant has fared slightly better than Canada and Ontario.

People in the BCF communities make close to Ontario's median income.



median income for the Brant Census Division.<sup>12</sup> ▲ \$41,200 in Canada

On average, housing is more affordable in BCF communities than across Ontario.



of owner and tenant households spending 30% or more of household income on shelter costs in Brant Census Division.<sup>13</sup> ▼ 24.2% in Ontario

Despite recent wage increases, "at current interest rate levels, house prices across the country would need to decline by 40 percent to restore affordability to its historical average. Alternatively, the average family income would need to rise by 66 percent, or house prices would need to stagnate for more than 10 years if incomes grew 4 per cent a year."<sup>14</sup>



# Children, Youth and Young Adults

Photo: Pragyan Bezbaruah

Positively, a slightly lower percentage of children (0 to 12) and youth (13 to 18) in BCF communities are living with low income compared to Ontario. The National Childcare Plan has also lowered costs of childcare. Despite those positives, the vitality of children, youth, and young adults (19 to 24) in Brantford and the County of Brant is lower than for Ontario. Greater efforts are needed to support children, youth, and young adults with their early development, physical and mental health, school achievement and graduation, employment and their ability to buy a home. The future vitality of our communities is at risk if progress is not made in these areas.

## WORKS IN PROGRESS

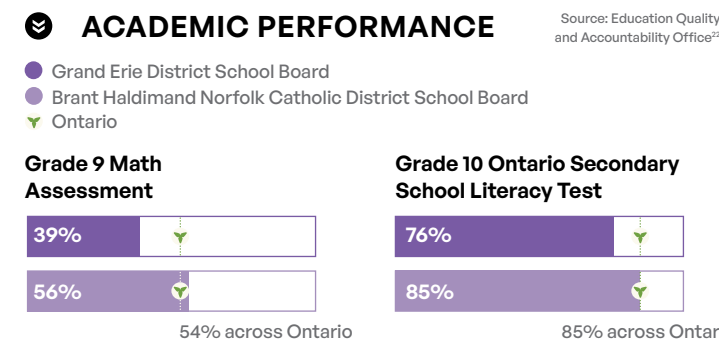
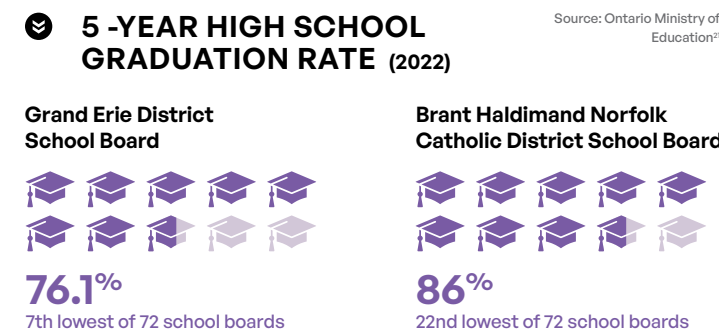
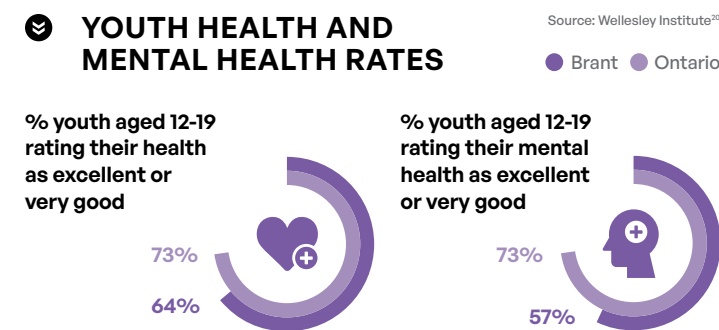
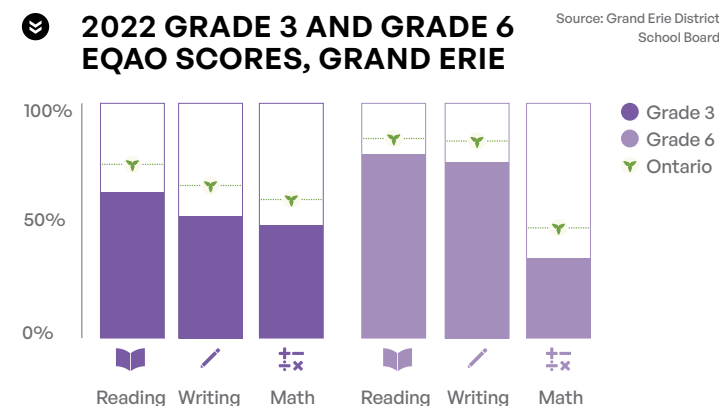
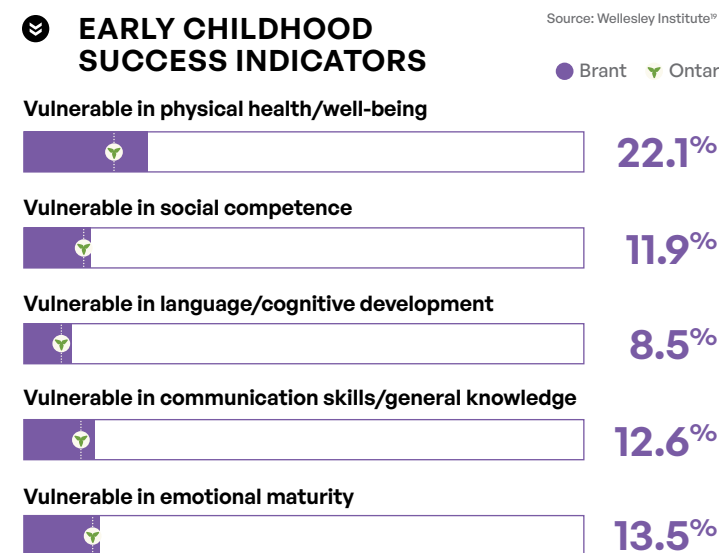
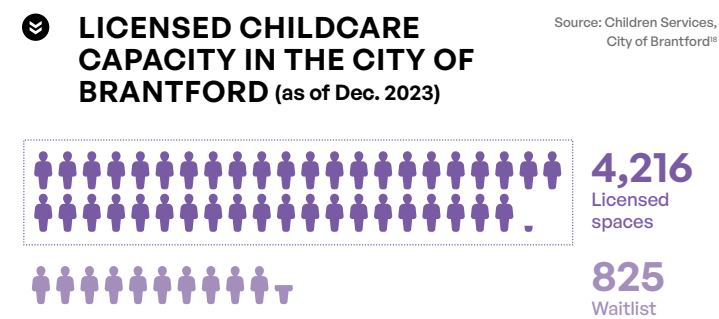
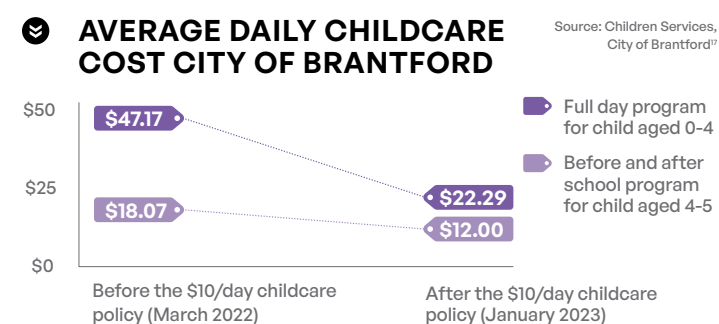
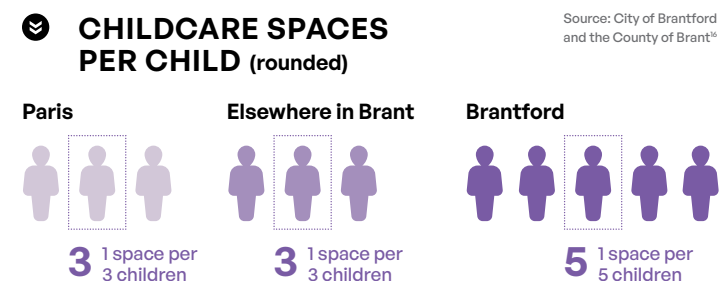
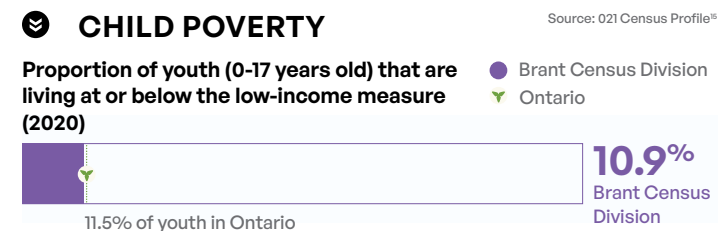
There are many incredible, locally-based organizations in our community working to support the well-being of our youth: some examples include Kids Can Fly; Why Not City Missions; Organized Kaos Life and Trade; Big Brothers Big Sisters of Grand Erie, Halton and Hamilton; Lansdowne Children's Centre; Boys & Girls Club of Brantford; Child and Family Services of Grand Erie; Crossing All Bridges Learning Centre (youth & young adults); YMCA of Hamilton, Burlington, and Brant.

## THINGS TO CELEBRATE

- » Percentage of children and youth living with low income in the BCF communities is lower than in Ontario.
- » Childcare costs are decreasing.

## THINGS TO IMPROVE

- Compared to Ontario, youth in the BCF communities are faring worse in the areas of:
- » Infant and child development.
  - » Number of childcare openings.
  - » School achievement and high school graduation rates.
  - » Youth physical and mental health.
  - » Youth unemployment.



# Immigration

Photo: Migs Reyes

● Growth in a community enhances community vitality by supporting economic growth, bringing economies of scale, and enriching culture and diversity. Growth can also bring challenges, such as increased demand on supports and services.

The County of Brant and Brantford's populations generally increased during the 2000s. However, between 2011 and 2016 the County of Brant shrank by 0.9%.<sup>24</sup> More recently, between 2016 and 2021, the County of Brant's population increased by 7.4%, over 2 percentage points more than the Canadian rate of population growth.<sup>25</sup> In particular, Paris has experienced a population boom, increasing its population by 20.7% from 2016 to 2021.<sup>26</sup>

Like most other places in Canada, the percentage of the Brant Census Division that are immigrants from other countries (14.3%) is increasing (up from 12.4% in 2016).<sup>27</sup>

## WORKS IN PROGRESS

- » The Brantford Immigration Partnership is working on their action plan to support newcomers to the area.<sup>28</sup>
- » There are over 30 local organizations supporting the region's Inclusive Community Plan.<sup>29</sup>

## THINGS TO CELEBRATE

- » Population and ethnic diversity are increasing across the region.
- » After a four-year gap, the City of Brantford again has a Local Immigration Partnership, with the establishment of the Brantford Immigration Partnership in 2020.<sup>30</sup>
- » The Brantford CMA is the 30th largest Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) in Canada, and the 13th largest in Ontario.

## THINGS TO IMPROVE

- » As the immigrant population increases, more supports will be needed to ensure they can succeed, belong, and that the region can benefit from what they offer.

### POPULATION CHANGE IN THE COUNTY OF BRANT AND CITY OF BRANTFORD

Source: 2021 Census Profiles<sup>31</sup>

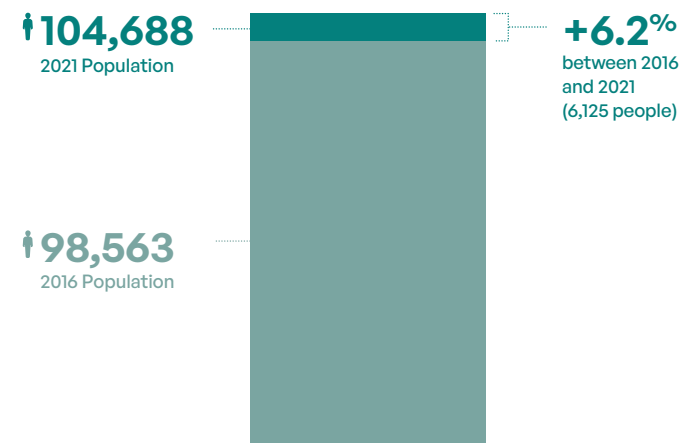


**144,162**

Population of the Brantford CMA in 2021 was 144,162, making it the 30th largest CMA in Canada.

### POPULATION GROWTH IN THE CITY OF BRANTFORD

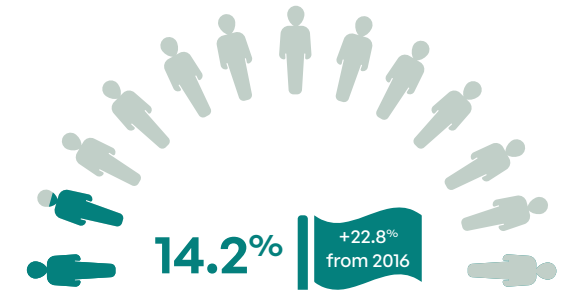
Source: 2021 Census Profiles<sup>32</sup>



### IMMIGRANT POPULATION: BRANT CENSUS DIVISION

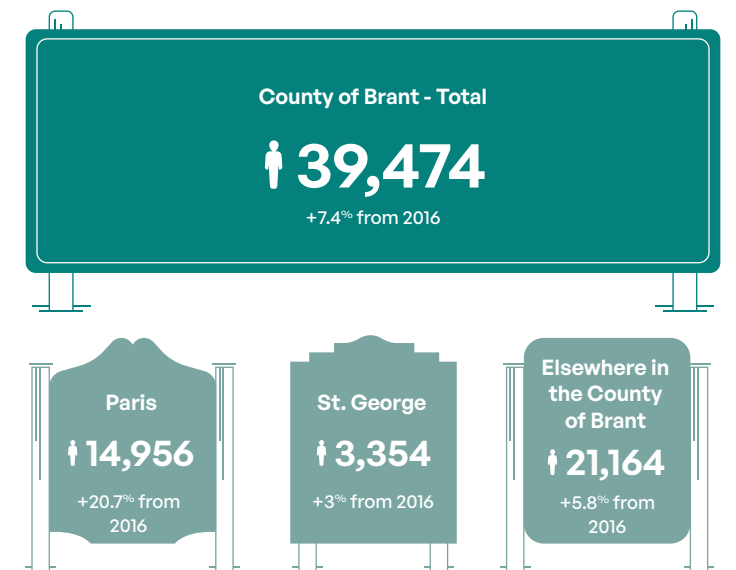
Source: 2021 Census Profiles<sup>34</sup>

Percentage (%) of population that are immigrants (2021)



### 2021 POPULATION GROWTH BRANT CENSUS DIVISION

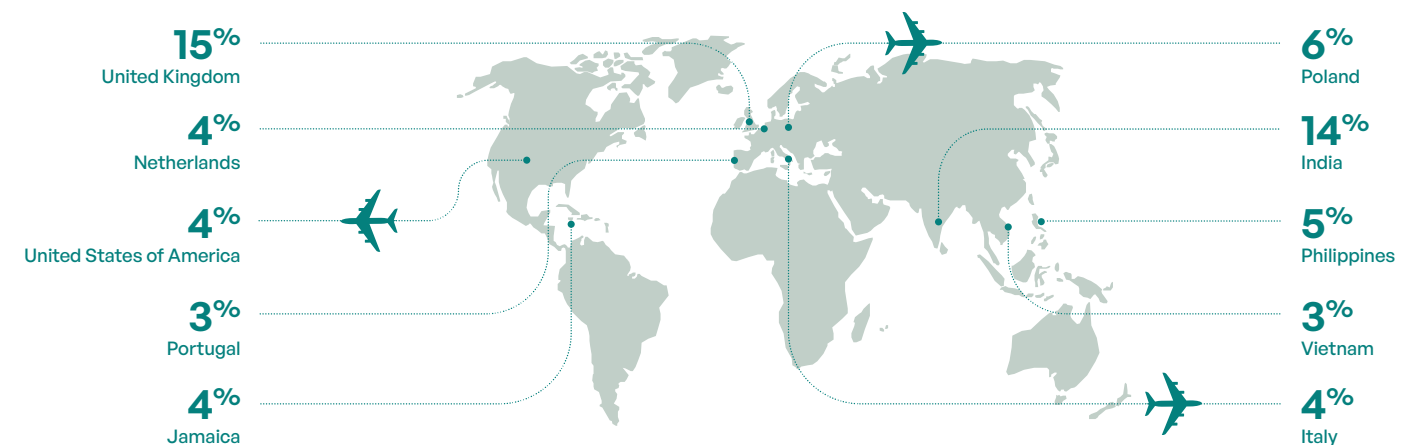
Source: 2021 Census Profiles<sup>33</sup>



### IMMIGRANTS' TOP TEN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN IN THE BRANT CENSUS DIVISION

Source: 2021 Census Profiles<sup>32</sup>

Percentage (%) of immigrant population (2021)





# Gap Between the Rich and the Poor

Photo: Kindel Media

The gap between the rich and poor is slightly less in the Brant Census Division than in other parts of Canada. There was high unemployment during the COVID 19 pandemic, but the area's unemployment was typically under 5% in 2023. Also, housing costs are lower in the Brantford Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) than in many other places in Ontario.

While our area compares well to other areas, we have not escaped the recent sharp increases in the cost of living. Between 2005 and the end of 2023, home prices in the Brantford CMA (includes Brantford, the County of Brant and Six Nations of the Grand River) have increased by about 4 times, while household incomes only increased by 1.8 times. Investment in social housing has not kept up with demand, and local food banks are reporting record numbers of users.<sup>36</sup>

Homelessness has increased in many parts of Ontario since the start of the COVID 19 pandemic. While the pandemic made it difficult to obtain accurate numbers of how many people in the Brantford area are homeless, the rise in the cost of living suggests an increased need to address this issue.

## WORKS IN PROGRESS

- » The City of Brantford is working with nonprofits and other levels of government to overcome the challenges to meet our communities' housing needs. More details can be found in the Brantford-Brant Municipal Housing Master Plan.<sup>37</sup>
- » Our area has 8 food banks and cupboards, and additional organizations offer free meal programs.<sup>38</sup> These services provide critical support to families, individuals and older adults.
- » There are 14 community gardens in the City of Brantford<sup>39</sup> and 3 in the County of Brant.<sup>40</sup>

## THINGS TO CELEBRATE

- » Low unemployment.
- » On average, housing is more affordable than in Ontario.

## THINGS TO IMPROVE

- » More investment in affordable housing is needed along the housing continuum, along with stronger affordable housing policies.
- » More supports are needed for food security.

## INCOMES IN BRANT CENSUS DIVISION

Source: 2021 Census Profile Brantford CMA\*  
 \* Canada \* Ontario

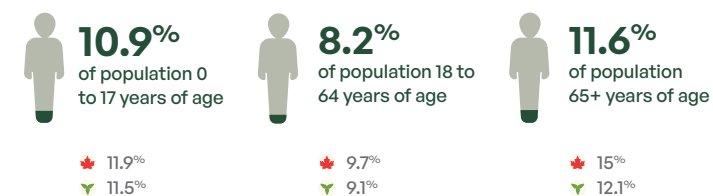
Population aged 15 years and over in private households (2021)



## LOW-INCOME IN BRANT CENSUS DIVISION

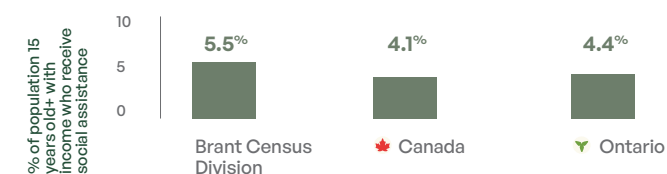
Source: 2021 Census Profile\*  
 \* Canada \* Ontario

Percentage (%) of population in Brant Census Division (2021) that are living with low income



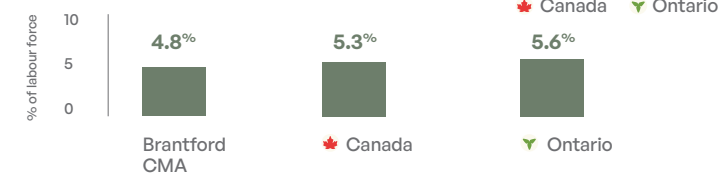
## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS

Source: 2021 Census Profile\*  
 \* Canada \* Ontario



## 2023 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE\*

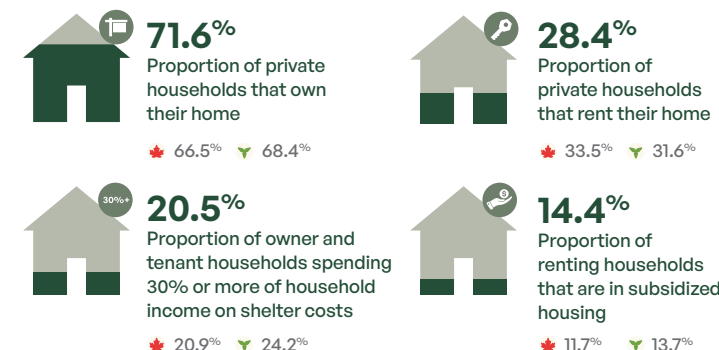
Source: Statistics Canada, Table: 14-10-0380-01\*\*



\*Average of monthly, seasonally adjusted, three-month average.

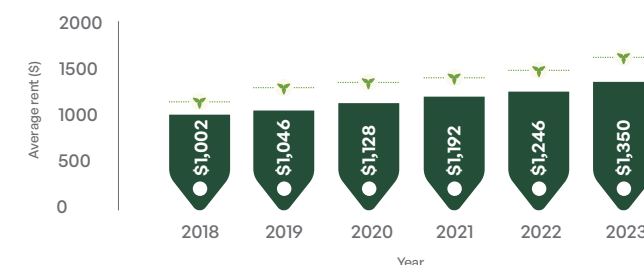
## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Source: 2021 Census Profile\*  
 \* Canada \* Ontario



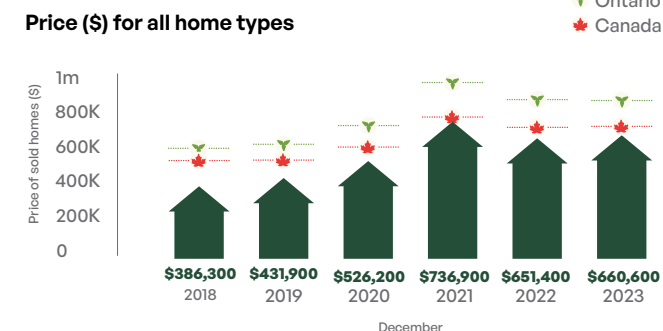
## AVERAGE RENT IN BRANTFORD CMA FOR ALL UNIT TYPES

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation\*\*  
 \* Brantford CMA \* Ontario



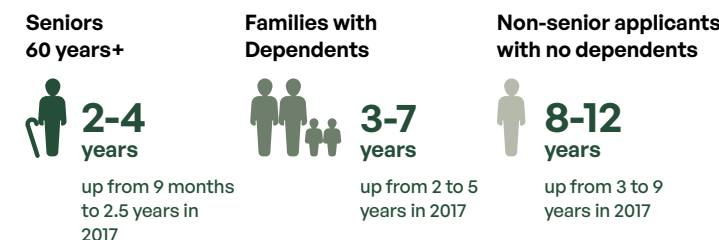
## PRICE OF TYPICAL HOMES SOLD IN BRANTFORD CMA

Source: MLS® HPI Tool\*\*  
 \* Brantford CMA \* Ontario \* Canada



## 2022 SOCIAL HOUSING WAIT TIMES - CITY OF BRANTFORD

Source: Brantford Access to Housing Application Information Guide\*\* & City of Brantford Report No. 2023-20\*\*



## BRANTFORD FOOD BANK USAGE (2023-2024)

Source: Community Resource Services\*\*



## BRANTFORD FOOD INSECURITY

Source: Brant County Health Unit\*\*





# Economy



Photo: Walter Otto

Overall, BCF's service area continues to have a strong and diversified economy, with growth in both blue- and white-collar jobs. The area's economy has bounced back well from the COVID 19 pandemic, with increases in the number of businesses and an unemployment rate very close to what it was before the pandemic. We can further increase high-skill and well-paying jobs in our communities by increasing the percentage of residents who graduate from high school and obtain post-secondary education.

## WORKS IN PROGRESS

- » Enterprise Brant provides business loans, business counselling, and economic development activities to support the local economy.
- » Businesses are investing in opening new locations in the area, such as an upcoming new Costco warehouse.<sup>52</sup>

## THINGS TO CELEBRATE

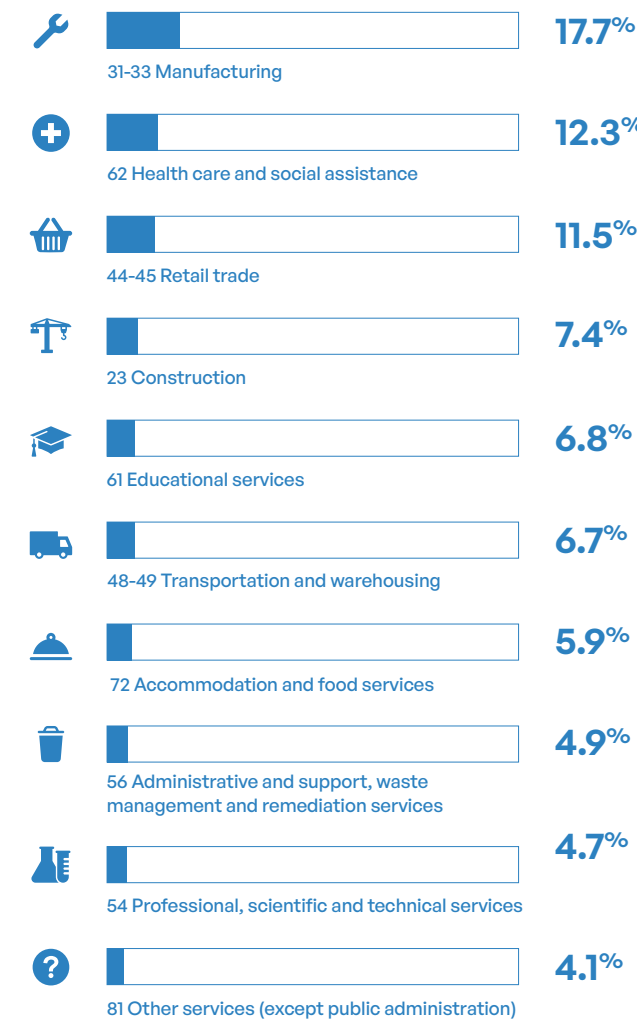
- » Growth in both blue- and white-collar jobs.
- » Lower unemployment than in both Canada and Ontario.
- » Continued growth in businesses, including 94 new small businesses and a dozen new or expanded industrial businesses in 2022.<sup>53</sup>

## THINGS TO IMPROVE

- » Increasing the percentage of people in the labour force with university and/or skilled trades credentials.
- » Investments in Six Nations businesses would be beneficial.

## TOP INDUSTRIES BY PERCENTAGE (%) OF LABOUR FORCE

Source: 2021 Census Profile - 25% sample data<sup>54</sup>

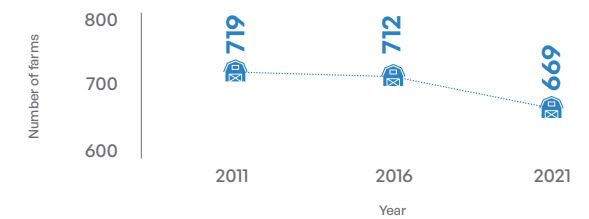


The percentage of the area's labour force in manufacturing jobs grew from 17.1% in 2016 to 17.7% in 2021. That percentage is about twice the percentage of manufacturing jobs in Canada (8%) or in Ontario (8.9%).

The Brantford area's labour force has a smaller percentage of people employed in professional, scientific, and technical service jobs (4.7%) and in finance and insurance jobs (2.6%) compared to Ontario (9.2% & 5.4% respectively). However, those industries are also growing in the Brantford area, with the percentage of people employed in professional, scientific, and technical service jobs up from 4.3% in 2016, and in finance and insurance jobs up from 2.4% in 2016.

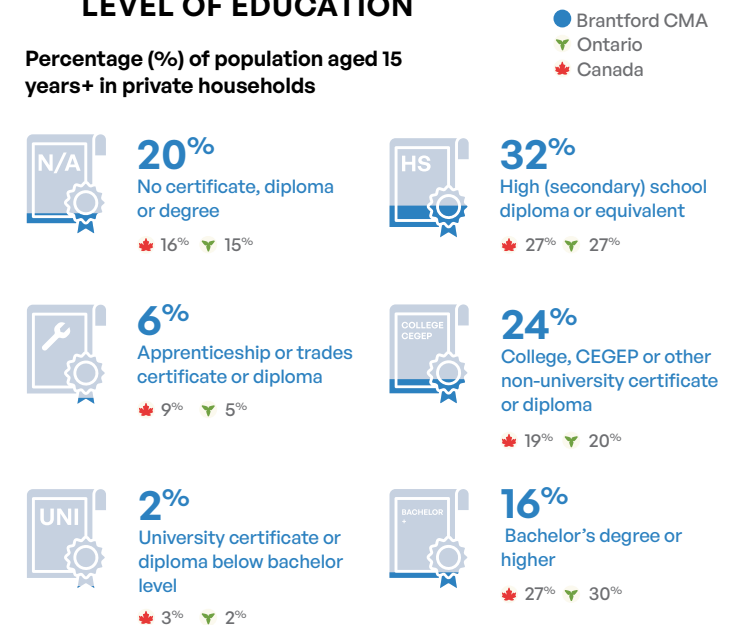
## NUMBER OF FARMS IN THE BRANT CENSUS DIVISION

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0232-01<sup>55</sup>



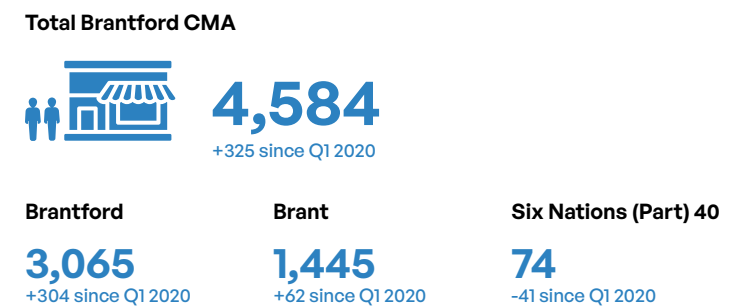
## RESIDENTS' HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Source: 2021 Census Profile - 25% sample data<sup>56</sup>



## NUMBER OF BUSINESSES WITH EMPLOYEES IN THE BRANTFORD AREA (Q1 2023)

Source: Statistics Canada. Tables 33-10-0269-01 & 33-10-0719-01<sup>57</sup>



## 2023 BRANT UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0380-01<sup>58</sup>





# Getting Around

Photo: Luca Ercolani

The Brantford area has been more car focused than other parts of Ontario. Compared to Ontario, a smaller percentage of people in the Brantford CMA (includes Brantford, the County of Brant and Six Nations of the Grand River) work from home, a larger percentage take a car to work, and fewer take transit. While the increased car use comes with concerns, such as equitable transit and environmental impacts, it does relate to Brantford area workers having shorter commutes.

More recently, there is a greater focus on transit within the Brantford area. Brantford's Mayor noted that transit has become "a critically necessary" service since the COVID 19 pandemic.<sup>59</sup> In September 2023, Brantford Transit introduced 20-minute service, which resulted in large increases in ridership.<sup>60</sup> Also, the County of Brant introduced Brant Transit in 2019: "a fleet of vans that assist residents with transportation anywhere in the County of Brant, as well as transportation to and from the County of Brant and the City of Brantford."<sup>61</sup>

## WORKS IN PROGRESS

- » Late in 2023, Brantford started the Moving Forward initiative, which includes plans to improve transit for the growing community and the northwest industrial area.<sup>62</sup>
- » Brantford is lobbying Metrolinx to bring a GO station to the city.<sup>63</sup>

## THINGS TO CELEBRATE

- » Via Rail service has returned to Brantford, after temporarily being cut during the COVID 19 pandemic.<sup>64</sup>
- » Brantford Transit has reduced times between some buses to 20 minutes.
- » Brant Transit will continue to be offered moving forward.

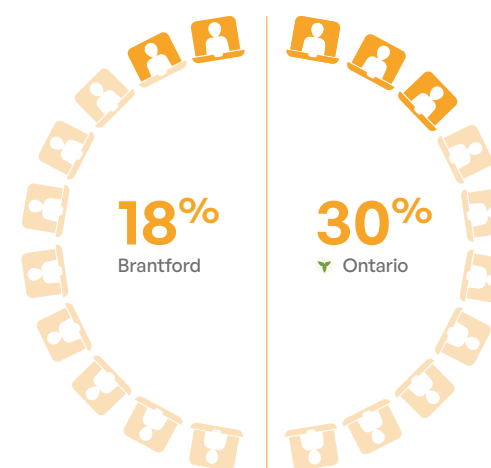
## THINGS TO IMPROVE

- » Increasing the percentage of people using active transit like walking or biking can support people's health.
- » Reducing the use of gas-powered vehicles can improve our air quality.
- » Continue to enhance transit services as guided by the Moving Forward initiative.

## WORKING FROM HOME

Source: 2021 Census Profile - 25% sample data<sup>65</sup>

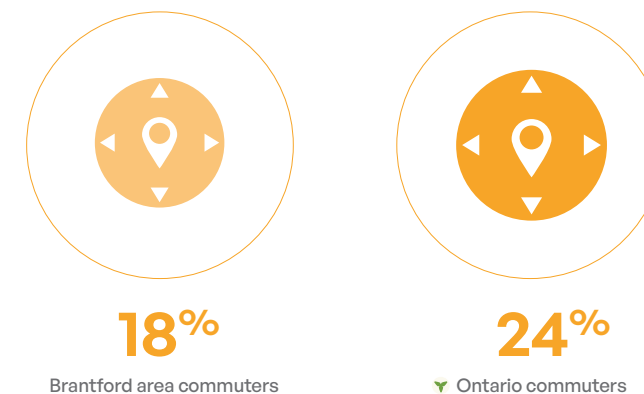
Percentage (%) of employed labour force aged 15 and over working from home (2021)



## COMMUTING FOR WORK

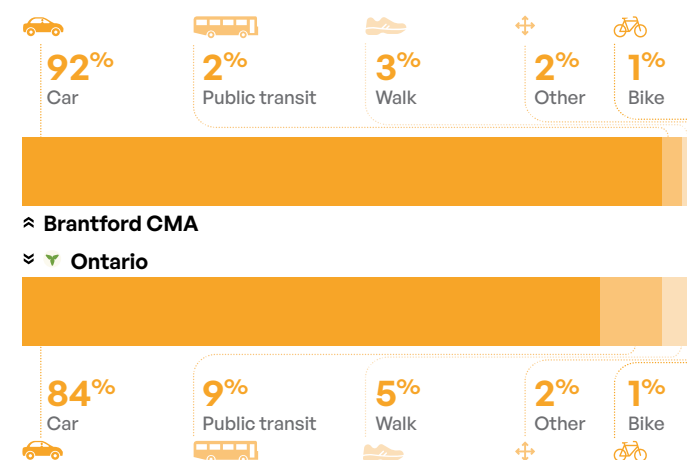
Source: 2021 Census Profile - 25% sample data<sup>67</sup>

Percentage (%) of commuters that travel outside of their census division for work



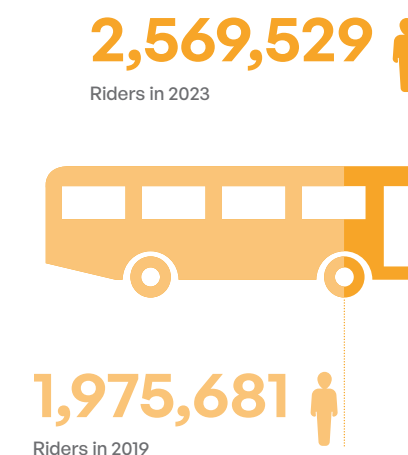
## HOW RESIDENTS COMMUTE TO WORK

Source: 2021 Census Profile - 25% sample data<sup>68</sup>



## BRANTFORD TRANSIT RIDERS

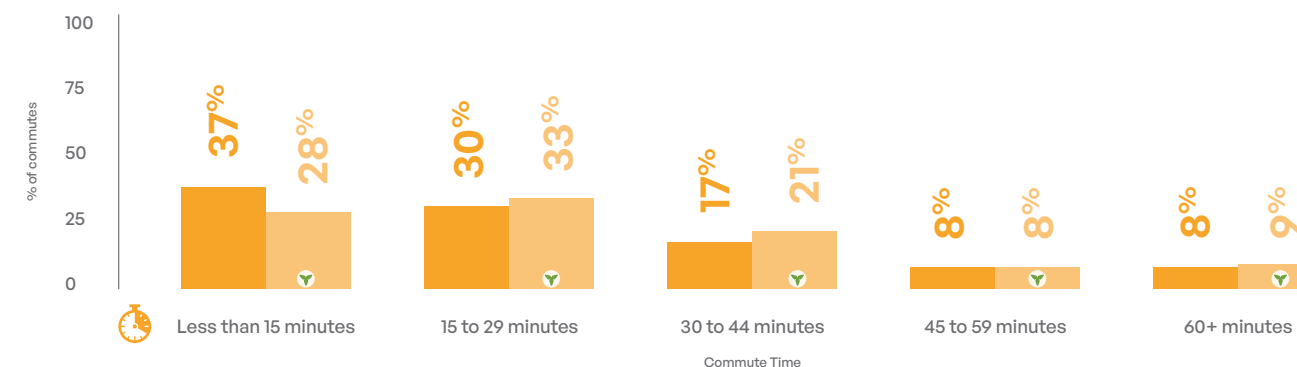
Source: The Brantford Expositor<sup>69</sup>



## HOW LONG IT TAKES BRANTFORD COMMUTERS TO GET TO WORK

Source: 2021 Census Profile - 25% sample data<sup>70</sup>

Commuting duration for the employed labour force aged 15 years and over with a usual place of work or no fixed workplace address, Brantford CMA





# Environment

Photo: Grant Durr

As noted in our Canadian Vitality Trends chapter, climate change is putting our environment at risk. Brant County Health Unit indicates that the region has been experiencing increasing temperatures, rainfall, and flooding.<sup>70</sup> The City of Brantford's air quality has also gotten worse since our last Vital Signs report. The Brant County Health Unit notes that "the City of Brantford is identified as one of the top ten metropolitan areas or 'hot spots' in Canada to be exposed to and impacted by extreme heat in the next 50 years."<sup>71</sup> Also, water quality in the central and southern watershed of the Grand River is only marginal.<sup>72</sup>

The Brantford area contains many environmental highlights. The County of Brant is a rural area with plenty of green space. Both Brant and Brantford share the Grand River, which is a Canadian Heritage River. The City of Brantford has also been growing its kilometres of natural trails. Efforts are needed to protect these environmental highlights in the face of the climate crisis.

## WORKS IN PROGRESS

- » Brantford City Council adopted a Community Climate Change Action Plan.<sup>73</sup>
- » Similarly, the County of Brant has initiated a Climate Action Plan.
- » The County of Brant has become a Bee City Canada community, which includes ongoing education and efforts to maintain and improve pollinator habitats.<sup>74</sup>
- » The Brant Tree Coalition organizes yearly tree planting events in the County of Brant and the City of Brantford.<sup>75</sup>
- » The City of Brantford is working to clean up and rehabilitate Mohawk Lake and Canal.<sup>76</sup>

## THINGS TO CELEBRATE

- » In 2022, the County of Brant operated 51 kilometres of natural trails and Brantford operated 98 kilometres, up from the 40 kilometres we reported in our last Vital Signs report.
- » The City of Brantford now has over 75 electric vehicle charging stations.<sup>77</sup>
- » The Brant Land Trust has become the caretaker for its first two properties – one in Brantford and one in Brant.<sup>78</sup>
- » Our 2018 Vital Signs report noted the need to start a green bin program, and the City of Brantford started one in 2023.<sup>79</sup>

## THINGS TO IMPROVE

- » Increase the tree canopy to achieve the City of Brantford's target of 40% coverage by 2051.
- » Replace fuel burning vehicles and heating systems that are near their end-of-life with technologies that do not use fossil fuel, such as heat pumps and electric vehicles.
- » Update new building standards to lower carbon emissions, conserve resources, reduce operating costs, and provide resilience for weather events like flooding, extreme heat, and high winds.
- » Continue to plan and manage natural areas for biodiversity and pollinators at home, in the City, and in the County.

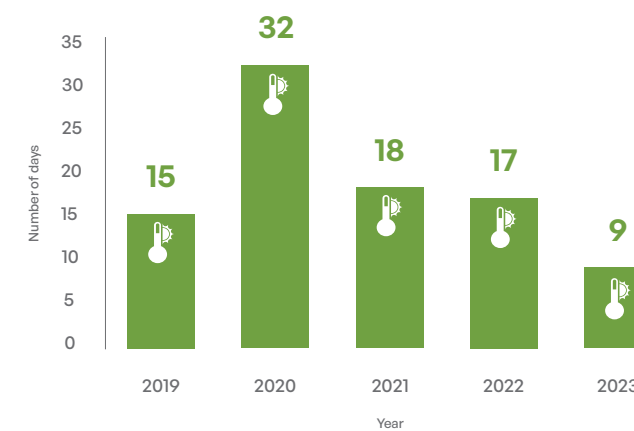
## NATURAL TRAILS

Source: Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing<sup>80</sup> & County of Brant<sup>81</sup>



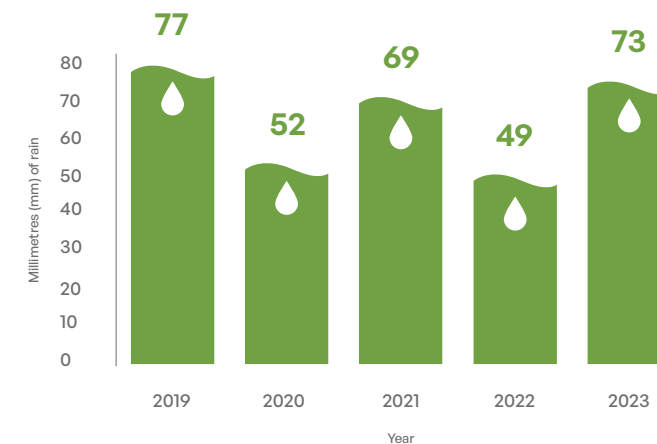
## DAYS ABOVE 30°C IN BRANTFORD

Source: Canadian Centre for Climate Services<sup>82</sup>



## AVERAGE MONTHLY RAIN IN BRANTFORD (MM)

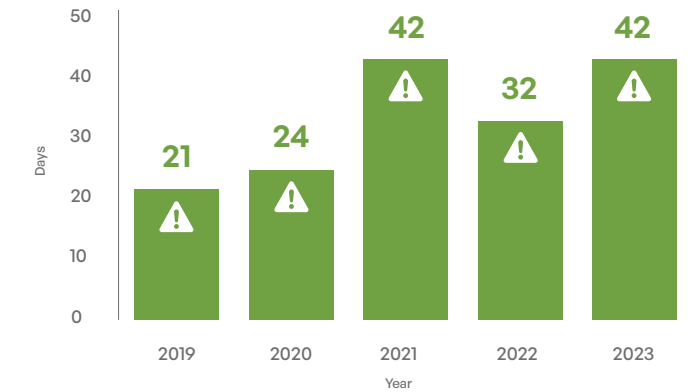
Source: Canadian Centre for Climate Services<sup>83</sup>



## AIR QUALITY INDEX

Source: Air Quality Ontario<sup>84</sup>

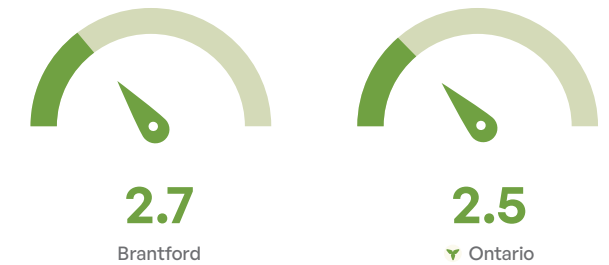
Number of moderate or high-risk days



## AVERAGE AIR QUALITY HEALTH INDEX

Source: Air Quality Ontario<sup>85</sup>

The Air Quality Health Index or AQHI is a scale designed to help you understand what the air quality around you means to your health.



## CITY OF BRANTFORD'S TREE CANOPY COVERAGE

Source: City of Brantford<sup>86</sup>



# Belonging and Engagement

Photo: Anna Pou

● Brantford CMA residents' life satisfaction and sense of belonging to their local community are about average for Canadians. However, there are some challenges with community engagement. As noted in our chapter on Canadian Vitality Trends, data for Ontario suggests that volunteering and donating are down since the COVID 19 pandemic. Data available for the Brantford CMA (includes Brantford, the County of Brant and Six Nations of the Grand River) confirms that fewer residents were donating prior to and during the COVID 19 pandemic. Thankfully, the average amount donated by Brantford area donors increased in 2021 and 2022 so that the total amount donated was higher in those years.

## WORKS IN PROGRESS

- » The City of Brantford has created Let's Talk Brantford (<https://letstalkbrantford.ca>) to engage citizens and get their feedback and ideas on how to make Brantford a better place to live, work, and play.
- » Belonging Brant "is dedicated to creating connections and building relationships across Brantford, Brant County and Six Nations to help people contribute to their community in a meaningful way."
- » The County of Brant's Arts, Culture, and Heritage Strategy is designed to increase people's feelings of connection and pride in the local arts, culture, and heritage.

## THINGS TO CELEBRATE

From 2018 to 2021, the following increased in the Brantford and County of Brant area:

- » Increased sense of belonging to local community.
- » Increased life satisfaction.
- » The new TF Warren Group Cainsville Community Centre opened in 2023 to provide the County of Brant with an additional place to host community events, gather, and play together.

## THINGS TO IMPROVE

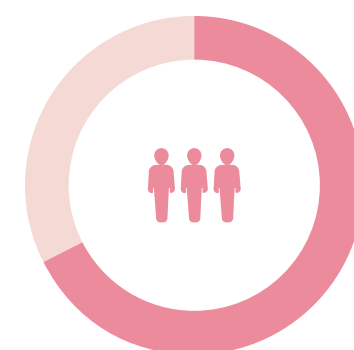
- » More volunteering and donating are needed to support our communities' nonprofit sector and their contributions to the vitality of our communities.

## SENSE OF BELONGING

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 13-10-0805-01<sup>19</sup>

Brantford CMA (2021)

● Brantford CMA  
▼ Ontario  
★ Canada



67.7%

of residents rating sense of belonging to local community as somewhat strong or very strong (+3.1% since 2018)

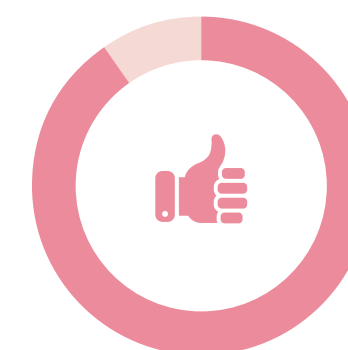
★ 67.2% ▼ 69.1%

## LIFE SATISFACTION

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 13-10-0805-01<sup>19</sup>

Brantford CMA (2021)

● Brantford CMA  
▼ Ontario  
★ Canada



90.4%

% of residents rating life satisfaction as satisfied or very satisfied (+6.1% since 2018)

★ 90.2% ▼ 90.3%

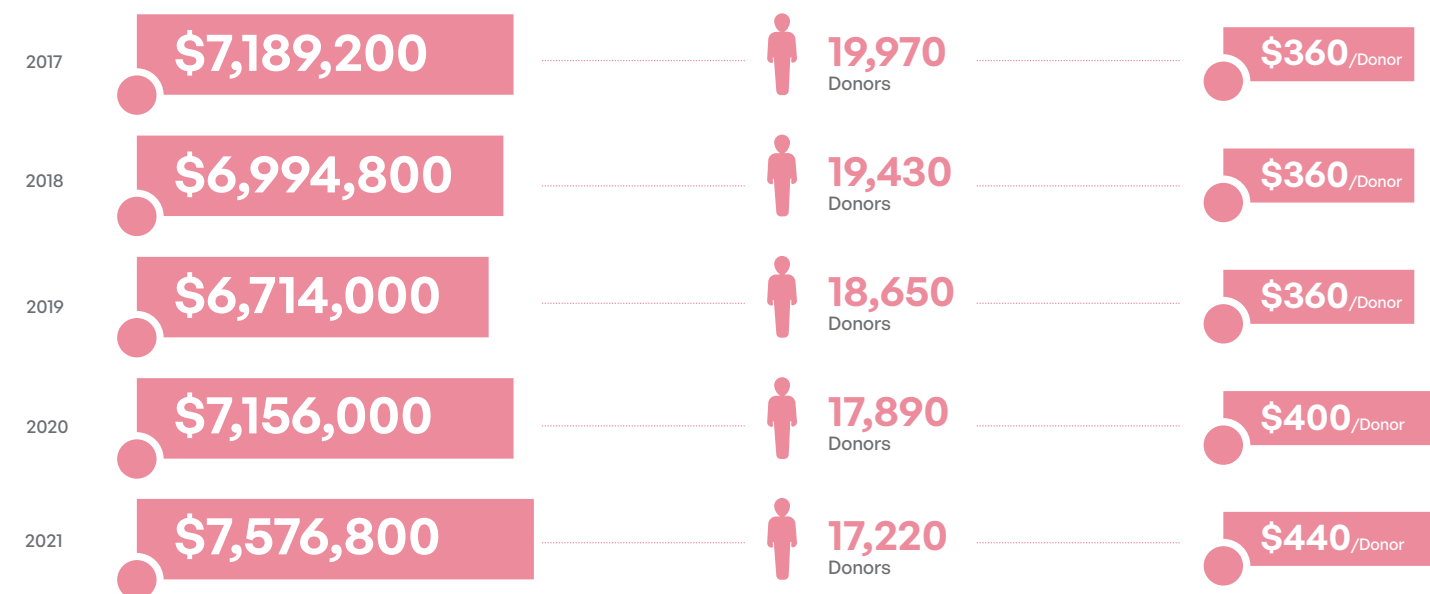
## DONATIONS IN BRANTFORD CMA

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 11-10-0130-01<sup>22</sup>

Total amount donated

Number of Brantford CMA Donors

Average donation





# Arts and Culture

Photo: Nicolas Gamboa

Our communities have many cultural highlights, including: Brantford's Sanderson Centre for Performing Arts, Harmony Square, Bell Homestead (where Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone), Woodland Cultural Centre (which is a nexus for Indigenous art, language, culture and heritage), The Grand River Champion of Champions Pow Wow, Brant Studio Tour, Brantford International Jazz Festival, Brantford International Villages Festival, Brantford Kinsmen Ribfest, Brant Eats, Paris Fair, and the Glenhyrst Art Gallery. The arts and culture sector in the County of Brant and the City of Brantford is bouncing back from the COVID 19 pandemic, but there is still room for improvement.

## WORKS IN PROGRESS

- » There are thousands of free or affordable community events every year.
- » Wilfrid Laurier is redeveloping Market Square in Brantford, and plans to create the Downtown Brantford Cultural Hub that will act as a cultural resource for the broader community.<sup>93</sup>
- » Both the Brantford Public Library<sup>94</sup> and the County of Brant Public Library<sup>95</sup> are working on building new libraries.

## THINGS TO CELEBRATE

- » Many popular films and television shows have been filmed in the region.
- » The number of Harmony Square events has grown beyond pre-COVID 19 pandemic levels.
- » In 2023, the Glenhyrst Art Gallery launched the first annual Grand River Arts Festival, which includes visual arts, music, and theatre.
- » Robbie Robertson, whose mother was from Six Nations of the Grand River, earned a posthumous Oscar nomination for his score of 'Killers of the Flower Moon,' making him the first Indigenous person to be nominated in that category.

## THINGS TO IMPROVE

- » While the City of Brantford's per capita spending for culture (\$62.57) has increased by 7% since 2016, it still lags behind the last reported provincial average of \$97 in 2009.<sup>96</sup>
- » Library use is lower than in 2017.

## COUNTY OF BRANT AND CITY OF BRANTFORD LIBRARY USE 2022

Source: Brantford Community Foundation; County of Brant; & City of Brantford<sup>97</sup>



## FILM IN THE REGION 2022

Source: Advantage Brantford<sup>98</sup>



- 1 Christmas Reboot
- 2 Maybe This Time
- 3 Undercover Holiday
- 4 Murdoch Mysteries
- 5 All-Round Champion
- 6 Chucky
- 7 Mayday
- 8 Handmaid's Tale (permit 1)
- 9 Handmaid's Tale (permit 2)
- 10 Ghost Hunters of the Grand River

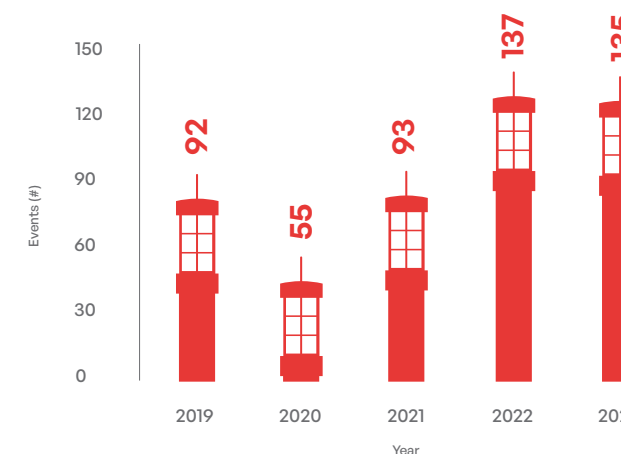
## BRANTFORD PER CAPITA SPENDING ON CULTURE

Source: City of Brantford<sup>99</sup>



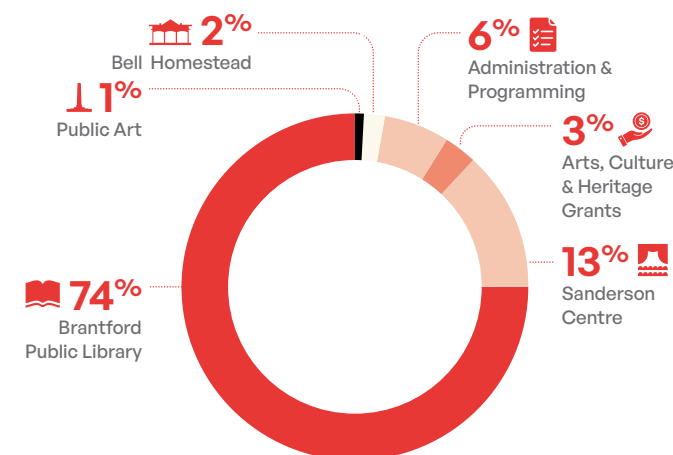
## HARMONY SQUARE EVENTS

Source: City of Brantford<sup>100</sup>



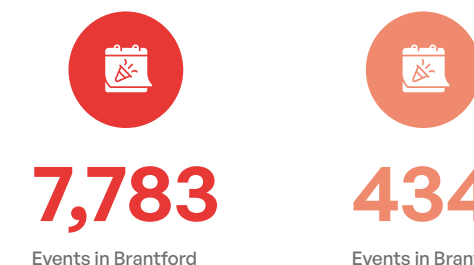
## 2021 MUNICIPAL DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDING FOR CULTURE

Source: City of Brantford<sup>101</sup>



## 2023 COMMUNITY EVENT LISTINGS

Source: City of Brantford<sup>102</sup> and County of Brant<sup>103</sup>



# Health

Photo: Gabin Vallet

Our 2018 report noted that due to serious issues related to population health and health care system performance, Brant Community Healthcare System's operations were to be reviewed. That review was completed in 2017, and while many of the identified issues are being addressed,<sup>104</sup> continued progress is still needed. Positively, the percentage of people in the Brantford area that have regular access to primary care (91%) has improved and is better than the Canadian rate of 85.6%.

On average, BCF's communities have poorer health than other Canadians, including in the areas of weight, arthritis, smoking, and high blood pressure. Communities across Ontario have been experiencing an opioid crisis, with a record number of opioid-related deaths occurring in 2020. The rate of opioid related ER visits and deaths in the Brant Public Health Unit's region have been close to double the rates for Ontario.

## WORKS IN PROGRESS

- » Brant Community Healthcare System's emergency room is being renovated.<sup>105</sup>
- » 11 health and community agencies are collaborating on the Brantford-Brant Community Drugs Strategy Action Plan.<sup>106</sup>

## THINGS TO CELEBRATE

- » Access to primary care continues to improve.
- » The Brantford area's physical activity levels are on par with Ontario and Canada.
- » The new Cowan Community Health Hub opened in Paris in 2021. It features a Family Health Team, along with a number of health care and social services under one roof providing care for the community.

## THINGS TO IMPROVE

- » Improve health outcomes for our communities.
- » Continued need to reduce emergency room wait times.
- » Need to reduce death due to opioids.

## ACCESS TO PRIMARY CARE

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 13-10-0805-01<sup>107</sup>

Percentage (%) of Brantford CMA (12 and over) that has regular healthcare provider



## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 13-10-0805-01<sup>107</sup>

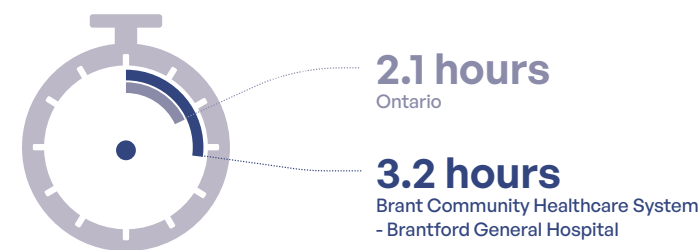
Percentage (%) of those 18 and older at or above recommended levels in Brantford CMA (2017/2018)



## ER WAIT TIMES

Source: Health Quality Ontario<sup>108</sup>

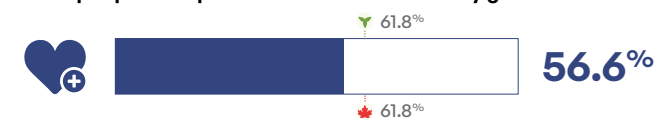
Wait time to first assessment by a doctor in the ER



## HEALTH OF BRANTFORD CMA COMPARED TO ONTARIO AND CANADA (2019/2020)

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 13-10-0805-01<sup>109</sup>

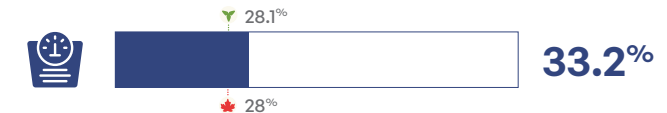
% of people who perceive their health as very good or excellent



% of people who perceive their mental health as very good or excellent



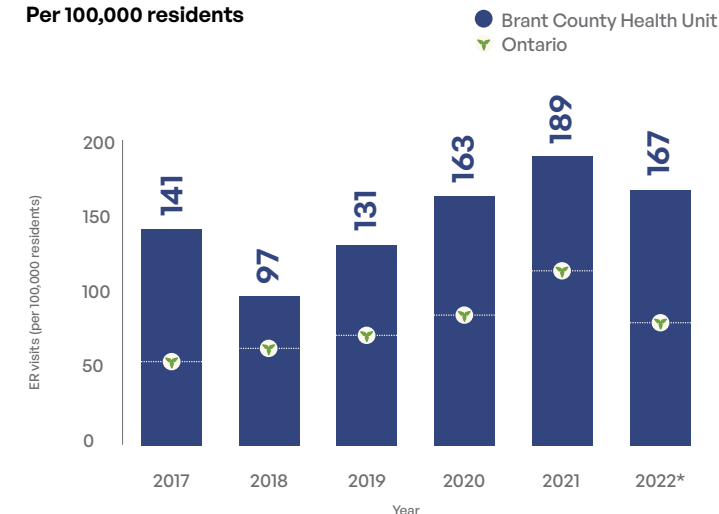
% of adults (18 years and over) with a self-reported body mass index that is considered obese



## OPIOID RELATED ER VISITS

Source: Public Health Ontario, Interactive Opioid Tool<sup>110</sup>

Per 100,000 residents

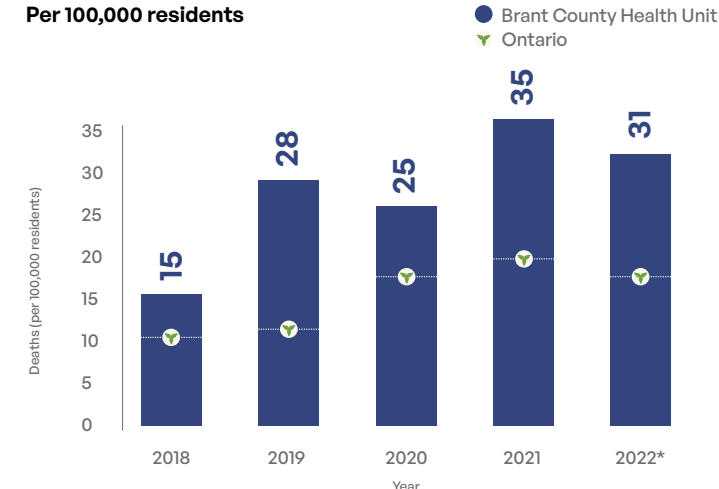


\*Data is preliminary and subject to change

## DEATHS DUE TO OPIOIDS\*

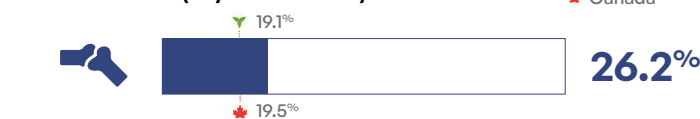
Source: Public Health Ontario, Interactive Opioid Tool<sup>110</sup>

Per 100,000 residents



\*Data is preliminary and subject to change

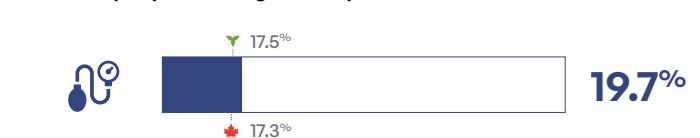
% of adults (15 years and over) with arthritis



% of people who are current smokers, daily or occasional



% of people with high blood pressure





# Safety



Photo: Albert Stoynov

Public safety in our area has improved since our last report. The Brantford CMA (includes Brantford, the County of Brant and Six Nations of the Grand River) is the only CMA in Ontario whose crime severity index was lower in 2022 than 2016. While there have been meaningful improvements, the Brantford CMA's crime severity is still fifth worse among Ontario CMAs, so there is opportunity to continue the progress in community safety.

The rate of traffic offences in the Brantford CMA has increased from 2018 to 2022, while the National and Ontario average rates have decreased.

### WORKS IN PROGRESS

Both the County of Brant and the City of Brantford have:

- » Declared intimate partner violence as an epidemic and are taking steps to address it.<sup>113, 114</sup>
- » Have Community Safety and Well-being Plans in place.<sup>115, 116</sup>

### THINGS TO CELEBRATE

- » The Brantford CMA is the only CMA in Ontario whose crime severity index was lower in 2022 than 2016.
- » The Brantford CMA's crime rate is the lowest it has been since it started to be tracked for the area (2006).

### THINGS TO IMPROVE

- In 2022, the Brantford CMA's:
- » Crime severity index was higher than the Ontario average.
  - » Rate of drug offenses was higher than Canada or Ontario.
  - » Rate of traffic offenses was higher than Ontario.

### CRIME SEVERITY

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 35-10-0026-01<sup>117</sup>

Ontario CMA's 2022 Crime Severity Index

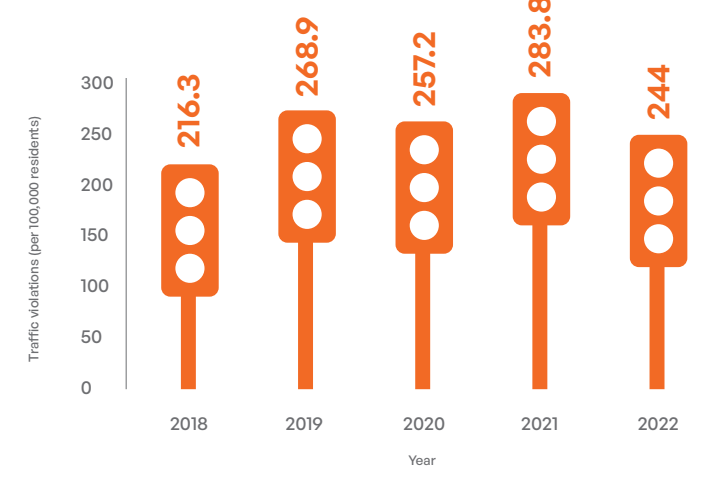
Thunder Bay	103.52
Greater Sudbury	82.75
Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo	79.12
Kingston	76.1
<b>Brantford</b>	<b>75.89</b>
London	73.98
Windsor	68.61
Belleville	67.68
Peterborough	63.95
Guelph	60.56
Hamilton	57.65
St.Catharines-Niagara	56.87
Ottawa-Gatineau, Ontario/Quebec	54.67
Ottawa-Gatineau	52.91
Toronto	51.87
Barrie	47.09



### GROWTH IN BRANTFORD TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS

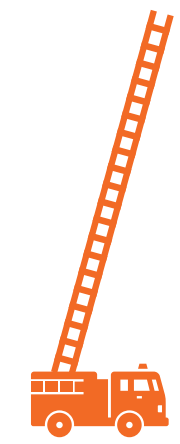
Source: Statistics Canada, Table 35-10-0177-01<sup>118</sup>

Violations per 100,000 people



### FIRE DEPARTMENT RESPONSES (2022)

Source: Brantford Fire,<sup>119</sup> County of Brant<sup>120</sup>



6,146

Fire loss incidents Brantford



818

Fire loss incidents Brant

### BRANTFORD'S CRIME RATES

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 35-10-0177-01<sup>118</sup>

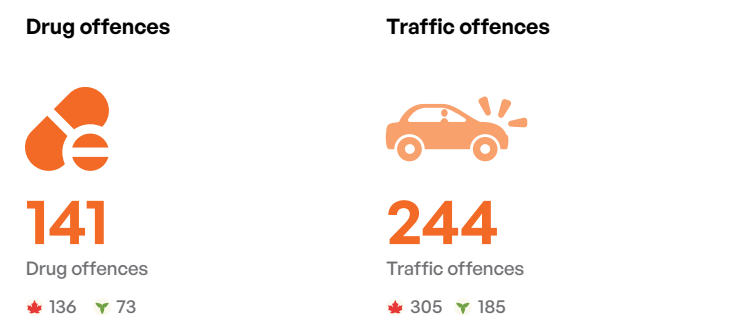
Crimes per 100,000 people in Brantford (2022)



### DRUG AND TRAFFIC OFFENCES

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 35-10-0177-01<sup>118</sup>

Offences per 100,000 people in Brantford (2022)





# What Makes Brant a Grand Place to Live

The communities served by the Brant Community Foundation have a lot of assets that enhance residents' quality of life. While more work and support are needed in some areas, it is important to celebrate what makes Brant a grand place to live.

The County of Brant and the City of Brantford offer a mix of rural and urban benefits. Both feature the Grand River and a network of hiking and biking trails that connect to Hamilton, Port Dover, and Cambridge. Both regions have made efforts to protect the environment and deal with the impacts of broader climate change.

The Indigenous communities in the area bring many assets including their culture and traditional knowledge. Both the Six Nations of the Grand River, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation host yearly Pow Wow's that attract thousands of spectators. Also, the Six Nations of the Grand River and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation have acted as caretakers of the land for centuries.

Our area offers more affordable living. Housing costs are lower than the Ontario average, and a smaller percentage of the population is living with low income.

Our area is the 30th largest Census Metropolitan Area in Canada, and it is growing. New immigrants to the area bring enhanced cultural diversity and support economic growth. Our growing arts and culture sector and many events are supported by municipal governments and the community. Growth brings more activities, services, and employment opportunities, reducing the need to travel to outside communities. Expanded public transit has also made it easier to travel within our communities. That connectedness likely contributes to about two-thirds of residents reporting a strong sense of belonging to their local community.

Economic opportunities are also growing in our area. The number of businesses in the County of Brant and the City of Brantford have been growing, and there is land available for residential and business use.<sup>123</sup> Business growth is being supported by the labour market, and there is currently low unemployment in our area. Enterprise Brant has supported economic development by making the highest investments ever in the local economy in the last year.

# What Can Make Brant an Even Grander Place to Live

Photo: Michael Hamments

While our communities have their strengths, there are steps that donors, funders, policymakers, and individuals can take that will make Brant an even grander place to live. One step is to engage in vital conversations about this Vital Signs report and what can be done to support our communities' vitality. Everyone has a role to play, and the more we work together to give back to our communities, the better all of our vitality will be.

## CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND YOUNG ADULTS:

Brantford youth need support with their physical and mental health, education, and the cost of living. Some actions to address those issues are:

- » Access community supports like EarlyOn Programs, or volunteer to be a young person's mentor.
- » Advocate for policies that can increase wages and slow the rising costs of food and housing.
- » Support the creation and maintenance of free spaces where youth can spend time, connect, and be supported.
- » Seek solutions and rally around efforts to increase high-school graduation rates.

## IMMIGRATION

- » Support initiatives that make Brant a welcoming place for new immigrants, including the work of the 34 organizations that have signed onto the Brantford Immigration Partnership's Inclusive Community Plan.
- » Purposely interact with immigrants and refugees to make them feel welcomed in your community. A great list of examples can be found at [allarewelcomehere.ca](http://allarewelcomehere.ca).
- » Create and support events and opportunities to celebrate diversity, such as the Brantford International Villages festival.



### ▼ GAP BETWEEN THE RICH AND THE POOR

- » Increase funding for affordable housing along the housing continuum and/or lobby for it.
- » Start a local chapter of ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now), which is a membership-based community union of low- and moderate-income people seeking social and economic justice.
- » Support coordinated efforts on the Federal Government's school food program.

### ▼ ECONOMY

- » Provide supports for young entrepreneurs.
- » Support programs that help equity-deserving groups succeed in business.
- » Enhance the amount of skilled trades training, and raise the profile of skilled trades opportunities in the community.
- » Support existing and new businesses in Brantford, Brant, Six Nations of the Grand River and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

### ▼ GETTING AROUND

- » Support efforts to bring the GO Train to Brantford.
- » Advocate for more transportation service in and around Brant and Brantford.

### ▼ ENVIRONMENT

- » Create and support stronger actions and policies to protect our environment and use greener infrastructure to deal with climate change.
- » Reduce your carbon footprint by minimizing your waste and fossil fuel energy use. Examples of ways to reduce home energy use can be found at: <https://www.brantford.ca/en/living-here/climate-action-at-home.aspx>
- » Increase greenspaces with more native plants. Participate in annual native tree planting events.
- » Support Bee City efforts to maintain and improve pollinator habitats.

### ▼ BELONGING AND ENGAGEMENT

- » Support and participate in our area's arts, culture, and heritage events.
- » Visit our area's parks and trails to appreciate our environment.
- » Get involved in your community by volunteering or joining a service club or neighbourhood association. Not only will you support our communities' vitality, but you will also make connections and gain skills and experience.
- » Donate what you can to nonprofits to help them deal with increased demand for their services.

### ▼ ARTS AND CULTURE

- » Increase accessibility to all public spaces for community members and groups.
- » Attend and support local arts, culture, and heritage events, such as those listed in our Arts and Culture chapter.
- » Advocate for continued increases in funding for culture from local governments.

### ▼ HEALTH

- » Further invest in efforts to reduce harm due to opioids.
- » Support and invest in seniors' health. Individuals can help reduce costs to the healthcare services by supporting seniors to be cared for at home.
- » Contribute to the upgrades needed for our local hospitals.

### ▼ SAFETY

- » Continue to advocate for improved traffic safety, including bike and pedestrian safety.
- » Join neighbourhood efforts to get to know your neighbours and improve your neighbourhood's environmental design and security.
- » Increase funding to support victims of intimate partner violence.
- » Advocate and support cybercrime safety policies and toolkits.

# Engaging with Vital Signs

Vital Signs was produced with the entire community in mind. The following are ways in which we encourage continued engagement:

- » Leverage the research and findings to identify potential partners who share similar goals and priorities. The data can help to align your mission with those of other organizations.
- » Host forums or roundtables that bring together stakeholders to discuss the report's findings and explore partnership opportunities.
- » Use the Vital Signs report to brief local policymakers and advocate for changes in policies that address the needs highlighted in the report.
- » Many charities use the insights and data to create compelling narratives for fundraising campaigns and proposals, highlighting the urgent needs and opportunities for impact within the community.
- » Community foundations rely on Vital Signs to inform grantmaking priorities.
- » Donors often rely on the Vital Signs report to inform their philanthropic investments, and highlight how their contributions can make a tangible difference.
- » Use the report as a conversation starter to engage discussion with various community groups, fostering a collaborative approach to problem-solving.

# The Brant Community Foundation

We build community vitality.

**Brant Community Foundation**  
Building our Community. Investing in the Future.

Photo: Michael Hamments

Community vitality has been our purpose, promise and passion since 1997, when we started connecting donors to community needs and opportunities. Together, we help build strong and resilient places to live, work and play.

**Inclusive. Innovative. Forward-looking. Vital. This is our vision for our community.** In our vision, our community is able to offer opportunities to everyone. It has the knowledge and ability needed to help shape its own future. We are ready to address pressing problems like hunger, unemployment and housing insecurity. All our citizens are able to benefit from the best our community can offer: the arts, recreation, health care, education, safe and inclusive neighbourhoods and a healthy environment.

## SPONSORS



## PARTNERS



**VitalSigns.**

## VITAL SIGNS ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### Vital Signs Steering Committee

- » Paula Thomlison  
*Chair*
- » Rita-Marie Hadley
- » Chris McCurdy
- » James Popham
- » Paul Bakker

### Community Foundation Project Staff

- » Anne Marie Peirce  
*Executive Director*
- » Amy Sterkenburg  
*Grants and Communications Coordinator*
- » Rebecca Launchbury  
*Financial and Administrative Coordinator*

### Data and Research

- » Wilfrid Laurier University - Brantford
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- » Jocelyn Booton
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[www.socialimpactsquared.com](http://www.socialimpactsquared.com)

### Graphic Design

- » Loop: Design For Social Good  
[www.weareloop.com](http://www.weareloop.com)

# Producing Vital Signs

The 2024 Vital Signs Report provides data that is a snapshot in time for our local communities. The Vital Signs team, including our data experts and researcher/writer provided crucial leadership, advice, and support in creating this document. The data and research team, led by Wilfrid Laurier University's Dr. James Popham, were relentless in accessing the data that tells the story of the state of the key indicators you see in this report. Our researcher/writer Paul Bakker developed the narrative that speaks to the findings.

Where possible, we presented localized data acquired from local experts and organizations, for a regional view. This is only possible through the support of our community data partners who shared statistical information that helped to provide a more fulsome picture.

The information presented in this report was collected from open and local data sources. Where possible, we prioritized Statistics Canada products that surveyed the Brant Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) using representative sampling strategies. When this data could not adequately tell the community's story, we sought out additional resources including academic polling, governmental data, and statistics collected by local organizations throughout the BCF's service area. This information was vetted for accuracy and veracity by the research data team. We would like to express our sincerest thanks to all those who helped us with our data requests.

A full list of the data sources, as well as links to their descriptions (whenever possible) is available at:

[brantcommunityfoundation.ca/about-us/vitalsigns/](http://brantcommunityfoundation.ca/about-us/vitalsigns/)

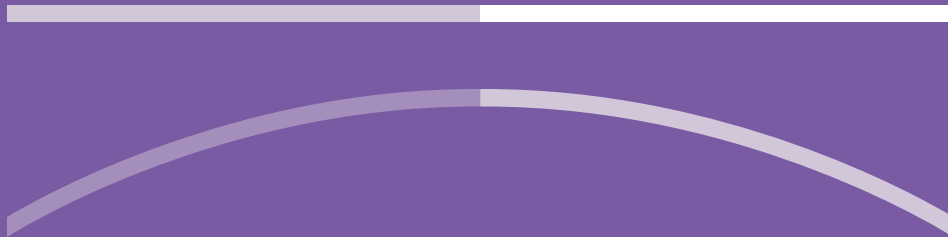


## THE BRIDGES IN OUR VITAL SIGNS REPORT

In this edition of the Brant Community Foundation's Vital Signs publication, we have selected a design that pays tribute to the Grand River and the bridges that cross it. The Grand River starts in the highlands in Dufferin County and travels about 310 km before emptying into Lake Erie, touching many cities, towns and municipalities as it goes.

Locally, it links the City of Brantford, the County of Brant, the Six Nations of the Grand River and Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

The imagery of the bridge and its stylized versions throughout the publication, reinforces how our communities are linked together. You will notice this repeated through the publication.




### Brant Community Foundation

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Charitable Registration: 88356 4494 RR0001

 [brantcf.ca](http://brantcf.ca)

 [@brantcommunityfoundation](https://www.facebook.com/brantcommunityfoundation)

 [@brantcommunityfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/brantcommunityfoundation)

 [@BrantCommFdn](https://twitter.com/BrantCommFdn)

  
**Brant Community Foundation**  
Building our Community. Investing in the Future.



COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATIONS  
OF CANADA

FONDATIONS  
COMMUNAUTAIRES  
DU CANADA

**VitalSigns**®