




HAMILTON'S VitalSigns®

Hamilton's Vital Signs

A citizens' report from Hamilton Community Foundation on 12 areas that contribute to the city's quality of life

Hamilton's Vital Signs looks at our city's vitality, highlights important research data, and identifies significant trends on issues that matter to all of us. It is intended to stimulate citizen awareness, discussion and action.

To start that discussion, Hamilton Community Foundation asked 400 citizens, in a September telephone survey conducted by Leger Marketing, to share their perception on the findings in the 12 research areas. They rated each *Vital Signs* area green, yellow, or red:

-  I am satisfied our community is moving in the right direction
-  I am concerned about our community
-  The community needs to take immediate action

Those "stoplight" ratings are shown in the report.

We also invited the community to provide their opinion via the web. Those responses and the Leger survey results are available at www.hamiltonvitalsigns.ca.

HamiltonVitalSigns.ca

Vital Signs issues are complex. We hope this taste of the data and citizen opinions will inspire you to learn more. HamiltonVitalSigns.ca is a rich resource for:

- More data around the indicators presented here, including graphic presentation of the longer-term trends
- More indicators
- Links to the original reports and source data from which *Vital Signs* has been gleaned
- Examples of work that is being done on these issues
- Ideas on what you can do to help

Using Vital Signs

We hope you will use *Vital Signs* as a starting point for conversations and action. We encourage you to share it with your family, friends, colleagues, faith group, school council, neighbourhood association, service club, elected official and electoral candidate.

We also invite you to visit hcf.on.ca to find out more about the good work already being undertaken by local charities in partnership with businesses, government and individuals.

You can also explore more perspectives by watching *Hamilton's Vital Signs* on *For the Record*, the first Monday afternoon of every month on Cable 14.

We Want to Hear From You!

Most important, we'd like to know what you think about *Hamilton's Vital Signs*. Did the information surprise you? Move you? Inspire you? We want to hear from you. Email us at vitalsigns@hcf.on.ca or contact us via Facebook and Twitter.

Vital Signs is a national initiative of Community Foundations of Canada; 22 communities are publishing a local *Vital Signs* report today. Watch for *Vital Signs*, a national report, to be published October 11 in the *Globe and Mail*.



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A Message from Hamilton Community Foundation

Last year, *Hamilton's Vital Signs* pulled back the veil on a community making progress in some areas, but split by deep fault lines of inequality. Building on the work of the *Hamilton Spectator's* Code Red investigation into Hamilton's neighbourhoods, *Vital Signs* traced a picture of "two cities that share the same urban boundary but little else."

In the year since, we continue to make progress on the economy and education, but the underlying dichotomy between affluent and poor neighbourhoods persists.

There are encouraging signs of progress in our economy. Small business startups have increased significantly in 2011 over 2009 while bankruptcies are down 37%. The unemployment rate for the Hamilton CMA (which includes Burlington and Grimsby) has been lower than both the provincial and national averages for two years. Youth unemployment has fallen and is also lower than the provincial and national averages. And, in the city of Hamilton, 2010 was a record year for building permits, up from \$692 million in 2009 to \$1.1 billion, while the housing market remained steady.

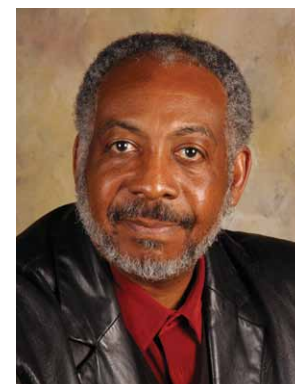
But it's clear that this good news has reached deeper into some neighbourhoods than others. Child poverty continues to exceed 50% in several neighbourhoods, while the overall rate is 26%. Similarly, the Ontario Works caseload is the highest in a decade, climbing from under 10,000 in early 2008 to 14,110 in June 2011. The number of people using emergency shelters – 3,680 in 2010 – is similar to the previous two years.

In education, the high school non-completion rate continues a steady improvement over the past decade – from 27% in 2000 to 19.9% in 2010 – but again, as last year's *Vital Signs* found, the results vary from zero in some neighbourhoods to over 65% in others.

Hamilton still struggles to integrate immigrants. The number of new permanent residents moving to our city increased to 4,003 in 2010 from 3,778 in 2009. Almost 40% of recent immigrants to Hamilton have a university degree; double the



Terry Cooke
President & CEO, HCF



Dr. Gary Warner
Board Chair, HCF

rate of all working-age Hamiltonians. However, these immigrants also have double the unemployment rates of non-immigrants and a poverty rate over 50% – more than in any other Ontario city.

The central message that emerges from this year's *Vital Signs* report is: *we need to do more*. We need to build on our economic momentum and extend it to every neighbourhood. We need to build strong, healthy communities that encourage civic participation and support entrepreneurs. We need to improve the prospects of our most impoverished families and our most vulnerable residents. We need to work with policymakers and planners to better integrate our neighbourhoods and schools.

As a foundation, we're looking beyond our ongoing focus on poverty reduction – to align more of our assets to strengthening Hamilton through programs like community investing, and our role as a catalyst for broad and deep changes in areas like education.

"The central message that emerges from this year's *Vital Signs* report is: *we need to do more.*"

As citizens, we all need the compassion to build bridges that close the gap between our two urban solitudes. We need the courage to set our city the ambitious goal of eradicating the devastating poverty that destroys hope.

Working together, we can build a more hopeful future.

What the Findings Show



These recurring themes underlie the data you'll read in this report:

■ **Progress to celebrate, sustain and expand.** Last year, *Vital Signs* identified progress in several areas including water use, waste diversion, homelessness, seniors' poverty and crime rates. For the most part, this progress has been sustained, and in some cases, accelerated. This year's report shows additional progress in the economy, work, education and learning. Hamiltonians need to recognize and celebrate the progress that we are making as a city. We also need to build on, learn from and expand that progress.

■ **Strong signs of life in the Hamilton economy.** Whether it's the record number of building permits issued in 2010, the lower unemployment rates of the last two years, the continued steadiness of the housing market, the improved performance of the goods-producing sector, or the rising contribution of the arts sector, the data shows many clear signs of a recovering Hamilton economy.

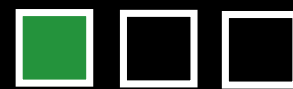
■ **Persistent signs of social danger.** Hamilton's economic recovery has been neither complete nor universal. The number of people receiving Ontario Works (social assistance) is at its highest level in over a decade and child poverty rates in some neighbourhoods continue to exceed 50%. The percentage of people working in jobs that don't pay a living wage is higher than in most other communities, and both the number of people in utility arrears and those waiting for social housing has increased substantially over time.

■ **How Hamilton grows and retains its people.** The data shows trends that clearly present implications and considerations for urban and social planning. These include the high proportion of people who both live and work in Hamilton, the number of new Canadians arriving here and the set of skills they possess and are able to apply. The dichotomy of the housing market – with its increasing ownership costs and the stock of relatively affordable rental housing, as well as the attachment that Hamiltonians feel to their neighbourhoods, all provide critical food for thought as citizens and leaders make decisions about how Hamilton should grow, expand, and re-invent itself in the coming years.

■ **Implications for citizen participation.** Hamiltonians are committed to making our city better. We see this in the higher-than-average rates of volunteerism and charitable donations. But the data shows once again that the city has great divides between neighbourhoods, and between different groups of people. These chasms deny many the chance to participate fully in our city. *Vital Signs* found widely varying poverty rates between neighbourhoods, under-representation of women and visible minorities in politics, and the increased risk of poverty and social exclusion for certain people in our community.

www.hamiltonvitalsigns.ca

Arts and Culture



Hamiltonians attend popular music concerts and cultural festivals at higher than average rates. Our library use continues to grow, and grants to Hamilton artists from national and provincial arts councils have increased by almost 50% over the past decade.

Cultural Event Attendance

In 2010, 44% of people age 15 and over reported seeing at least one popular music concert in the Hamilton CMA within the last year – higher than the 39% average in other *Vital Signs* communities. People in Hamilton CMA also had higher than average rates for attending a cultural festival within the last year (44% compared to 41%). Hamilton was slightly below average in attending theatre performances (45% compared to 47%) and attending a symphonic or classical music concert (14% compared to 18%).

Library Use

Library use continued to grow in 2010 with some 6.3 million items checked out, up 4% since 2009, and 35% since 2007. The number of monthly digital downloads hit 5,000 for the first time in July, growing 83% since 2009. Driven primarily by demand for e-books, this number is projected to reach 10,000 by January.

Grants to the Arts

Two of the major granting bodies for the arts sector are the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council. Over the last decade, grants to Hamilton artists from the Canada Council have increased by 44% to \$950,575, up from \$657,000 in 2001-2002. Grants from the Ontario Arts Council to Hamilton have increased by 55% to almost \$1.2 million last year from \$775,000 in 2003-2004. These increases are similar to those in other cities. Hamilton receives between 2% and 3% of the total funding for Ontario from both granting organizations.

On the Web

- Number of heritage buildings and sites
- Number of artists and cultural workers

Belonging and Leadership



Hamiltonians' sense of belonging is increasing. Voter turnout is improving but remains below average. The number of women elected to political office is below Ontario's average, and visible minorities are greatly under-represented.

Sense of Community Belonging

In 2009-2010, 67% of Hamiltonians reported having a "strong" or "somewhat strong" sense of community belonging, similar to provincial and national averages, and up slightly from 65.1% in 2007-2008, and 59% in 2001. Sense of belonging varies by gender and neighbourhood. In 2009-2010, 70% of women reported strong or somewhat strong sense of belonging, compared to 63.8% of men.

Voter Turnout

Some 40% of eligible Hamiltonians voted in 2010's municipal election, up from the previous two in which 37% and 38% of eligible voters went to the polls. Turnout varied by ward: Dundas was highest at 46%; in Ward 3 it was 31%. In 2011's Federal election, 58% of Hamiltonians voted, up from 56% in 2008, but below the provincial (62%) and national (61%) averages. Turnout varied by polling station, ranging from some with over 70% of eligible voters to several with fewer than 22%.

Diversity in Elected Politicians

Three women were elected in Hamilton's 2010 municipal election (20% of total seats), an increase of one from the previous term, and below the 28% provincial average. Federally and provincially, women hold three of Hamilton's ten ridings, including the only female leader of a Canadian political party. Visible minorities are greatly under-represented across Ontario, occupying only 7.6% of all municipal council seats. The most recent visible minority politician elected provincially or federally in Hamilton was Lincoln Alexander in 1980.

On the Web

- Life satisfaction
- Charitable donations
- Volunteer rate

Economy



Hamilton had a strong economic year in 2010 as measured by employment and building permits. Employment remained strong in the first half of 2011, while building permits slowed by 30% after last year's record results. Real estate sales have held steady since 2008, and average house prices are rising.

Employment

The number of people who were employed in the Hamilton CMA in July 2011 increased by over 6,600 (1.8%) to 378,000 from July 2010. This was a higher percentage increase than in many Ontario cities, including London, Ottawa and Windsor, tied with Toronto, and higher than the provincial and national average. It was behind only Kitchener-Waterloo and Oshawa. Over the past three years, the number of jobs in the goods-producing sector (primarily manufacturing and construction) has increased 5.5%, while the service sector (e.g. trade, transport, health care) grew by 3.9%.

Building Permits

In 2010, Hamilton had a record year with \$1.1 billion in permits issued. This was an increase from \$692 million in 2009 and \$818 million in 2008. For the first half of 2011, permit activity was \$338

million, due to a 30% decrease for both residential and non-residential construction.

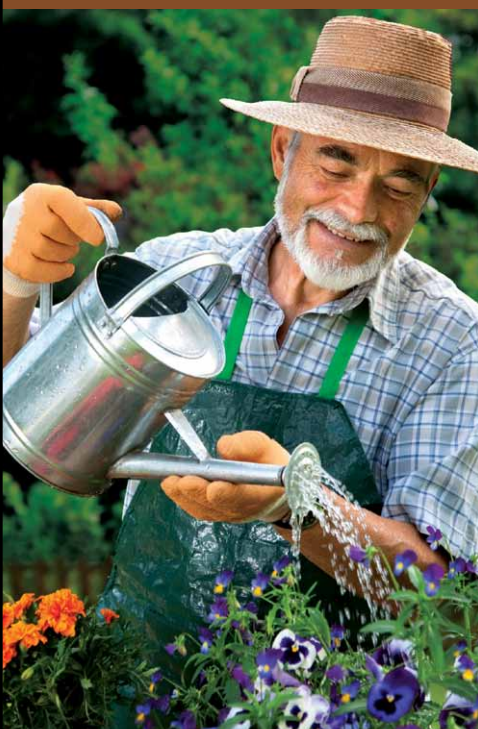
Real Estate Sales

Last year 6,764 residential units were sold in Hamilton. This was similar to 2009's total of 6,887, and 2008's total of 6,769 units. These totals are below pre-recession levels: the average number of units sold from 2003 to 2007 was 7,610 per year. The average house price climbed 12% over the last year, and 88% over the last ten years.

On the Web

- Source of City tax revenue: residential vs non-residential
- Office and industrial vacancy rates
- Consumer and business bankruptcies

Environment



Hamilton's water consumption and waste diversion continued to improve last year. The number of poor air quality days is also improving: there was a total of two over the last two years, compared with an annual average of 16 from 2002 to 2007.

Water Consumption

Water consumption continued to decline in 2010, falling to 426 cubic metres from 437 cubic metres per account in 2009. This continues the reduction of over 50% since the early 1990s as reported in *Hamilton's Vital Signs* last year. Residences are the heaviest users of water and have mirrored the overall water consumption decline, dropping almost 40% from 2001 to 2006.

Waste Diversion

In 2010, Hamiltonians diverted more waste from landfills. The amount diverted rose to 49% last year, similar to the provincial average and up from 47% in 2009 and from 17% in 2000. The amount of waste composted dropped slightly to 23% from 24% in 2009, while the amount recycled remained at 22% compared to a year earlier. The City of Hamilton's overall diversion target is 65%.

Poor Air Quality Days

The Ministry of the Environment defines a poor air quality day as one when the Air Quality Index, which measures local pollutants and ground level ozone, remains above 51 for more than one hour. There were two poor air quality days in Hamilton last year, and none in 2009. These low levels represent an improvement from 2002 to 2007 when the city averaged 16 poor air quality days annually. Some neighbourhoods, particularly in northeast Hamilton, are not regularly captured in the Air Quality Index. In these neighbourhoods, the Hamilton Air Monitoring Network shows a long term decline in most pollutants, but also a three-year rise in several specific ones.

On the Web

- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Land use and greenspace
- Percentage days beaches open
- Brownfields

Gap between Rich and Poor



Over the last decade, income disparity among Hamiltonians is virtually unchanged. Child poverty rates are over 50% in several neighbourhoods, and the city's social assistance caseloads are at a 10-year high.

Income Disparity

The disparity of after-tax incomes in Hamilton has changed very little in the last decade. In 2009, the poorest 20% of Hamiltonians had 5% of total income, the same as in 2001. The richest 20% had 41% of the total income in 2009, similar to 2001. National trends are similar, with the richest 20% of Canadians having 44% of the total income in 2009. Overall, the richest 20% have about eight times that of the poorest 20%.

Children Living in Poverty

One measure of poverty is the pre-tax Low Income Measure, which looks at the number of people below 50% of the median income for households in Hamilton. In Hamilton in 2009, 26% of children lived in families that were below the Low Income Measure, just above the 25% in 2006, and the 24% provincial average for 2009.

Only one neighbourhood in Hamilton had a rate below 10%, while three neighbourhoods had rates of over 50%. Three out of the 22 neighbourhoods showed some improvement between 2006 and 2009. Recent immigrants, lone parent families, and Aboriginal people are more than twice as likely to experience poverty.

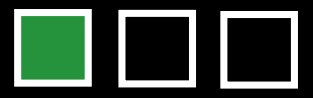
Ontario Works Caseload

The number of people on Ontario Works (Ontario's social assistance program) has climbed by over 40% in the last three years. In June 2011 there were 14,110 cases, the highest number since 2000. The number has risen from just under 10,000 cases in early 2008.

On the Web

- Overall poverty rates by neighbourhood
- Food bank use
- Poverty rates by group

Getting Around



Most Hamilton residents work in Hamilton or Burlington, but a higher percentage of CMA residents commute more than 30 km than in many other Ontario cities. The percentage using public transit for work is growing, as are the kilometres of bike lanes and recreational trails.

Average Commuting Distance

Some 70% of Hamilton residents worked in Hamilton in 2006 (the most recent information available). Another 12% commuted to Burlington. Average commuting distance for people in the larger Hamilton CMA was 8.3 kilometres, similar to provincial and national averages, and virtually unchanged from 2001. Approximately 16% of Hamilton CMA commuters travel over 30 km to work, higher than the Ontario average and cities like London, Windsor, Toronto and Ottawa.

Public Transit Use for Work

The proportion of working-age adults using public transit for work in Hamilton increased to 9.3% in 2006 from 8.4% in 2001; higher than Kitchener-Waterloo, London, and Windsor, but lower than Oakville, Ottawa, and Toronto. HSR use is unchanged over the last decade, while GO Transit use from downtown was up 32% over 2004 and from Aldershot, up 166%.

Hiking and Biking Trails

In 2010, Hamilton had 135 km of major hiking and biking trails, up from 132 km in 2007. This included the 2010 addition of two trail bridges spanning the LINC and the QEW expressways. The Bruce Trail provides approximately another 100 km of hiking trails through the city. Urban streets with bicycle lanes or paved shoulders are up 45% from 100 km three years ago. In 2009, the City of Hamilton approved a new multi-year Cycling Master Plan intended to quadruple designated bike lanes to 566 km.

On the Web

- Annual GO Transit ridership
- Annual HSR ridership
- Annual DARTS ridership

Getting Started in Our Community



Hamilton's recent immigrants have double the unemployment and poverty rates of its Canadian-born residents, despite having more education. Youth unemployment is below Ontario average and improved over 2010, but remains twice the adult rate. Hamilton business startups increased.

New Permanent Residents

In 2010, 4,003 permanent residents came to Hamilton. Although this represents an increase from last year's 3,778, the overall trend is down from 2005 when 4,613 arrived. Hamilton received a lower proportion of economic class immigrants (40% of all immigrants) than provincial (51%) and national (61%) averages. Among working-age recent immigrants 38% have at least one university degree, more than twice the rate for working-age Hamiltonians. However they also have unemployment rates double those of non-immigrants. Recent immigrants in Hamilton have a poverty rate of over 50% – higher than in any other Ontario city.

Youth Unemployment

The unemployment rate for youth during the first half of 2011 was 13.4%. This rate is lower than the provincial average (16.1%)

and national average (14.4%). The average for the first half of 2011 is below the 2010 average of 14.6%. The unemployment rate for youth in the Hamilton CMA is still more than double that of the general population.

New Business Startups

According to Hamilton's Small Business Enterprise Centre, 580 small businesses were started in 2009. Based on the first quarter of 2011, some 800 will be launched this year. There were 12 business bankruptcies reported in the first quarter of 2011 for the Hamilton CMA – the lowest quarterly total since 2006. The number of business bankruptcies is down 37% from the same time last year.

On the Web

- Migration rates
- Students with neither official language as their first language

Health and Well-Being



Hamilton is similar to Ontario in physical activity and chronic disease rates, but higher in obesity which has increased since 2001. We're similar to Ontario in the percentage of low birthweight babies, but there is a wide range within the city.

Physical Activity and Obesity

In 2009-2010, just over half of Hamiltonians reported being active in their leisure time (enough to improve cardiovascular health), or somewhat active (enough to have some health benefit) – similar to provincial and national averages. The percentage of Hamiltonians aged 12 or over, who are overweight or obese is 60% – higher than the provincial and national average of 52%. The rate is higher for Hamilton men (69%) than for Hamilton women (51%), but both are higher than provincial averages for their gender.

Chronic Disease Rates

Chronic diseases are the leading cause of poor quality of life, illness, disability, and death. In 2007-2008, Hamiltonians reported rates of diabetes (5.5%), heart disease (5.7%), and cancer (2.5%) similar to the provincial average.

Low Birthweight

Low birthweight describes babies born weighing between 500 grams and 2,500 grams (5 lbs, 8 oz), which puts them at risk for health and other special needs. Hamilton's 6.4% low birthweight rate in 2009 was similar to the 6.5% provincial rate. The overall low birthweight rate has been relatively stable over the past decade. However, as last year's *Vital Signs* found, between neighbourhoods, the rate ranged from 4.8% in some neighbourhoods to 9% in others.

On the Web

- Teen pregnancy rates
- Life expectancy
- Self-rated general and mental health

Housing



Hamilton's average house prices continued a decade-long climb, jumping 12% last year, while the city's rental housing is among the most affordable in the province. After improving in 2006-2007, the number of people without housing and staying in emergency shelters has levelled out.

Homeowner Affordability

In 2010, Hamilton's average house price increased 12% to \$273,653 from \$244,230 one year earlier. Hamilton's house prices have risen 88% over the last decade; in 2000, the average home was \$145,192. Hamilton remains more affordable than both provincial and national averages: Hamiltonians spend 3.5 times their annual income on a house, while provincial and national averages are over four times the annual income.

Renter Affordability

Last year, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Hamilton rose to \$783 from \$767 in 2009. The provincial average rent for a two bedroom apartment is \$980. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Affordability Index shows that Hamilton continues to be one of the most affordable cities in Ontario in which to rent an apartment.

Emergency Shelter Usage

There were 3,680 people using emergency shelters in 2010, similar to the previous two years. The number of people who stayed in emergency shelters for more than 200 days of the year was 42; in 2009, it was 39. The occupancy rates for men's shelters climbed from 70% to 85% due to the closure of one of the emergency shelters. The occupancy for women's shelters for 2008-2009 was close to 98%.

On the Web

- Housing starts
- Social housing waitlist
- Utility arrears
- Density of housing

Learning



Hamilton's high-school completion and post-secondary education rates are improving, but continue to be below provincial averages. Standardized test performance varies widely by school.

Completed Post-Secondary Education

In 2010, in the Hamilton CMA, 51.1% of people aged 15 or over had completed post-secondary education compared with 52.7% provincially and 51.8% nationally. The percentage has increased from 43.4% in 2000. Hamiltonians are above the Ontario average in completed apprenticeship or trades certificates.

High School Non-completion Rates

In 2010, in the Hamilton CMA, 19.9% of people aged 15+ had not completed high school, slightly above the provincial average of 18.7%. Hamilton's non-completion rates are showing improvement over time though – in 2000, 27.0% of people did not have a high school diploma. This rate varies widely across the city: as last year's *Vital Signs* reported, the proportion of 20-24 year olds who do not have a diploma and are not in school varies from zero in some neighbourhoods to over 65% in others.

Standardized Student Test Scores

Students in Hamilton are tested in Grade 3, Grade 6 and Grade 9 by the "EQAO" which measures student performance against provincial standards. The HWCDSB consistently achieves higher than provincial averages. Though improving, the HWCDSB is usually just under the provincial average. In 2010-11, both school boards came in slightly below the provincial standard in Grade 3 and 6 math. (The HWCDSB exceeded the provincial standard for Grade 9 academic math). In most areas measured, girls outperform boys and there is a wide variation by school. In both boards, there are schools that exceed the provincial average and schools that are below.

On the Web

- Early Development Instrument
- Canadian Composite Learning Index
- Visits to Early Years Centres

Safety



Hamilton's property crime rates continued a decade-long decline while violent crime rates showed a slight increase after a long decline. The number of domestic violence occurrences reported to police has increased over the last four years.

Property Crime Rate

Last year, property crimes rates fell by 5% in the Hamilton CMA to 3,417 per 100,000 people. The provincial decline was 7%; national decline was 6%. Since 1998, Hamilton's property crime rate has declined 31.1%. The rate is lower than the national average, but higher than the provincial average.

Violent Crime Rate

Violent crime rates increased by 3% from last year to 1,129 violent crimes per 100,000 people in the Hamilton CMA. Provincial and national violent crime rates decreased over this time by 2% and 3% respectively. In spite of Hamilton's 2010 increase, the violent crime rate has decreased by 18% since 1998. Similar to the property crime rate, Hamilton's violent crime rate is lower than the national average, but higher than Ontario's average.

Police-reported Domestic Violence

The number of domestic violence occurrences reported to police increased by more than 70% in 2010 to 3,798 from 2,189 in 2007. The number of charges laid increased by 24% to 973 from 782 for the same years.

On the Web

- Police-reported hate crimes
- Child welfare caseloads
- Road and pedestrian safety

Work



Hamilton's unemployment rate has been below provincial and national rates for over two years. Average earnings have increased for women, but have fallen for men. More Hamiltonians are working for less than a living wage.

Unemployment Rate

The June 2011 seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the Hamilton CMA was 5.9%, up from 5.4% in May, when it was the lowest rate in Canada. Over the last year, Hamilton's unemployment rate has been substantially below provincial and national averages (7.8% and 7.5% in June 2011, respectively). The last time that Hamilton's unemployment rate was above the Ontario average was over two years ago: March 2009, when Hamilton's rate was 8.8%, and the Ontario average was 8.7%.

Average Earnings

From 2006 to 2009, individual average earnings in the Hamilton CMA fell slightly when adjusted for inflation. Men's average earnings fell over that time to \$46,400 from \$51,700, while women's average earnings grew to \$33,200 from \$29,800. These are similar to, but more pronounced than, provincial and national trends.

Living Wage

Hamilton's Social Planning and Research Council reports that, according to most recent data available (2006), there were 10,155 people in Hamilton working full-time, full-year, whose income was still below the poverty line. This was up from 8,310 in 2001. This group made up 6.7% of the working population – lower than Toronto (9.0%), but higher than Ottawa, London, and Waterloo. Ontario's average for those employed at less than a living wage was 5.5%, and the national average was 5.8%.

On the Web

- Percentage of full-time vs part-time jobs
- Employment insurance beneficiaries
- Participation rate by gender

Methodology

Indicator Selection

The *Vital Signs* Advisory Committee comprises members of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction's Evaluation and Learning Committee plus additional experts from the environment, business and economic, and arts and culture sectors. The indicators selected and prioritized by the committee build on those identified by HRPB to measure a wide range of socio-economic issues and provide a broad quality of life picture. They incorporate those identified by Community Foundations of Canada to be included as part of the national *Vital Signs* initiative.

Progress was examined in three ways:

- The indicator's change over time, including changes from the data presented in last year's report
- Its comparison to provincial and national averages
- The disparity present within the indicator – e.g. between different neighbourhoods or between different groups of Hamiltonians.

References

Information was gathered with researchers from many local and national organizations and reviewed by Advisory Committee members and other external experts. Complete references, links to data sources and other information is available at www.hamiltonvitalsigns.ca.

Every effort was made to use information pertaining to the city of Hamilton where possible. Some Statistics Canada data was only available for the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), which includes Burlington and Grimsby. This is indicated where applicable.

Vital Signs is a community check-up conducted by community foundations across Canada that measures the vitality of our communities and identifies significant trends in a range of areas critical to quality of life. *Vital Signs* is co-ordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada.

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About Hamilton Community Foundation

Hamilton Community Foundation's mission is to strengthen Hamilton's quality of life as an inclusive and sustainable community through philanthropy. We help donors make the difference *they* want to make by:

- Working with donors to build funds that meet their philanthropic and financial objectives
- Granting to the widest possible range of charitable organizations and initiatives
- Fostering community leadership by bringing people, knowledge and resources together around the community's needs and opportunities.

Since it was founded in 1954, Hamilton Community Foundation has made grants to our community totalling approximately \$65 million, including almost \$4 million last year.

Why we're publishing *Hamilton's Vital Signs*

Building and sharing knowledge about our city is at the heart of our mission. It's a resource we offer as we work with our community towards a strong and vibrant city. Knowledge enables us to help donors make informed decisions on how to have the greatest impact with their gifts. It provides institutions and charities with information for community planning and decision-making, and inspires action and engages citizens further in civic life.

Hamilton's Vital Signs is one aspect of informing our own work as a grantmaker and catalyst for community change. Examples of

HCF's support to programs and organizations in the context of *Hamilton's Vital Signs* highlights include:

- Working with partners to strengthen challenged neighbourhoods
- Preparing citizens for a changing economy through literacy and skill acquisition
- Empowering youth to turn their environmental ideas into action
- Supporting a range of arts and cultural initiatives
- Integrating newcomers
- Reducing and preventing poverty by addressing its root causes.

All the evidence shows that these strategies are effective, but as *Vital Signs* affirms, the challenges are complex. Each of us has a critical role, but by itself, is not enough. The broad engagement and collaboration of our whole community is needed to move our city forward.

We encourage you to visit www.hamiltonvitalsigns.ca for more information about the work HCF is funding and to visit www.hcf.on.ca to learn how we can help you make long-lasting change.



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Thank You to Our Partners

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