



What is Canada's Vital Signs?

Each fall, Canadian [community foundations](#) from the Atlantic to the Pacific prepare local report cards for, and about, their communities. Like an annual check-up, each Vital Signs report looks at how one community is doing across many aspects of quality of life. What makes for 'good' quality of life varies from one community to another just as surely as Canada's varied peoples, geography and even weather shape so much of our daily realities. Each Vital Signs report reflects this diversity, tracking the measures that are important to its community.

Alongside diverse local priorities, runs the thread of shared concerns - issues that are important to all Canadians. To capture these issues, Community Foundations of Canada produces *Canada's Vital Signs*. Collected from the 'street level' view provided by local reports, *Canada's Vital Signs* zooms out to report on national issues that local communities all agree are a priority. Within each Vital Signs issue area, an indicator is chosen to provide a snapshot of how our communities are doing across the country. This year's issue areas and indicators are:

Vital Signs issue area	Vital Signs 2009 indicator
The Gap Between Rich and Poor	Total Income
Safety	Violent Crime Rate
Health	Incidence of Low Birth Weight
Learning	Aboriginal High School Completion Rates
Housing	Gross Income Shelter Ratio
Getting Started	Youth Unemployment Rate
Arts and Culture	Earnings for Professional Occupations in Arts/Culture
Environment	Household Recycling Rate
Work	Employment Rate
Belonging and Leadership	Charitable Donations

Vital Signs monitors change, informs needed action and celebrates signs of community health. But the work of Vital Signs doesn't stop with the publication of the local and national reports. The reports are a catalyst, designed to encourage ongoing discussion, debate and action, led by community foundations and their local partners, who keep the issues in the spotlight year-round with meetings, events, speeches and grantmaking opportunities.

Participating Communities

Every year a varying group of community foundations participate in the Vital Signs program and the publication of Vital Signs reports. For more information about the community foundation movement visit www.cfc-fcc.ca. The communities participating in Vital Signs 2009 are:

- Boundary Communities, BC* (includes Christina Lake, Grand Forks, Greenwood, Midway, Rock Creek., Bridesville, Beaverdell), *Phoenix Foundation of the Boundary Communities*
- Calgary, AB, *The Calgary Foundation*
- Guelph & Wellington, ON, *The Guelph Community Foundation*
- Kelowna, BC, *Central Okanagan Foundation*
- Kingston & Area, ON*, *Community Foundation for Kingston & Area*
- Medicine Hat, AB, *Community Foundation of Medicine Hat and Southeastern Alberta*
- Oakville, ON, *The Community Foundation of Oakville*
- Ottawa, ON, *Community Foundation of Ottawa*
- Red Deer, AB, *Red Deer & District Community Foundation*
- Great Saint John, NB, *The Greater Saint John Community Foundation*
- Great Sudbury, ON, *Sudbury Community Foundation*
- Sunshine Coast, BC*, *Sunshine Coast Community Foundation*
- Toronto, ON, *Toronto Community Foundation*
- Victoria, BC, *Victoria Foundation*
- Waterloo Region, ON, *Cambridge & North Dumfries Community Foundation* and *The Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation*
- Wolfville, NS*, *Wolfville Community Fund*

**denotes a community releasing its first Vital Signs report*

For more information see our [Vital Signs FAQ](#).