

NEWS RELEASE

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MEDIA CONTACT

Sasha Chabot-Gaspé
(647) 289-0990
schabotgaspe@torontofoundation.ca

First-time Toronto's Vital Signs Report exposes pervasive inequity

TORONTO, Feb. 28, 2018 – Released today, Toronto Foundation's 16th Toronto's Vital Signs Report reveals the extent to which inequity infiltrates all aspects of life in the city. For the first time in its history, the report uses an equity lens to disaggregate data and paints a clear picture that quality of life in Toronto varies drastically depending on neighbourhood, income, race, immigration status, gender, sexual identity, and age. The report also gives Torontonians concrete, actionable steps to be part of ending inequity in the city.

"Though the overall story of our city is one of success, more and more, Toronto is becoming a city of islands," says Sharon Avery, President and CEO, Toronto Foundation. "Toronto's Vital Signs Report shows us what inequity really looks like and where it resides. We now have the definitive case for support for a better and more resilient city."

Toronto's Vital Signs Report compiles hundreds of sources of data across ten elements of quality of life, from housing to health, safety and the environment. It serves as an annual consolidated snapshot of the trends and issues affecting our city. This new equity framing aims to surface the gaps and opportunities for improvement and make the report a more actionable tool for policy-makers, practitioners and philanthropists. The report is led by Toronto Foundation, in collaboration with Social Planning Toronto and its social enterprise, Public Interest, that serve as the report's principal writer, and George Brown College, the report's lead research partner.

"The reality is that we have a good foundation," explains Sean Meagher, Executive Director, Social Planning Toronto. "But there are cracks that risk becoming gaping holes if we're not vigilant."

"To be a truly great city, we need to be a just city where everyone has the opportunity to thrive," Avery states. "This means that those who have the power and the means need to take note. We're hoping to inspire them to stand up and do something now."

The 2017/18 Toronto's Vital Signs report concludes with a bold call to action (page 75) to use the report to spark dialogue, inform upcoming voting decisions and disrupt charitable giving patterns. The full report can be read here at 10:30 a.m. today: <https://torontofoundation.ca/vitalsigns/>.

Some general facts on who we are as a city:

- The middle income range is between \$24,000 and \$42,000. This is the middle class in Toronto. This group saw income gains of just 6 per cent over ten years while the top fifth of earners experienced a 9 per cent increase.
- The number of residents living on low income has grown to 20 per cent of the population, and the average real employment increase for this cohort was 6 per cent from 2005-2015, while the top fifth of all earners saw an increase of 9 per cent.

(more)

- For the first time, there are more seniors than children in Toronto and the most common household type (replacing couples with children) is people living alone.
- For the first time, more than half of us identify as belonging to a visible minority.
- Toronto is a thriving global centre. Our population has grown to more than 2.7 million (up 4.5 per cent between 2001 and 2016). We are Canada's top immigration destination. Our ravines, rivers and access to a Great Lake balance natural beauty with our burgeoning skyline.

Some facts on equity across the ten issue areas in the report:

Arts and Culture

- 60 per cent of those living downtown have access to the arts but only 37 per cent who live in Scarborough do.

Environment

- Overall, 25 per cent of our city has tree cover. In Rosedale-Moore Park, it is 62 per cent whereas in other neighbourhoods, it is as little as 7 per cent.

Getting Around

- More than half of us drive and it takes 29 minutes or less to commute. Thirty-seven per cent take transit and 30 per cent of those spend more than an hour to get to work (7 per cent for drivers).

Health

- 73 per cent of high-income earners report good or excellent health while 48 per cent of low-income earners report the same. Diabetes rates in Rosedale-Moore Park are 5 per cent and 17 per cent in Malvern.

Housing

- Nearly half of renters spend more than 30 per cent of their income on housing, compared to 27 per cent of owner households.

Income & Wealth

- There are nearly three times the number of households living on less than \$20,000 per year than there are those living on \$100,000 per year or more.
- Toronto is the child poverty capital of Canada, with over one-in-four children living below the poverty line. Nearly half of all newcomer children are living in poverty.

Leadership, Civic Engagement & Belonging

- Individuals earning \$50,000 per year on average contribute 2.3 per cent of their income to charity, compared to 1.6 per cent of those earning \$100,000.

Learning

- 15 per cent of TDSB students taking applied courses drop out of school before graduating, compared to only 3 per cent of students taking academic courses.

Safety

- There were 2,258 reported sexual assaults in 2016, a 30 per cent increase since 2010.

Work

- On average, racialized men earn approximately \$15,000 less than non-racialized men; racialized women earn approximately \$10,000 less than non-racialized women. (more)

About Toronto Foundation

Established in 1981, the Toronto Foundation is one of the top 191 Community Foundations in Canada. We pool philanthropic dollars and facilitate charitable donations for maximum community impact. Our individual, family and organizational Funds number more than 500 and we administer more than \$400 million in assets. Through the Vital Toronto Fund we engage in city building, mobilizing people and resources to increase the quality of life in Toronto. To learn more, visit www.torontofoundation.ca