2026 | WINDSOR-ESSEX'S

VitalSigns® REPORT

FIND OUT WHAT MAKES WINDSOR-ESSEX COUNTY
A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, WORK, PLAY, AND GROW!

YOUR **VOICE**. YOUR *Community!*

WindsorEssex Community Foundation

2026 | WINDSOR-ESSEX'S **Vital**Signs®

2025 Vital Signs® Report Launch

Welcome to the Vital Signs® Report, published by the WindsorEssex Community Foundation (WECF) in partnership with Community Foundations of Canada (CFC). The Vital Signs® Report is a snapshot of life in Windsor and Essex County that uses local research and data to measure the vitality of our community.

By identifying strengths and trends in 11 key areas of focus, Vital Signs® touches on all aspects of our daily lives and allows us to better understand our community. Our goal is to gather data from a broad and diverse selection of community members to better understand the needs of our overall community.

Each year, WECF conducts the Vital Signs® Survey and publishes the Vital Signs® Report as an informational resource for our community. We use this as an opportunity to share with the community what makes Windsor-Essex County a great place to live, work, play, and grow.

The Vital Signs® Report helps to build community knowledge, inform community investments, and identify strategic priorities. We use the Vital Signs® Report to help guide our grant-making process, based on what our community has told us are their priority areas. We want to facilitate giving where the need is greatest, and the Vital Signs® Program helps us to do just that.

We are proud to compile this unique Report for our community. We want to thank everyone who participated and supported this year's Vital Signs® Program. We hope this Report will reaffirm what makes Windsor-Essex County a great place to live, work, play, and grow!

Lisa Kolody
Lisa Kolody
Executive Director, WECF
Inspiring philanthropy, to benefit our community, today and forever!

WELCOME TO THE 2026 VITAL SIGNS REPORT!

The data presented in this Report is organized into **11 key areas of focus.** Within those areas, local, provincial, and national data is included.

TOP PRIORITIES:
This section highlights top responses for each issue area.

WHAT YOU SAID:
This section highlights the results of what survey respondents shared, along with select pieces of feedback*.

DID YOU KNOW?
This section highlights important or interesting initiatives related to the information presented in each issue area.

HOW CAN I USE THIS REPORT?
The Vital Signs® Report serves as a starting point for further conversations. It is intended to inform the community about our priorities to better direct our region's resources and planning.

WHO USES THIS REPORT?
The Vital Signs® Report is a valuable tool for understanding the needs of our community. Use this Report to access the outlined programs and services, or to develop new ones that address local needs. We encourage residents, businesses, community organizations, educational institutions, and government leaders to share and discuss the findings of this Report.

*Some "What You Said" responses have been edited for clarity and brevity.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

If **Vital Signs®** is Windsor-Essex County's annual community check-up then the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a global physical exam. Established as part of the United Nations' Agenda 2030, the SDGs consist of 17 interconnected objectives focused on eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, and promoting responsible, sustainable growth by the end of the next decade. The goals serve as a call to action, advocating for the right of all people to peace and prosperity.

More information on the Sustainable Development Goals is available at www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals

COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS OF CANADA

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 coordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada. The **Vital Signs®** trademark is used with permission from Community Foundations of Canada.

WindsorEssex Community Foundation

OUR COMMUNITY

POPULATION

WINDSOR - ESSEX COUNTY	WINDSOR CMA*	ESSEX COUNTY*
422,630	349,615	73,016

**2021 Census Metropolitan Area

Statistics Canada's estimation process, which adjusts for census undercoverage and updates populations annually, estimates the 2026 population of the region at

488,738

ABOUT OUR SURVEY RESPONDENTS

AGE

24 or younger	5%
25-44	27%
45-64	39%
65 or over	29%

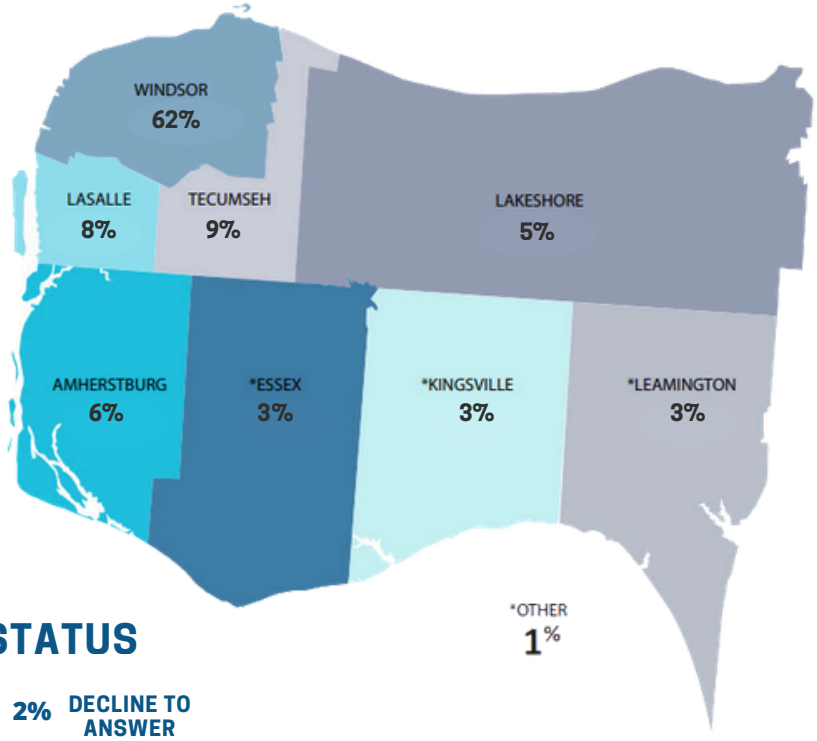
EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Employed Full-time*	47%
Employed part-time*	12%
Unemployed	2%
Retired	31%
Student	4%
Unable to work/not looking for work	3%
Decline to answer	1%

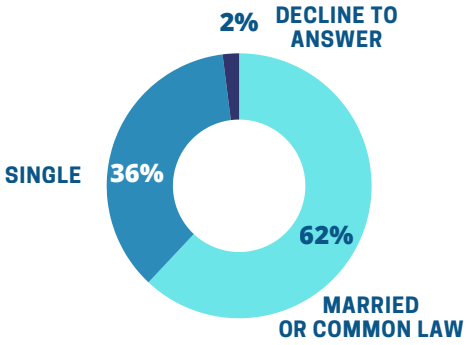
LIVED IN WINDSOR-ESSEX COUNTY FOR:

More than 10 years	88%
2 - 10 years	10%
Less than 2 years	2%

WHERE DO YOU CURRENTLY LIVE?



MARITAL STATUS



BORN IN CANADA

84% YES	16% NO

*In this report, "full-time employment" refers to working 35 or more hours per week and "part-time employment" refers to working 34 or less hours per week.

2026 WINDSOR-ESSEX'S **VitalSigns®**

PRESENTED BY WINDSOR Family | Health | Team

HEALTH, WELLNESS & ACTIVITY

TOP PRIORITIES

Improving access to mental health programs and services **41%**

Improving access to health professionals and services **41%**

Increasing access to sports and physical activity programs **11%**

WHAT YOU SAID

86% of survey respondents said that, in general, I am happy in life always / most of the time.

When it comes to the overall Health, Wellness and Activity in Windsor & Essex County,

39% of survey respondents said we're doing great / we're making good progress

59% said there's room for improvement

"Creating more walkable neighbourhoods and planning communities that support active, healthy living is essential to improving health and quality of life in Windsor-Essex."

— 2026 SURVEY RESPONSE

STATS

Windsor Regional Hospital

15th largest hospital in Ontario

7th largest Community Teaching Hospital in Ontario

1 in 4 youth report experiencing challenges related to mental health

46% of adults reported one or more chronic illness

Windsor Family Health Team

provides team-based primary care through a team of:

7 family physicians

2 clinical locations

2 nurse practitioners

20+ interprofessionals

Sources: Windsor Regional Hospital, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, and Windsor Family Health Team

ALIVIA REILLY, STUDENT, WINDSOR FAMILY HEALTH TEAM HEALTH PROMOTION BOOTH

Photo taken by Windsor Family Health Team

DID YOU KNOW?

In addition to providing patient care, the **Windsor Family Health Team** partners with post-secondary institutions to support community-based research, evaluate innovative models of care, and provide learning opportunities for students across a range of health professions. By integrating education, research, and clinical practice, the organization is helping strengthen the future healthcare workforce while advancing evidence-informed care for Windsor-Essex. **windsorfht.ca**

University of Windsor's Adapted Physical Exercise (APEX) program promotes inclusion and well-being by pairing Human Kinetics students with students who have intellectual and developmental disabilities for adapted physical activity. The project will measure the positive outcomes educators and participants have already experienced through everyday interactions and shared experiences. **uwindsor.ca**

Family Services Windsor-Essex delivered more than 11,000 counselling sessions last year, supporting individuals, couples, and families through life's challenges and transitions. They offer affordable counselling with flexible appointments, including evenings, weekends, and a walk-in counselling clinic. Their diverse team has a wide range of specialties and language options, providing support for relationships, mental health, stress, grief, and personal growth. **fswe.ca**

CMHA Windsor-Essex has expanded access to youth mental health supports in Essex County by providing regular services in LaSalle and Harrow, helping young people access care closer to home. Youth who have struggled to engage with virtual services report that receiving in-person support in their community had a positive impact on their mental health. **windsoressex.cmha.ca**

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1 NO POVERTY | 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

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WORK

TOP PRIORITIES

Providing a living wage to employees **35%**

Providing access to a diverse range of meaningful employment opportunities **31%**

Decreasing the unemployment rate **15%**

Ensuring youth are better prepared for the workforce **15%**

WHAT YOU SAID

When asked about the quality of work opportunities in Windsor & Essex County,

25% of survey respondents said we're doing great / we're making good progress

72% said there's room for improvement

"There should be more emphasis on providing incentives/opportunities for top talent to live and work locally after graduation."

—2026 SURVEY RESPONSE

STATS

Windsor-Essex

8% unemployment rate as of June 2026 (compared to 11% in June 2025)

56.9% employment rate as of June 2026

61.8% labour force participation rate

Ontario

7% unemployment rate as of June 2026

Canada

6.5% unemployment rate as of June 2026

Sources: Statistics Canada

ST. CLAIR COLLEGE CHATHAM CAMPUS HEALTHCARE HORIZONS
Photo taken by Rich Garton, St. Clair College

DID YOU KNOW?

Severe disabilities heavily alter a family's financial stability. **Family Respite Services** provides a crucial bridge for families, allowing parents to retain their jobs, secure household income, and avoid long-term reliance on social assistance programs. Without external relief: 61.4% of primary caregivers of children with severe disabilities must reduce their employment hours, and over 38% have to take extended leaves of absence entirely. **familyrespite.org**

The Windsor Essex Chamber of Commerce helps businesses grow through exclusive member programs that provide savings on business services, employee benefits, insurance, networking opportunities, and advocacy support, helping local companies invest more resources into their operations and workforce. **windsoressexchamber.org**

In March 2026, approximately 170 high school students in the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) Health and Wellness program participated in Healthcare Horizons, an immersive career exploration event hosted by **St. Clair College** and the **Chatham-Kent Health Alliance** that introduced students to health-care careers and post-secondary education pathways. **stclaircollege.ca**

Connections Early Years Family Centre offers the Be Back Soon program, a service that provides flexible, short-term childcare at no cost for qualifying families to use when they need to attend employment, legal, social services, or health appointments. By providing childcare when families need it most, Be Back Soon helps parents and caregivers take important steps toward employment and family stability. **connectwithus.ca**

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1 NO POVERTY · 5 GENDER EQUALITY · 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

2026 WINDSOR-ESSEX'S **VitalSigns®**

PRESENTED BY Connor Clark & Lunn Private Capital

ENVIRONMENT

TOP PRIORITIES

Improving air quality **28%**

Improving the amount of connected green spaces **23%**

Improving resilience to climate change **23%**

Monitoring the health of Lake Erie **8%**

Improving water quality **7%**

Improving recycling programs **4%**

95% of survey respondents said that Lake Erie's health is extremely important / moderately important.

WHAT YOU SAID

When asked how we're doing when it comes to the Environment in Windsor & Essex County,

36% of survey said we're doing great / we're making good progress

61% said there's room for improvement

"We need to encourage alternatives to car travel through improved bike lanes and public transportation."

—2026 SURVEY RESPONSE

STATS

9,000

tonnes of organic waste diverted from landfills through phase 1 municipalities of the Green Bin program.

27,000

eligible households in Kingsville, Leamington and Amherstburg will receive curbside collection as part of phase 2, starting in November 2026.

Up to **40%**

of household garbage volumes reduced through the Green Bin Program.

80,000

native trees distributed throughout Windsor and Essex County during ERCA's 2026 spring tree planting program.

Sources: EWSWA, ERCA, & City of Windsor

ESSEX REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY TREE PLANTING
Photo taken by Essex Region Conservation Authority

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2026, WECF joined **Community Foundations of Canada's Communities for Climate Resilience** learning cohort, a national initiative led by Community Foundations of Canada that empowers community foundations to integrate climate considerations into their grantmaking, investments and community leadership activities. **communityfoundations.ca**

In July 2026, 19 hectares of former Windsor Raceway lands were acquired by the Ontario Conservation Accelerator for inclusion in the proposed **Ojibway National Urban Park**. The acquisition increased the proposed park footprint to more than 443 hectares, helping protect one of Canada's most significant remaining tallgrass prairie and oak savanna ecosystems. **theoca.ca**

Friends of Ojibway Prairie is a volunteer-led organization that supports habitat restoration, conservation, and environmental education throughout the Ojibway Prairie Complex. In 2026, volunteers continued contributing to restoration projects, species monitoring, native plant initiatives, and community events that help protect this globally significant ecosystem. **friendsofojibwayprairie.com**

Supported by the WECF

The Downtown Windsor BIA's new Floral Futures Program will soon be transforming downtown streets with 12 large decorative planters filled with native plant species. Located along key corridors of Ouellette Avenue and Pelissier Street, the planters help support local biodiversity, provide habitat for pollinators, and educate residents about the environmental benefits of native plants. **downtownwindsor.ca**

Supported by the WECF

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SAFETY

TOP PRIORITIES

Expanding social programming for at-risk individuals **43%**

Reducing the use of illegal drugs **18%**

Increasing the visible presence of police **13%**

Reducing crime levels **11%**

Creating more proactive initiatives aimed at reducing youth crime **10%**

WHAT YOU SAID

When asked how we're doing in terms of SAFETY in Windsor & Essex County

38% of survey said we're doing great / we're making good progress

61% said there's room for improvement

"We should be exploring any and all opportunities, practices, and initiatives that focus on the prevention of crime, disorder, and the loss of well-being."

— 2026 SURVEY RESPONSE

"There needs to be a greater focus on programs to support rehabilitation of those living with addiction and homelessness."

— 2026 SURVEY RESPONSE

STATS

9.6% decrease in crimes against people in 2026, as compared to 2025.

93% of Windsor residents reported being satisfied with their personal safety from crime.

188 occurrences of crimes against people in 2026

VS

208 occurrences of crimes against people in 2025

Sources: Statistics Canada & Windsor Police Service

COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS TOGETHER FOR JUSTICE MEETING
Photo taken by WindsorEssex Community Foundation

DID YOU KNOW?

A partnership between **CMHA Windsor-Essex, Windsor Police Service,** the **City of Windsor, Port Windsor,** the **University of Windsor,** and the **Gordie Howe International Bridge** has transformed Windsor's waterfront with new COMPASS Stations that support emergency response, suicide prevention, and public safety. The initiative was funded through the Gordie Howe International Bridge Community Benefits Plan. **windsoressex.cmha.ca**

In 2026, municipalities across Windsor-Essex launched a refreshed **Community Safety & Well-Being Plan**, bringing together local governments, service providers, community organizations, and residents around a shared vision of a community where everyone feels safe, has a sense of belonging, and can access the services and opportunities they need to thrive.

In 2026, the **Windsor-Essex Community Foundation** participated in the **Together for Justice** pilot which brought six local organizations to identify barriers to accessing legal and justice-related services and develop solutions for vulnerable populations, including youth, newcomers, survivors of violence, temporary workers, and rural residents. The initiative is supported by **Community Foundations of Canada** and the **Law Foundation of Ontario** and seeks to improve community safety through prevention, education, and coordinated support services. **communityfoundations.ca.**

Essex-Windsor EMS upgraded to a modern Medical Priority Dispatch System in September 2026 to improve emergency response efficiency and reduce response times for urgent calls. **countyofessex.ca**

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16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

2026 WINDSOR-ESSEX'S **VitalSigns®**

WindsorEssex Community Foundation

GETTING STARTED

TOP PRIORITIES

Improving foreign accreditation recognition **24%**

Increasing awareness of racism and diversity issues **20%**

Increasing employment and educational opportunities for newcomers **17%**

Improving how my community welcomes newcomers **13%**

WHAT YOU SAID

When asked how we're doing in terms of GETTING STARTED in Windsor & Essex County

34% of survey said we're doing great / we're making good progress

42% said there's room for improvement

"With limited housing options, getting started in Windsor isn't as attainable as it once was."

—2026 SURVEY RESPONSE

STATS

1 in 4 residents in Windsor-Essex County is an immigrant

15,830 newcomers settled in Windsor-Essex between 2016-2021

27% of Windsor's population is foreign-born, representing more than 100 cultural backgrounds.

Approximately,

26% of immigrants in Windsor have a university degree

27% of newcomers in Windsor have a university degree

14% of immigrants have a college diploma

6% of newcomers in Windsor have a college diploma

Source: City of Windsor Diversity Profile and Statistics Canada

MULTICULTURAL COUNCIL OF WINDSOR AND ESSEX COUNTY TALENT CONNECT EVENT

Photo taken by Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2026, **Bilingual Legal Clinic Windsor-Essex Clinique juridique bilingue** offered free and confidential legal support helpline access and public education seminars for local migrant workers, supported by Together for Justice, a program supported by Community Foundations of Canada and WindsorEssex Community Foundation in partnership with the Law Foundation of Ontario. **blc-cjb.com**

Supported by the WECF

The **Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County** offers a seniors group where newcomers can build friendships, practice language skills, learn about Canadian culture and health, and share their experiences. The program is designed to help seniors build confidence and connections while reducing the stress and social isolation that can accompany settlement. **themcc.com**

Community support is helping **Matthew House Refugee Welcome Centre** work toward expanding newcomer services in Windsor-Essex. In 2026, the organization continued recruiting volunteers to assist with the renovation of an 18,000-square-foot facility that will provide shelter and settlement supports for up to 70 refugee claimants and their families. **matthewhousewindsor.org**

Supported by the WECF

For the purposes of this report:

"**Newcomer**" refers to individuals who have recently arrived in the community or country.

"**Immigrant**" refers to individuals who have permanently settled in a country other than their country of birth, regardless of how long ago they arrived.

1 NO POVERTY · 2 ZERO HUNGER · 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING · 4 QUALITY EDUCATION · 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH · 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

2026 WINDSOR-ESSEX'S **VitalSigns®**

WindsorEssex Community Foundation

LEARNING

TOP PRIORITIES

Affordability of post-secondary education **32%**

Improving skill development for the workforce **31%**

Better access to educational opportunities **16%**

Improved selection of post-secondary programs and oppportunities **11%**

WHAT YOU SAID

When asked how they would rate the quality of LEARNING in Windsor & Essex County

49% of survey respondents said we're doing great / we're making good progress

45% said there's room for improvement

"There should be more resources for children and youth with learning disabilities in the county."

—2026 SURVEY RESPONSE

STATS

The WindsorEssex Community Foundation awarded over

$89,000

in scholarships to local students across Windsor and Essex County.

The Province of Ontario invested

$9.65M

into improving learning spaces, labs, and equipment at the University of Windsor and St. Clair College in January 2026.

University of Windsor

49.3%

of full-time students come from Windsor-Essex

$8.7M

in co-op placement earnings

St. Clair College

3.9%

increase reported in domestic enrolment, growing from 7,360 students in Fall 2024 to 7,645 in Fall 2025.

82.7%

of students enrolled in Fall 2024 either continued their studies or graduated.

Sources: University of Windsor & St. Clair College

WINDSORESSEX COMMUNITY FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP BREAKFAST 2026

Photo taken by WindsorEssex Community Foundation

DID YOU KNOW?

The **Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Foundation** helps youth with lived experience in the child welfare system overcome financial barriers to postsecondary education through scholarships that can support tuition, books, housing, and transportation. These investments help youth stay focused on their educational goals while building pathways toward independence, employment, and long-term success. **wecaf.on.ca**

Supported by the WECF

St. Clair College's School Within a College (SWAC) program helps youth who are at risk of not graduating earn high school credits and dual-credit college courses, with partnerships across four regional school boards. **stclaircollege.ca**

Through **United Way's** On Track to Success program, students from priority neighbourhoods receive tutoring, mentoring, financial assistance, and socio-emotional supports to help them graduate from high school and prepare for college, university, or the skilled trades. In 2024-25, the program achieved a 92% retention rate and a 98% graduation rate. **weareunited.com**

Supported by the WECF

In 2026, the **Greater-Essex County District School Board (GECDSB), Fanshawe College, and Caldwell First Nation** entered into a partnership agreement to enhance educational opportunities and pathways for Indigenous learners. This agreement will enable learners to enroll in adult education classes through the GECDSB's Mason Education Centre or attend programs at Fanshawe College in London. **publicboard.ca**

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WindsorEssex Community Foundation

HOUSING

TOP PRIORITIES

Improving the affordability of housing **51%**

Increasing the availability of housing with different levels of assisted care **24%**

Providing housing for the homeless **20%**

WHAT YOU SAID

When asked how they would rate the quality of HOUSING in Windsor & Essex County

15% of survey respondents said we're doing great / we're making good progress

84% said there's room for improvement

"There needs to be affordable housing that includes on-site mental health and addiction services, supported by adequate security to promote safety and reduce crime."

— 2026 SURVEY RESPONSE

STATS

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation predicts:

5800

homes will be sold in Windsor-Essex County in 2026, compared to 5402 in 2025.

$575,000

will be the average resale home price of a house in Windsor-Essex County in 2026, compared to $567,000 in 2025.

672

individuals in Windsor-Essex experiencing homelessness, according to 2024 point-in-time count.

The next study is to be conducted in October 2026.

Housing starts in the Windsor Census Metropolitan Area are expected to decline in 2026 as economic uncertainty, elevated construction costs, and slower population growth continue to affect residential development.

Sources: CMHC & CBC Windsor

HANDPRINT WALL AT THE WINDSOR RESIDENCE FOR YOUNG MEN
Photo taken by The Windsor Residence for Young Men (WRYM)

DID YOU KNOW?

Windsor Family Homes and Community Partnerships manages more than 120 affordable rental units across Windsor while also providing support programs for tenants and the broader community. Its services include social housing, family programs, and a food bank that helps meet basic needs. **wfhcp.com**

Habitat for Humanity Windsor-Essex's Appliance Repair Program provided nearly 400 families with access to affordable and repaired appliances. By making essential household appliances more affordable and accessible, the program helps support housing stability for local families. **habitatwindsor.org**

Supported by the WECF

Windsor Residence for Young Men's Youth Housing Specialist program supported 139 young people, and 88% of youth experiencing homelessness and participating in this program successfully transitioned into stable housing, including independent living arrangements and family reunification. **wrym.ca**

Supported by the WECF

In partnership with the City of Windsor, the provincial government, and Hotel-Dieu Grace Healthcare, **Windsor- Essex Community Housing Corporation** opened Grace on Ouellette Apartments in May 2026, a new affordable housing development that transformed a former medical building into 19 affordable studio and one-bedroom apartments for individuals and families in need. **wechc.com**

The **Welcome Centre Shelter for Women & Families** provides emergency shelter for women+ and families experiencing homelessness in Windsor-Essex. Its current facility includes beds for single adult women+, as well as family shelter units. The shelter also has pet-friendly units, helping reduce a potential barrier for people seeking safe shelter. **welcomecentreshelter.com**

Supported by the WECF

2026 WINDSOR-ESSEX'S **VitalSigns®**

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GETTING AROUND

TOP PRIORITIES

Improving public transportation **31%**

Creating a regional transportation system connecting Windsor and Essex County **31%**

Improving and/or increasing the number of bike pathways and/or pedestrian walkways **15%**

Creating a more accessible transportation system for seniors and/or youth **15%**

WHAT YOU SAID

When asked how they would rate the quality of GETTING AROUND in Windsor & Essex County

23% of survey respondents said we're doing great / we're making good progress

72% said there's room for improvement

"Our region would benefit from an effective, reliable, and accessible regional transportation system connecting Windsor Essex County and an increase in the number of bike pathways and pedestrian walkways."

— 2026 SURVEY RESPONSE

STATS

85.5% of Windsor CMA commuters drive to work

7.6% of commuters carpool to work

2,765 Windsor CMA residents commute primarily by public transit

Through the 2025-2026 gas tax program, the Ontario government allocated over **$4.4 million** to support public transit in Windsor and Tecumseh.

13,578 passengers used public transit during the 2026 Ford Fireworks event, showing a **31%** increase in Fireworks transit ridership since 2025.

Sources: Windsor News Today & Statistics Canada

AMHERSTBURG LIBRO TRAILS
Photo taken by Tourism Windsor-Essex Pelee Island (TWEPI)

DID YOU KNOW?

The newly-opened **Gordie Howe International Bridge** connecting Detroit, Michigan, and Windsor, Ontario includes a dedicated multi-use path for pedestrians and cyclists, separate from vehicle lanes. The toll-free path is the only crossing between Michigan and Canada that accommodates foot and bike traffic. **gordiehoweinternationalbridge.com**

In 2026, **Transit Windsor** opened a new East End Transit Terminal, and completed the expansion of its West End Transit Terminal, adding new bus bays, passenger shelters, bicycle parking, and improved accessibility features to help residents connect more easily to destinations across the city. **citywindsor.ca**

Windsor-Essex is connected by more than 80 kilometres of Greenway Trails and an 11-kilometre riverfront trail network, helping residents and visitors travel by walking and cycling while accessing parks, natural areas, and communities across the region. **visitwindsoressex.com**

In 2026, the **County of Essex** added 16.7 kilometres of new active transportation infrastructure, helping expand the County Wide Active Transportation System (CWATS) network to approximately 580 kilometres of trails, bike lanes, multi-use paths, and paved shoulders connecting communities across Windsor-Essex. **countyofessex.ca**

Bike Windsor-Essex's Safe Spokes program is an eight-week cycling initiative that helps riders build the skills, confidence, and equipment needed to ride safely throughout Windsor-Essex. **bikewindsoressex.ca**

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | 13 CLIMATE ACTION

2026 WINDSOR-ESSEX'S **VitalSigns®**

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FOOD SECURITY

TOP PRIORITIES

Improving access to locally grown food **30%**

Increasing support for community food programs **30%**

Improving access to fresh and nutritious food **26%**

Increasing support for community food banks **5%**

WHAT YOU SAID

When asked how Windsor & Essex County is doing when it comes to FOOD SECURITY

33% of survey respondents said we're doing great / we're making good progress

64% said there's room for improvement

"We need to ensure that all neighbourhoods have access options for obtaining fresh produce, including local."

—2026 SURVEY RESPONSE

STATS

1 in 4 households in Windsor-Essex are impacted by food insecurity

The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit estimated the weekly grocery bill for a family of four at nearly **$272 per week**

Individuals experiencing food insecurity are **4x more likely** to experience mental health challenges.

60% of food-insecure households receive income from employment, demonstrating that food insecurity affects many working families.

Sources: WECHU & CBC Windsor

LEAMINGTON COMMUNITY HOPE CENTRE KITCHEN NATURE FRESH FARMS VOLUNTEERS
Photo taken by Leamington Community Hope Centre

DID YOU KNOW?

The Soup Shack Windsor operates seven days a week from 7pm to 9pm, providing community meals, snacks, beverages, clothing, and hygiene products to individuals experiencing homelessness and food insecurity in Windsor and Essex County. They serve the community from their location at 636 Goyeau Street. **dwcc.ca**

Supported by the WECF

The **Windsor Goodfellows** Breakfast Program provides breakfast for more than 1,800 children every school day, helping students start the day ready to learn. The program provides children in 23 local schools with breakfast/nutritious snacks in the morning. **windsorgoodfellows.org**

Supported by the WECF

South Essex Community Council's food support pilot exceeded its original goal by providing 4,262 nutritious snacks to 126 children through its after-school and childcare programs. The initiative also strengthened partnerships with organizations such as the Leamington Food Hub, Salvation Army Food Bank, and Real Canadian Superstore, helping local families access healthy food while supporting children's well-being. **secc.on.ca**

Supported by the WECF

The **Leamington Community Hope Centre** serves more than 100 people on many evenings through its drop-in meal program, providing food, connection, and support 365 days a year. **leamingtonhopecentre.ca**

Supported by the WECF

1 NO POVERTY 2 ZERO HUNGER 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

2026 WINDSOR-ESSEX'S **VitalSigns®**

PRESENTED BY

Windsor Symphony Orchestra

ARTS & CULTURE

TOP PRIORITIES

Increasing the number of arts & cultural programs available for community members

34%

Increasing the number of arts & cultural opportunities for those wanting to pursue a career or hobby in the arts

21%

Accessibility of arts and cultural events

19%

Providing more art in public spaces

11%

WHAT YOU SAID

When asked about the overall quality of ARTS & CULTURE in Windsor & Essex County

69% of survey respondents said we're doing great / we're making good progress

23% said there's room for improvement

"We should improve the visibility of current arts and cultural programs available within our community, and increase funding for arts organizations to help compensate for increased cost of living."

—2026 SURVEY RESPONSE

STATS

The City of Windsor provides

$133,000

annually through its Arts, Culture & Heritage Fund to support local artists and cultural organizations.

5 festivals

in Windsor and Essex named among Ontario's Top 100 Festivals and Events.

The Artspeak Gallery hosted

40

exhibitions displaying the work of

200+ artists

The top local festivals were attended by

369,700+

total attendees in 2026.

Sources: TWEPI, City of Windsor & Arts Council Windsor & Region

WINDSOR SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA LEAMINGTON SUMMER CONCERT
Photo taken by Lauren Holmes, Windsor Symphony Orchestra

DID YOU KNOW?

Art Windsor-Essex helps open the door to meaningful art experiences for young people across Windsor-Essex— especially where access may otherwise be limited. Through its accessible programs, AWE supported more than 470 educators last year and reached over 9,600 students, helping spark creativity, confidence, and connection through art. **artwindsoressex.ca**

The Windsor International Film Festival's Women of WIFF initiative has been celebrating women filmmakers and amplifying women's stories since 2017. Through film screenings, filmmaker discussions, and community-building events, the program creates opportunities for audiences to engage with stories by and about women while supporting greater representation in film. **windsorfilmfestival.com**

Supported by the WECF

Over 19,000 students in Windsor Essex experienced the **Windsor Symphony Orchestra (WSO)** either in their schools or at the Capitol Theatre last year. The WSO's education program is an important part of the orchestra's mission to "connect people through music." **windsorsymphony.com**

Supported by the WECF

The Kiwanis Music Festival Windsor-Essex County provides opportunities for hundreds of local music students to develop their skills, showcase their talents, and gain confidence through live adjudicated performances. The annual festival supports the artistic and personal development of young musicians across the region. **wkmf.ca**

Supported by the WECF

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2026 WINDSOR-ESSEX'S **VitalSigns®**

WindsorEssex Community Foundation

BELONGING & LEADERSHIP

TOP PRIORITIES

Increasing opportunities for people to feel included and connected **33%**

Creating initiatives to improve voter turnout **27%**

Providing more initiatives to increase life satisfaction **26%**

Increasing opportunities to volunteer **6%**

WHAT YOU SAID

When asked about the overall quality of BELONGING & LEADERSHIP in Windsor & Essex County

41% of survey respondents said we're doing great / we're making good progress

53% said there's room for improvement

"We should focus on developing opportunities for our community's diversity to be reflected in our leadership."

— 2026 SURVEY RESPONSE

STATS

41% of Canadians participate in formal volunteer activities, contributing **1.7 billion** volunteer hours annually

Among Canadian youth, **86%** of those with a strong sense of belonging reported positive mental health.

The last municipal election in 2022 saw some of the lowest voter turnout rates:

Pelee Island **58%**	Windsor **32%**
Kingsville **49%**	Lakeshore **30%**
Essex **41%**	LaSalle **30%**
Amherstburg **39%**	Tecumseh **28%**

Sources: Statistics Canada & AMO

TECUMSEH VOTER INFORMATION BOOTH AT FARMER'S MARKET
Photo taken by Town of Tecumseh

DID YOU KNOW?

Municipal Elections in Ontario are held every four years. The 2026 Municipal Election takes place on Monday, October 26. To learn more about who can vote in Municipal elections, and your rights as a voter, visit your municipality's website or **Ontario.ca**.

To help increase civic participation in the 2026 Municipal Election, the **Town of Tecumseh** is investing in a voter awareness campaign led by a dedicated Voter Engagement Specialist. The campaign aims to help more residents feel informed, connected, and empowered to participate in local decision-making. **tecumseh.ca**

Supported by WECF

The Windsor Essex Catholic District School Board's Focus on Youth program partners with local non-profits and community organizations to provide youth with leadership training, paid employment opportunities, and skills development, helping young people build confidence, connections, and a sense of belonging in their communities. **wecdsb.on.ca**

The **Bangladesh-Canada Association, Windsor Essex (BCAWE)** is leading the development of a Mother Language Plaza Monument in Jackson Park. The project will celebrate linguistic diversity, cultural heritage, and the importance of preserving mother languages while creating a lasting public space for education, reflection, and community connection. **bcawe.org** & **wecf.ca**

Supported by WECF

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WindsorEssex Community Foundation

OUR VISION

Inspiring philanthropy, to benefit our community, today and forever!

OUR MISSION

We build a better Windsor-Essex community by attracting and managing legacy funds, making grants to support local programs, and bringing community partners together.

ABOUT WECF

The WindsorEssex Community Foundation (WECF) is a charitable organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in Windsor-Essex County through collaboration, strategic leadership, and innovative philanthropic solutions. For over 43 years, we have been committed to creating opportunities for prosperity and improving our communities.

WECF serves as a perpetual community trust for philanthropic purposes. We help donors establish lasting legacies that benefit our community today and into the future. To date, we have invested over $20 million in our community and manage over $40 million in assets.

WECF leads several impactful programs in the region, including Inspiration 100™, Vital Signs®, and Random Act of Kindness Day™. By attracting and managing legacy funds, making grants to local initiatives, and fostering collaboration among community partners, we strive to build a better Windsor and Essex County.

WECF thanks our valued partners in community for supporting the Vital Signs® program. Together, through shared commitment and collaboration, we strengthen our region. Hearing from our community helps guide our work—and reminds us that when we listen, learn, and act together, we all grow stronger.

The WECF has invested over **$20 million** in community since 1983.

over **$1.4 million** invested in community in 2025-2026.

84 community partners supported through grants from the WECF in 2025-2026

More than **150** community investments made in the past year alone.

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

Connor Clark & Lunn Private Capital

Windsor Symphony Orchestra

WINDSOR Family | Health | Team

Town of Tecumseh Ontario - Canada

Investing in People Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County

familyservices Windsor-Essex Counselling & Advocacy Centre

Hawkins & Co. Advisors | CPAs

Canadian Mental Health Association Windsor-Essex County Community well-being is our sole focus

Downtown Windsor

SECC

FACCA INCORPORATED

FRS Family Respite Services Windsor-Essex

AWE Art Windsor Essex

ST. CLAIR COLLEGE

WindsorEssex Community Foundation