



# COMMUNITY VITALITY

Vital communities are those that have strong, active, and inclusive relationships among people, private, public, and non-governmental organizations that foster individual and collective wellbeing.

Vital communities are able to cultivate and marshal rich and diverse relationships in order to create, adapt, and thrive in the changing world. They do so by focusing on social relationships and support, including community safety and social engagement, and on social norms and values, including feelings towards others and residents' sense of belonging to their communities.



## SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Like most Ontarians, residents of Oxford County generally feel a strong connection to their communities, which reflects the steady rise in sense of belonging in recent years throughout the province and country. About 7 of 10 residents of Oxford County (70.2%) report feeling a somewhat or strong sense of belonging to their communities, which is comparatively greater than that for West Region (68.5%) and Ontario (68.1%), and much greater than for Canada overall (66.4%). Such a connection to their communities in Oxford County suggests that the majority of residents feel supported, are better able to cope, and are more resilient when faced with challenging situations.

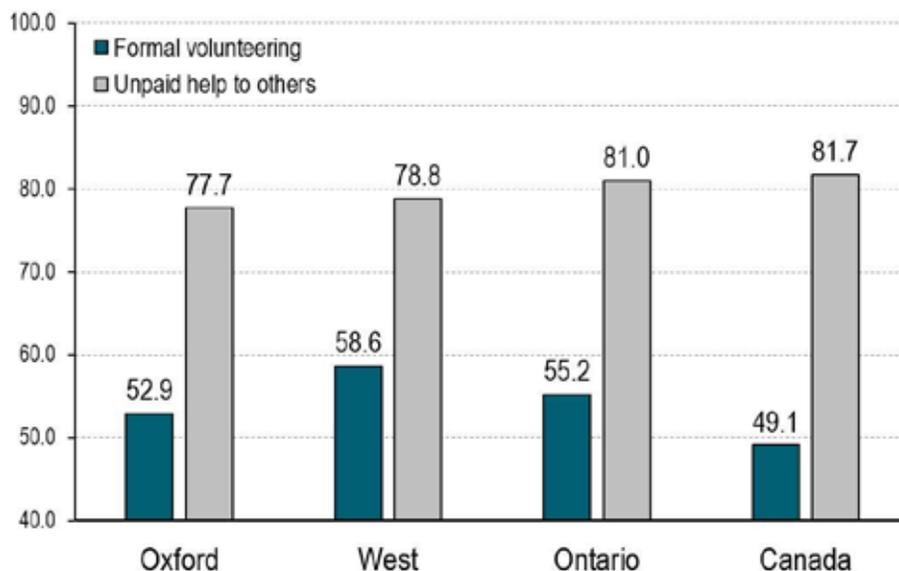
Residents of Oxford County feel this greater sense of belonging despite a higher percentage of people living alone (18.5%) compared to that in West Region (10.9%), in Ontario (9.6%), and in Canada (13.9%). Additionally, a lower percentage of residents (49.5%) report having five or more close friends on whom they can depend than for either the West Region or the entire province (53.8% and 53.7% respectively) or across the country (51.8%). Moreover, people in Oxford County participate in formal volunteering with organizations such as a union, a sport or recreation organization, or a cultural or educational group, to a lower degree (52.9%) than other Ontarians (55.2%), but more so than Canada as a whole (49.1%). These somewhat lower levels of social supports and social engagements represent a potential source of concern, despite the residents' stronger connection to the community. However, data for Oxford County was drawn from the Community Wellbeing Survey, which used questions with slightly different wording compared to those data from surveys conducted nationally, so this variation might partially account for the lower levels reported in Oxford County.



people with somewhat/strong sense of belonging to their communities

<b>OXFORD</b>	<b>70.2%</b>
<b>WEST</b>	<b>68.5%</b>
<b>ONTARIO</b>	<b>68.1%</b>
<b>CANADA</b>	<b>66.4%</b>

## PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE PARTICIPATING IN FORMAL VOLUNTEERING AND UNPAID HELP TO OTHERS IS LOWER THAN OTHER REGIONS



## COMMUNITY SAFETY

Approximately 4 of 5 people in Oxford County (81.0%) feel safe walking alone after dark in their neighbourhood. This rate is quite similar to that in West Region overall (80.3%) and slightly higher than anywhere else in Ontario (79.2%). Higher feelings of safety in Oxford are notable because such perceptions of feeling safe in one’s community have been on the rise in recent years throughout the province.

## SOCIAL NORMS AND VALUES

More than three-quarters of residents in Oxford County provide unpaid help to others (77.7%), such as helping an elderly neighbour. This rate is slightly lower than elsewhere in the province where over 4 in 5 people provide this type of help (81.0%). These forms of engagement could be serving to reinforce Oxford residents’ sense of belonging to their communities despite their generally lower levels of social support.

About 1 in 25 residents in Oxford County (4.1%) report experiencing discrimination due to characteristics such as one's ethnicity, race, or sexual orientation. This percentage of residents in Oxford County is lower than that for West Region (6.6%), and much lower than that for both the province (9.6%) and the country overall (9.3%). Even though this lower level of perceived discrimination may partially be due to the data being drawn from the Community Wellbeing Survey rather than a national data source, it is a positive sign. As a factor affecting not only the sense of belonging residents feel, but also their mental and emotional wellbeing, lower rates of discrimination are always encouraging.



people reporting experience of discrimination

<b>OXFORD</b>	<b>4.1%</b>
<b>WEST</b>	<b>6.6%</b>
<b>ONTARIO</b>	<b>9.6%</b>
<b>CANADA</b>	<b>9.3%</b>