

2024 Community Wellness Report

Promoting Health and Wellbeing for All

(City of Brantford, 2024)

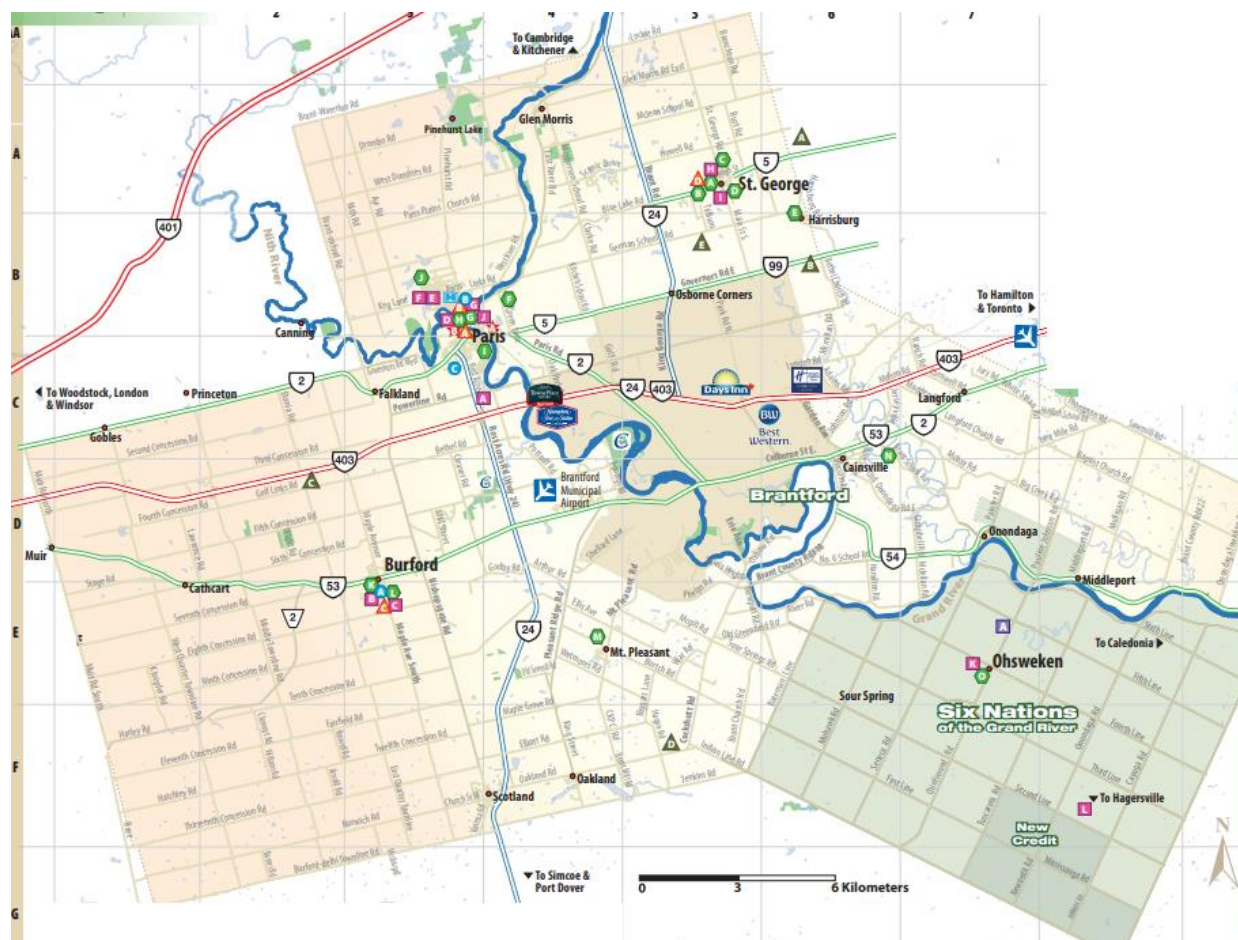


Figure 1 Map of Brantford, County of Brant and Six nations Territory

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Agency: Grand River Community Health Centre

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Acknowledgments

Land Acknowledgement

This report recognizes and honours the historical and ongoing presence of the Indigenous peoples of the Grand River. We express our deep respect for their stewardship of the land, which has been maintained for generations. The research presented in this report was conducted on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee (Hoe-dee-no-show-nee) and the Anishinaabe (Anish-nah-bay) peoples. We acknowledge their enduring connection to this land, their rich cultural heritage, and their vital contributions to our community. We commit to fostering respectful relationships with the Indigenous peoples of Brant, supporting their rights, traditions, and aspirations as we move forward together.

University of Waterloo

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the University of Waterloo for their invaluable contribution through the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW). This ground-breaking index significantly enriches our understanding of societal wellbeing by providing comprehensive insights into the diverse dimensions of health and quality of life. The CIW not only serves as a vital resource for researchers and policymakers but also inspires meaningful action towards fostering a healthier, more equitable, and prosperous future for all Canadians. We are deeply appreciative of the University's commitment to advancing knowledge and promoting wellbeing in our community.

Grand River Community Health Centre

We extend our sincere gratitude to the leadership team at The Grand River Community Health Centre (GRCHC) for their unwavering support and commitment to this research. Special thanks to Executive Director Lynda Kohler, Director of Primary Care and Community Health Todd Gould, Director of Quality and Primary Care Integration Anka Brozic, and Program Manager Magdalena Bentia. Their leadership and dedication to promoting wellness and improving healthcare outcomes exemplify a deep commitment to the improvement of community care. Through their efforts, GRCHC continues to ensure that programs and services are not only community-focused but also responsive to the needs of the people in County of Brant, Six Nations, and the City of Brantford.

Local Agencies of Brant and City of Brantford

We are profoundly grateful to the local health and social services agencies for their support and participation in disseminating our community wellness survey. Their dedication and collaboration have been instrumental in reaching a broad spectrum of our community, ensuring diverse voices are heard and valuable insights are gathered. By facilitating this survey, they have played a crucial role in fostering a deeper understanding of our community's health needs and priorities.

Introduction

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) is a comprehensive measure that goes beyond traditional economic indicators to assess various dimensions of wellbeing that are crucial for a high quality of life (University of Waterloo, 2024). Developed by the University of Waterloo, the CIW encompasses domains such as community vitality, democratic engagement, education, environment, healthy populations, leisure, culture, living standards, and time use.

- ✚ *Community vitality* refers to the strength and resilience of communities and their ability to foster a sense of belonging, social connectedness, and collective efficacy among its members.
- ✚ *Democratic engagement* examines the active participation of individuals in democratic processes and institutions on all levels of government (Federal, Provincial and Municipal) within society.
- ✚ *Healthy Populations* focuses on assessing and understanding the overall health and wellbeing of a given population. It includes a comprehensive set of indicators that measure various dimensions related to health outcomes, health determinants, and the social and environmental factors that influence health (National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health, 2024).
- ✚ The *Environmental* domain assesses and understanding the state of the environment and its impact on the well-being of Canadians. It encompasses various indicators that measure environmental health, sustainability, and the relationship between human activities and the natural environment.

- ✚ The *Leisure and Culture* domain seeks to understand the quality of life related to leisure activities, cultural engagement, and the availability of cultural resources within a society. It encompasses various indicators that reflect the social, recreational, and cultural dimensions of well-being among individuals and communities.
- ✚ The *Time Use* domain captures how people allocate their time across various activities and responsibilities, and how this allocation affects their overall well-being. It aims to compare the balance between work, leisure, caregiving, volunteering, and other pursuits that contribute to individuals' quality of life and societal health.
- ✚ The *Education* domain assesses the quality, accessibility, and impact of educational opportunities for communities. It encompasses various indicators that reflect the educational outcomes, resources, and experiences of individuals and communities both formal and informal.
- ✚ The *Living Standards* domain looks at the economic well-being and material conditions of individuals and households. It encompasses various indicators that reflect income levels, economic security, housing conditions, and overall standards of living.

By understanding these dimensions, communities like ours can better identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.

Brantford, Brant County, Mississauga's of the Credit and Six Nations, situated in the heart of Ontario, boast a rich history and a diverse population. However, like many regions across Canada, we face unique social, economic, and environmental challenges that impact our overall wellbeing (Brant County Health Unit, 2023). This survey serves as a proactive step towards addressing these challenges by gathering data directly from our residents. These

responses provide valuable insights into what matters most to our community members and will inform our GRCHC policies and initiatives that aim to enhance our community quality of life.

Methodology

Data Collection

The data was collected, using the same model as the previous GRCHC 2018 Community Wellness Report. The survey questions used originated from the Alliance for Healthy Communities Be Well Survey (Alliance for Healthier Communities, 2016).

The initial phase involved the collaborative effort of GRCHC staff who customized questions from the CIW, previous GRCHC 2018 Community Wellness Survey and Alliance of Healthy Communities to align with local demographics and community-specific concerns. The result was the establishment of 40 open and closed ended questions.

This comprehensive survey aimed to capture a holistic view of individuals' wellbeing across the eight domains, integrating both online and in-person methodologies. The online component of the survey provided flexibility for respondents, to participate at their convenience while ensuring a wide reach across the County of Brant and City of Brantford and Six nations geographic area. Simultaneously, the in-person administration of the survey catered to individuals with minimal or no internet access, fostering inclusivity and accommodating varying levels of technological literacy/ access among participants.

Survey responses were sought through a mix model of social media, community outreach events as well as three surveys pick up/ drop off locations at GRCHC for all ten weeks of the

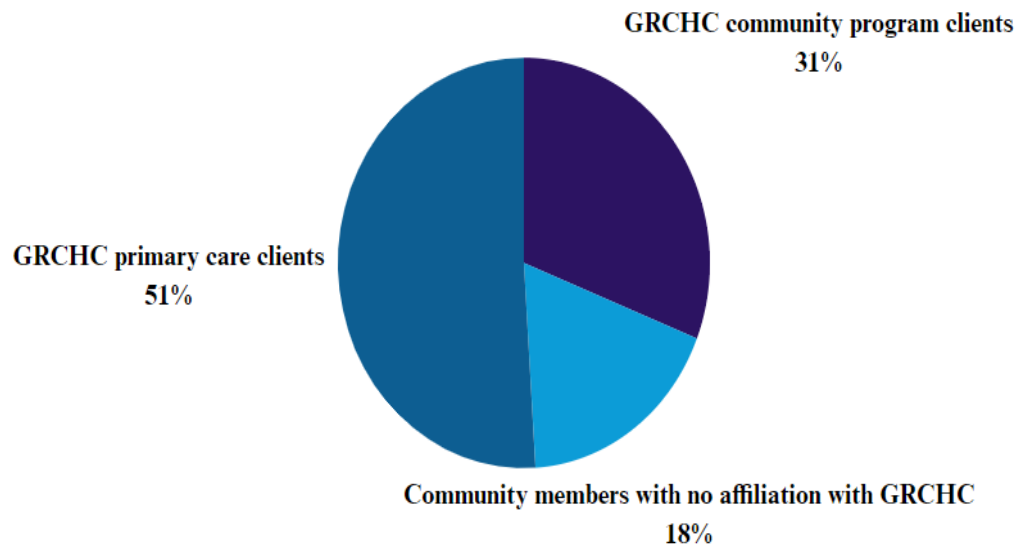
survey and the Brantford Public Library- Main site for five weeks and the Brantford Public Library-St Paul site for two weeks. Throughout the data collection period, rigorous protocols were implemented to maintain data integrity and confidentiality. Participants were assured of anonymity, encouraging candid responses and reducing potential biases. Data security measures were also upheld to safeguard sensitive information, complying with ethical standards and legal requirements governing research practices (Health Canada, 2024). Regular monitoring and quality assurance checks were conducted to mitigate errors and ensure the reliability of collected data, enhancing the credibility of findings derived from the survey.

During the survey activity period, an ongoing communication pathway was provided (staff contact) for participants to promote transparency and address any queries or concerns that arose. Additionally a focus group was held with 7 participants to expand on common themes or misinterpreted response found within the survey. This collective engagement fostered a sense of partnership between the health centre and the community, reinforcing trust and commitment to improving overall wellbeing outcomes.

Results/ Discussion

Specific exclusion criteria was applied to ensure data integrity and relevance. Out of the 312 completed surveys, four were excluded due to area code non-compliance indicating residency outside the designated parameters (City of Brantford, Brant County and Six Nations), ensuring that only local respondents were considered. Additionally, two surveys were removed for participants who reported ages below the 16 years minimum, as the study aimed to assess wellness in late adolescents and adults. Furthermore, two additional surveys were excluded for containing identifiable information, which violated privacy protocols and ethical guidelines. As a result there was a total of 308 surveys for analysis, representing a robust sample reflective of the community's perspective and insights.

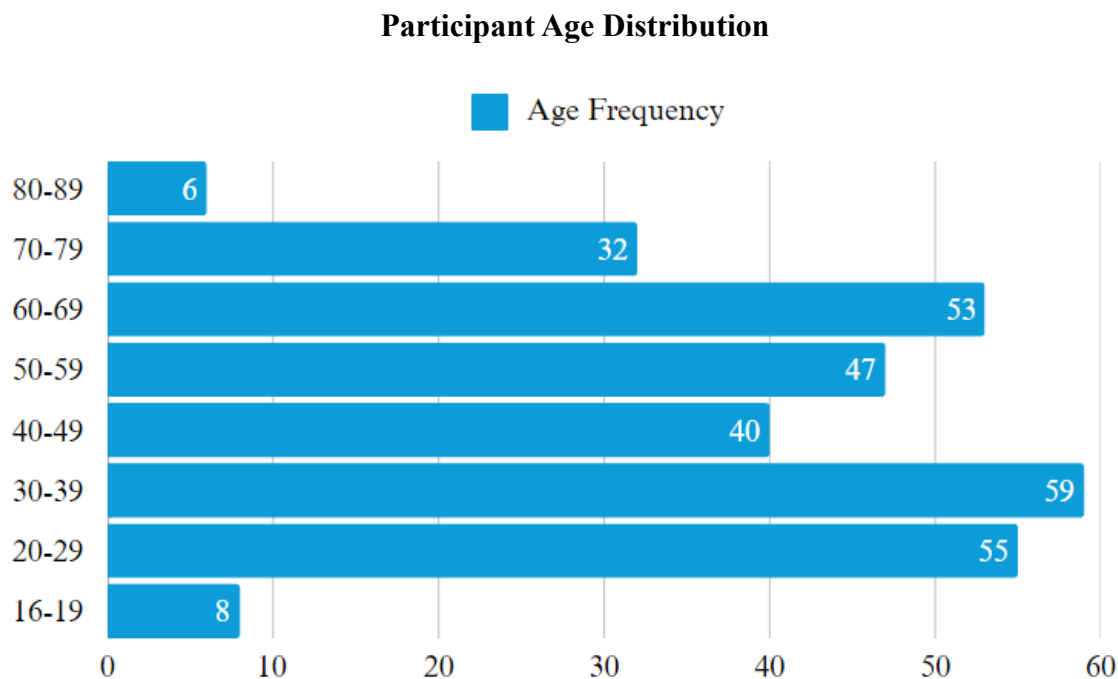
Participants connection to GRCHC



Among them, 51% were primary care clients of the Grand River Community Health Centre (GRCHC), receiving care from a Nurse Practitioner or Physician employed by the Centre. Additionally, 31% of participants reported active involvement in GRCHC's community programs, having attended one or more of the free monthly offerings designed to enhance social engagement, promote physical activity, and facilitate skill development in areas such as cooking and learning new skills such as knitting. In contrast, 18% of respondents indicated they had no affiliation with GRCHC. This segment likely represents individuals reached through targeted outreach efforts, including online advertising on Meta platforms and promotional initiatives from local health and social service agencies. These findings underscore the diverse engagement levels within the community and highlighting the effectiveness of outreach strategies in reaching a broader audience.

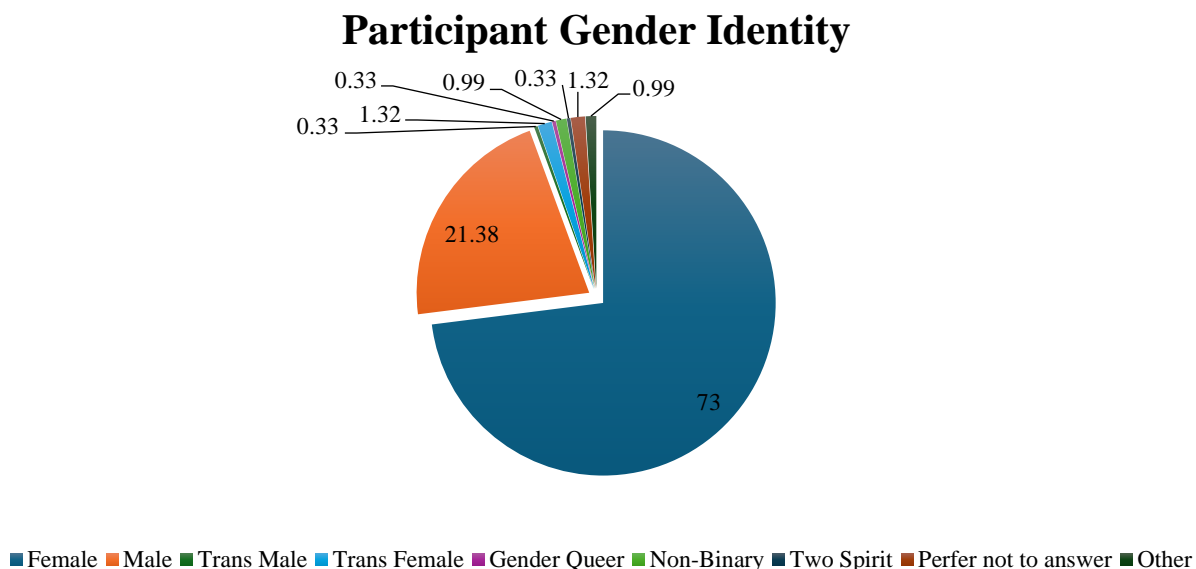
Demographics

Age Distribution



The survey participants exhibited a wide age range, spanning from 16 to 88 years old, with 54% of respondents aged 49 or younger. This reflects a significant shift from the previous survey, where 51% of participants were 50 years of age or older. Notably, this distribution aligns closely with data from the 2021 Census of Population (Statistic Canada, 2023). The increased representation of younger participants in the current survey can likely be attributed to improved promotion through social media and enhanced online accessibility, which have effectively broadened engagement among younger demographics.

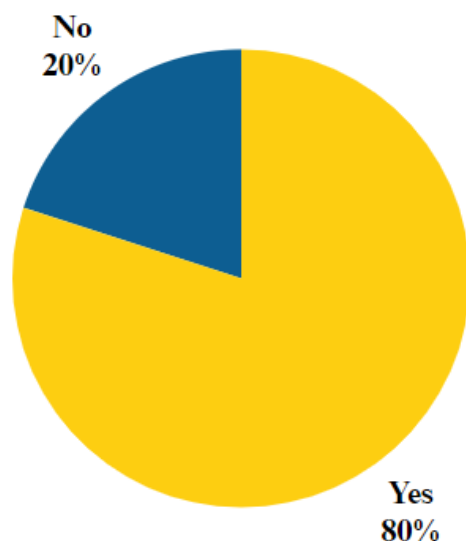
Gender Identity



In the survey, 79% of participants identified as female, while 21% identified as male. Additionally, 1% were Trans-female, and another 1% preferred not to disclose their gender. The remaining participants identified as Trans male, non-binary, two-spirit, or other. This distribution of gender identities is consistent with findings from the previous survey. When looking at factors that may contribute to the display of gender participation research suggests that women are often more likely to complete surveys and other data collection tools compared to men (Smith, 2008). Several factors may contribute to this trend, including differences in communication styles, socialization, and perceived importance of the survey topic. Women may also be more inclined to participate in research that addresses social issues or community well-being (Otufowora, et al., 2021).

Newcomer Participation

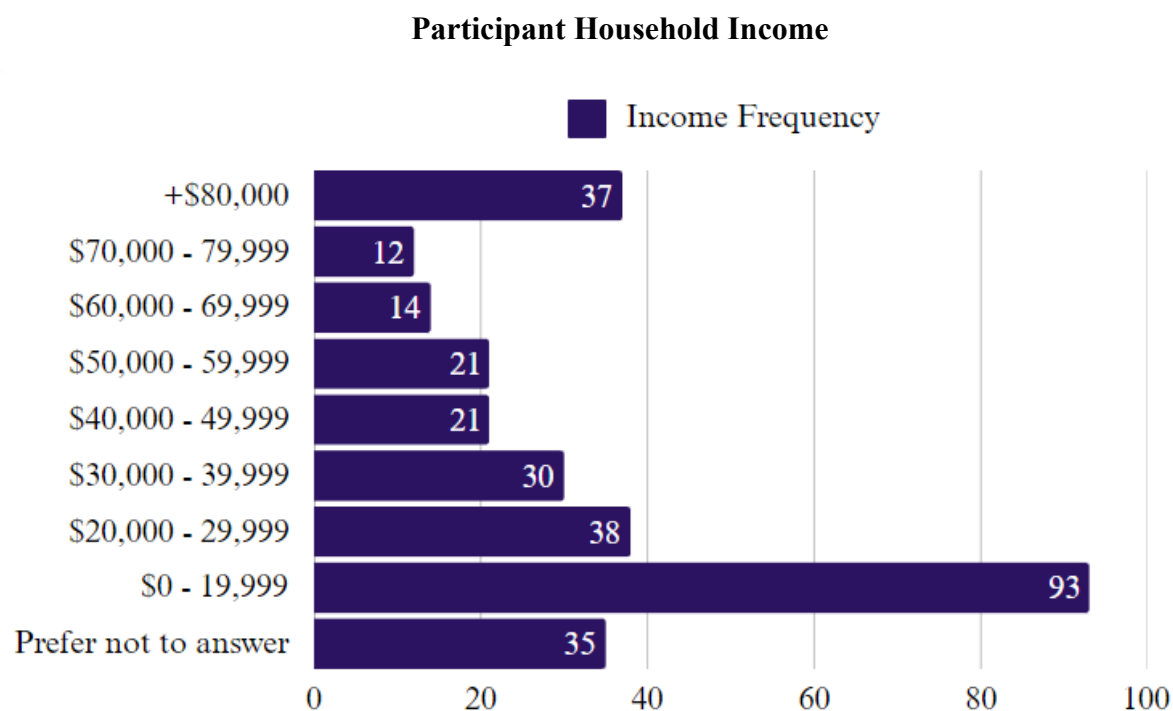
Participants born in Canada vs. those that were not



80% of survey participants reported being born in Canada, while 20% indicated they were not. This marks a significant shift in the demographic landscape, as the proportion of immigrant participants has increased notably since 2018 survey, when the percentage of newcomers was approximately 9.7%. This trend reflects the evolving ethnic diversity within Brantford, influenced in part by the presence of post-secondary education institutions such as Laurier University and Conestoga College, which attract a diverse student body. Additionally, Brantford's relative affordability compared to larger urban centres like Toronto enhances its appeal to newcomers seeking a more cost-effective living environment. An analysis of the data

further reveals that a majority of these newcomers hail from South or East Asia, underscoring the city's growing multicultural fabric. (Brantford Immigration Partnership, 2022).

Participant Household Income



56% of participants reported earning an annual household income of \$50,000 or lower.

Income distribution in Brantford commonly shows a higher proportion of lower to middle-income households compared to the broader province. This can be influenced by factors like local industry, employment opportunities. To compare the income levels of Brantford/ Brant with Ontario, we can look at various metrics such as average household income (total income earned by all working aged members of a household), and median household income (the income level that divides the lower and higher household incomes in a given area in half)

Median Household Income:

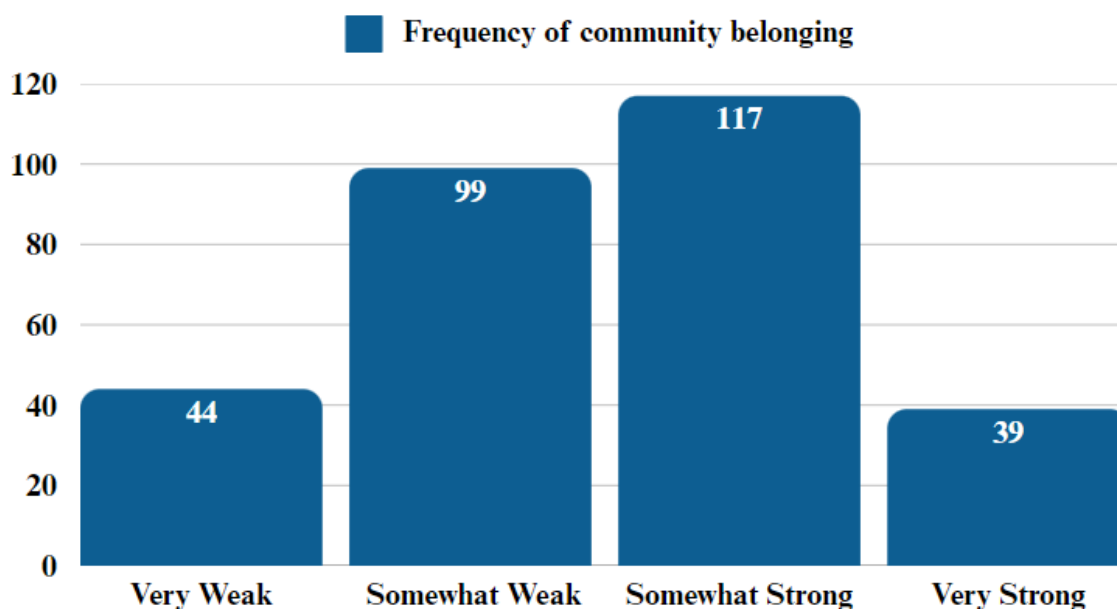
- ✚ Ontario: Median household income in Ontario is approximately CAD \$79,500 per year after taxes (CMHC data, 2021).
- ✚ Brantford: Median household income tends to be lower than the provincial average. Recent figures suggest around CAD \$76,000 per year after taxes.

Average Income:

- ✚ Ontario: The average income for Ontarians is generally higher than the median due to the influence of high earners. The average income was around CAD \$95,300 per year after taxes (CMHC data, 2021).
- ✚ Brantford: In Brantford, the average income is approximately CAD 85,900 after taxes compared to the provincial average, reflecting a more modest economic profile compared to other urban centres.

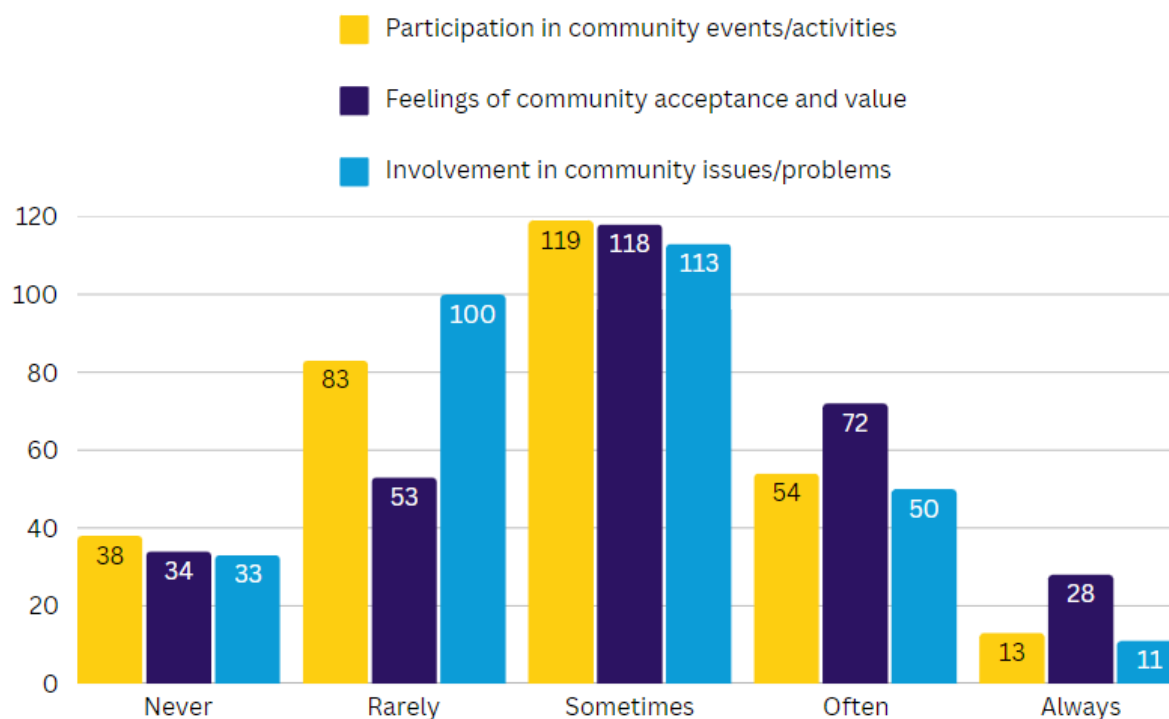
Community Vitality

Participants level of Community Belonging



Participants in the survey were prompted with the question, “How would you describe your sense of belonging to your community? Sense of belonging encompasses feelings of being part of something larger, as well as experiencing connection and acceptance.” 52% of respondents indicated that they feel a somewhat strong or very strong sense of belonging to their community. An analysis of the open-ended responses revealed several recurring themes, particularly the role of local institutions, such as churches and community programs, in fostering connections among residents. Additionally, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was significant; many participants noted that, while the pandemic initially disrupted established modes of community connectivity, it also encouraged the development of new online pathways that have persisted beyond the pandemic.

Participant's connection to the community



As part of our assessment of community vitality, participants were engaged with three key questions aimed at understanding their involvement and feelings of belonging within their community. The questions posed were:

- ✚ To what extent do you participate in community events and activities?
- ✚ To what extent do you feel accepted and valued in your community?
- ✚ When there are important issues or problems in your community, to what extent do you get involved in order to address these issues or help solve the problems?

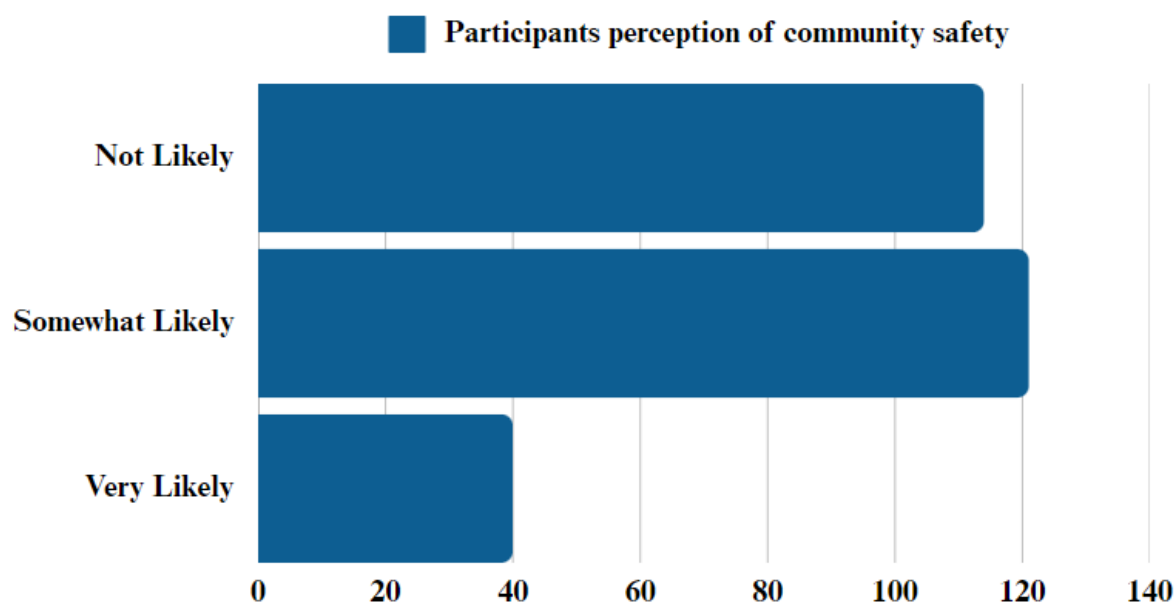
In response to the question about participation in community events and activities, only 22% of participants reported that they engage often or always, a significant decrease from 39% in

2018. This decline suggests a potential weakening of community engagement over the past few years which may be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic.

When asked about feelings of acceptance and value within the community, 32% of respondents indicated that they feel often or always accepted, down from 45% in 2018. This decrease highlights a growing sentiment of alienation among community members greatly attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. Comments from the survey indicate a lack of "third places"—informal gathering spots that foster social interaction—contributing to feelings of disconnection (Roberts-Ganim, 2023). Many participants expressed that while they occasionally connect with others, the absence of supportive environments limits their overall engagement.

Lastly, in terms of involvement in addressing community issues, 19% reported that they participate often or always, which shows a relatively stable response compared to previous years. However, this figure suggests that there remains significant room for improvement in mobilizing community members to take action on pressing issues. Overall, these findings underscore the need for initiatives aimed at enhancing community connection and participation, as well as creating inclusive spaces where all residents feel valued and empowered to contribute.

Perceptions of community Safety



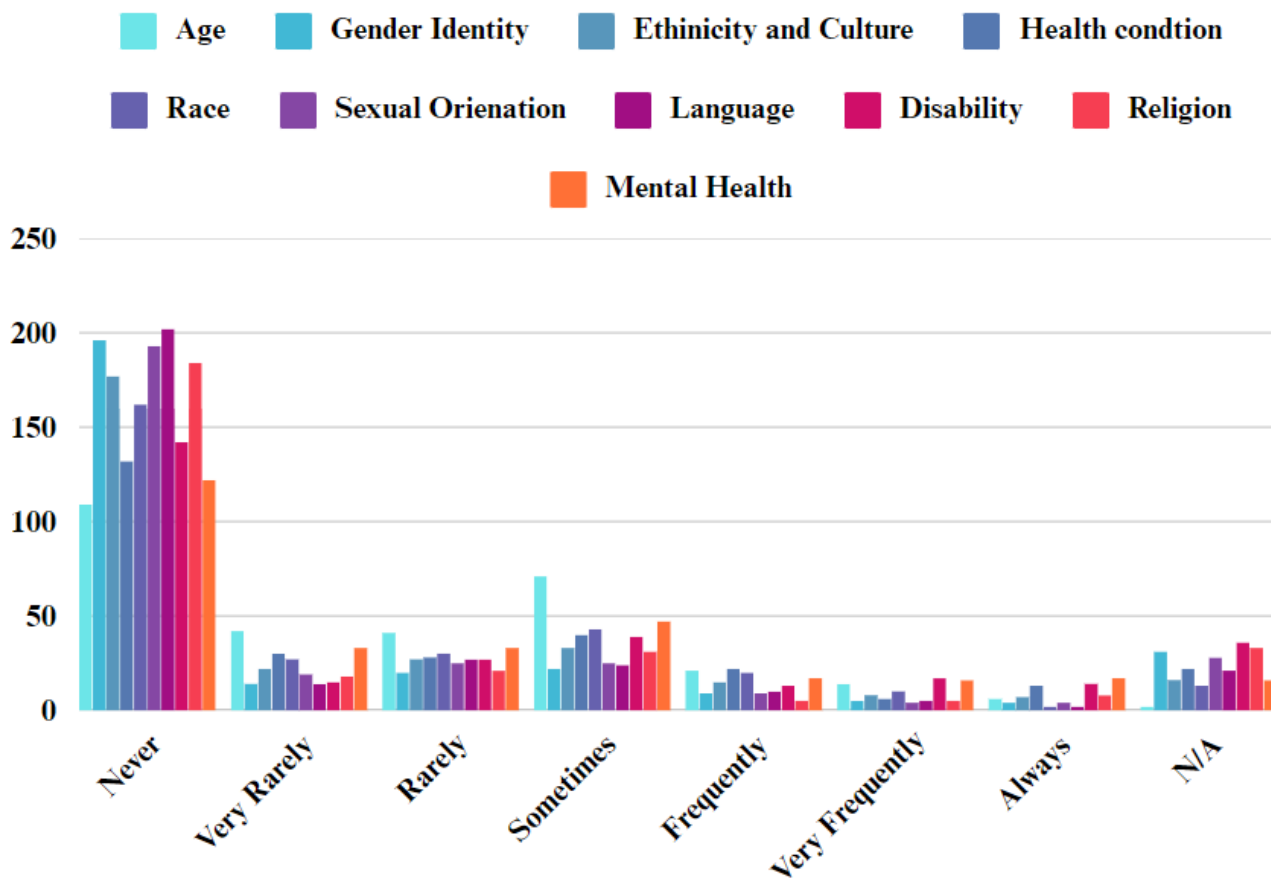
Participants were presented with a thought-provoking scenario designed to elicit insights into their perceptions of safety and trust within their community: “In the city or area where you live, imagine that you lost your wallet or something holding your identification or address, and it was found by someone else. How likely do you think your wallet would be returned to you?” This question served as a critical tool for assessing community sentiment regarding trust and social responsibility. The responses revealed a concerning trend: 47% of participants indicated that they felt it was "not likely" their lost wallet would be returned.

These findings echo the insights from Statistics Canada’s Safety Cities Profile Series, which notes that while 80% of residents in Brantford express satisfaction with their personal safety from crime, this figure falls short of the provincial average of 89% (Statistics Canada, 2020). The significant proportion of participants who lack confidence in the return of their lost

belongings suggests a troubling sense of mistrust among community members. This perception may reflect underlying issues related to social cohesion, which is crucial for fostering a sense of community and collective security.

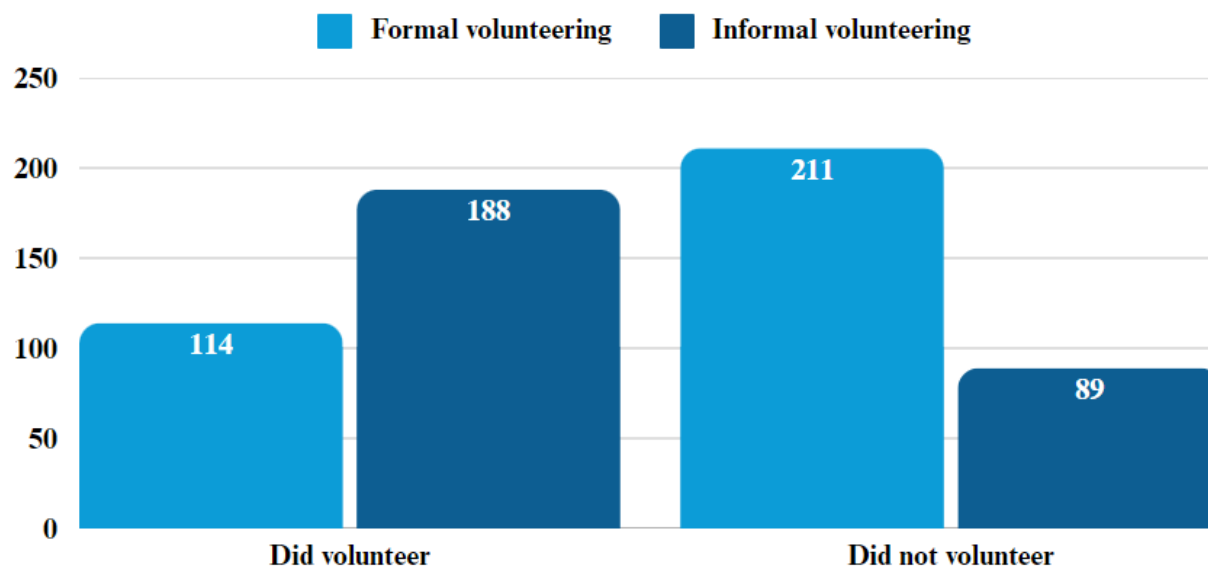
Such feelings of uncertainty can have far-reaching implications, not only affecting individual well-being but also influencing broader community dynamics. Trust serves as a fundamental pillar of social interaction; when it erodes, the fabric of community life can fray, leading to increased isolation and decreased collaboration among residents. The findings indicate a pressing need for further investigation into the factors contributing to these perceptions of mistrust. Understanding these elements is essential for developing effective community engagement strategies and informed policy initiatives aimed at cultivating a safer, more supportive environment. By addressing these concerns, local authorities and community leaders can work toward enhancing social cohesion and restoring trust, ultimately fostering a stronger, more resilient community.

Participant frequency of community discomfort based on social factor



Democratic engagement

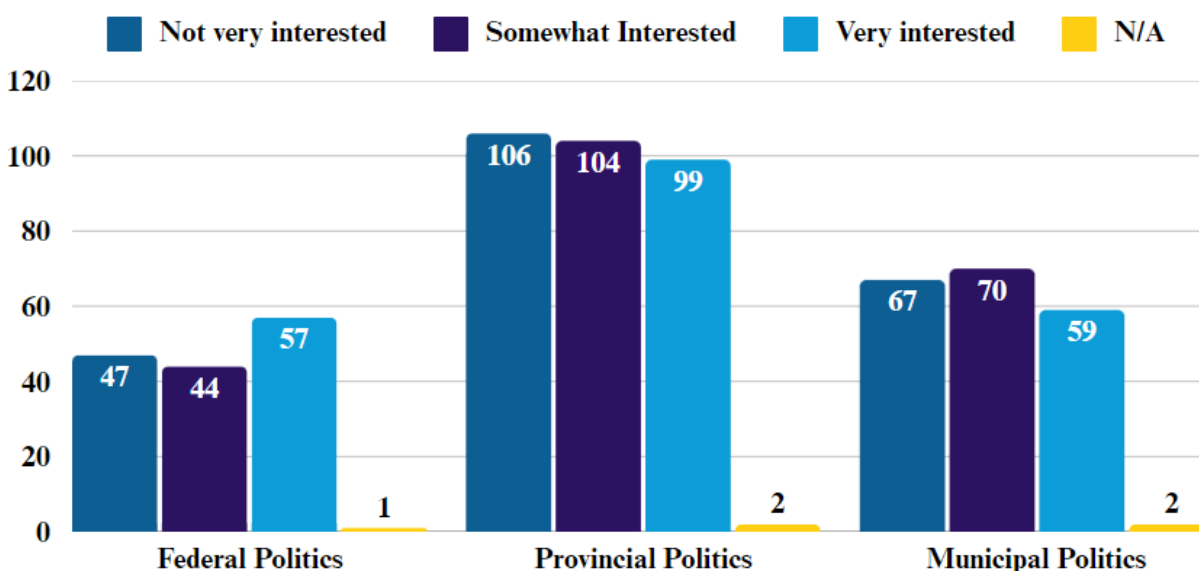
Participants formal vs. informal volunteering over the past year



Participants were asked about their volunteering experiences over the past year, specifically inquiring whether these experiences were formal or informal. The existing literature provided limited comparative data regarding community volunteering trends during this period. Despite the challenges posed by pandemic restrictions, it was observed that individuals actively sought out informal volunteering opportunities in their communities. Responses indicated a strong inclination towards initiatives aimed at fostering social connections and promoting physical activity. For instance, many participants reported engaging in neighbourhood support activities, such as establishing walking clubs designed to encourage residents to leave their homes and engage with one another. These grassroots efforts not only facilitated social

interaction but also contributed to community well-being, highlighting a resilience and adaptability among individuals in response to the constraints of the pandemic. This trend underscores the importance of informal volunteering as a means of community engagement and support during times of crisis.

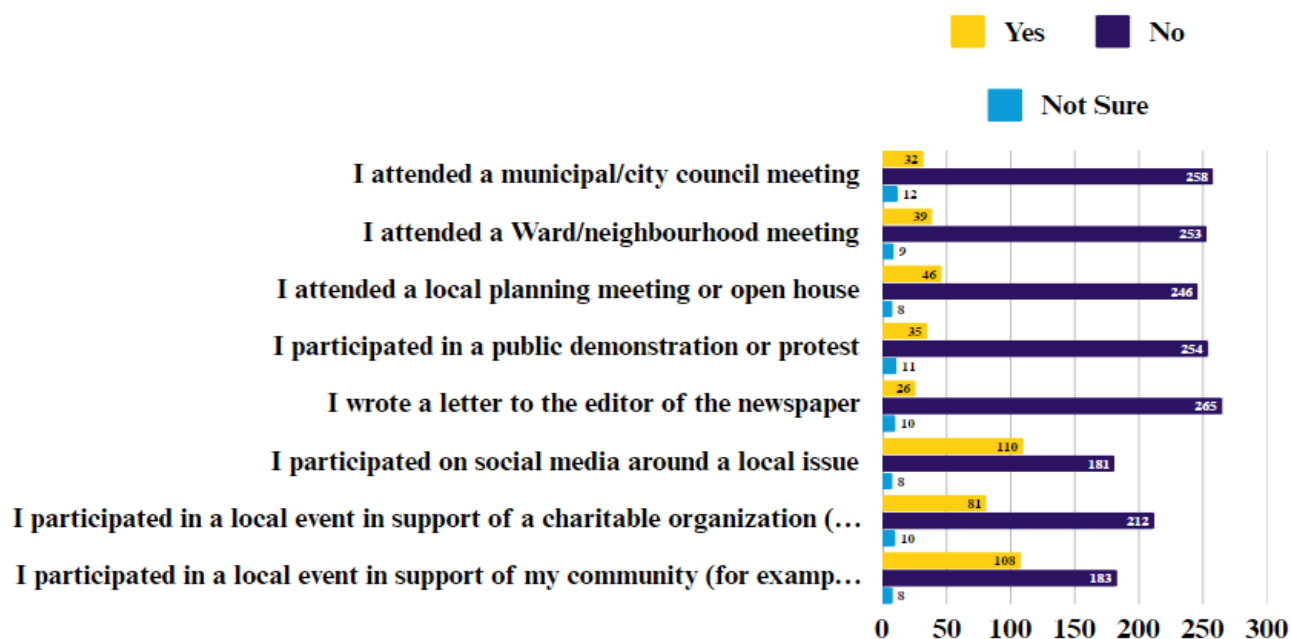
Frequency of participant's interest in politics



Participants were surveyed regarding their interest in politics, specifically asking them to rate their level of interest across various levels of government, including local, provincial, and federal. This inquiry aimed to assess shifts in political engagement within the community over time. In 2018, a notable 29% of participants expressed that they were not interested in politics at all, highlighting a significant apathy toward political involvement during that period. In contrast, the current survey revealed a striking decline in this disinterest, with only 0.01% of participants indicating a lack of interest across all levels politics. This dramatic change suggests a rapidly

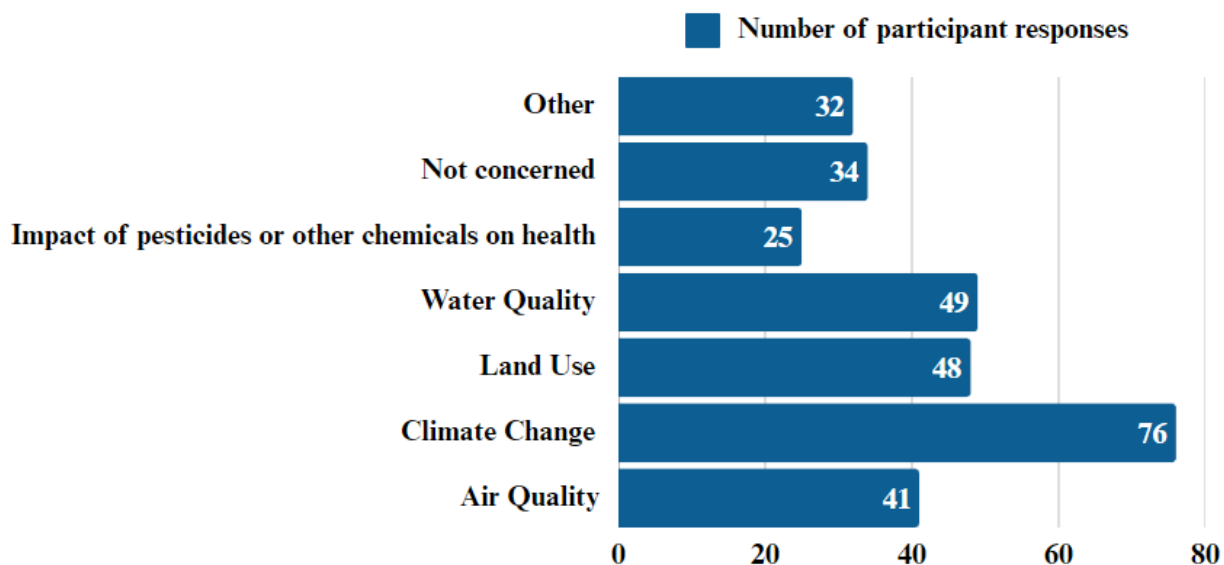
increasing awareness and engagement in political matters among community members, potentially influenced by recent events (housing crisis, food prices) that have galvanized public interest in governance and civic participation (Arriagada, Khanam, & Sano, 2022). Such findings warrant further investigation into the factors contributing to this shift, as well as the implications for community health, policymaking, and overall civic engagement. Understanding these dynamics can inform strategies to enhance political participation and strengthen democratic processes at all levels of government.

Participant's community involvement in the past 12 years



Environment

Participant's environmental concerns



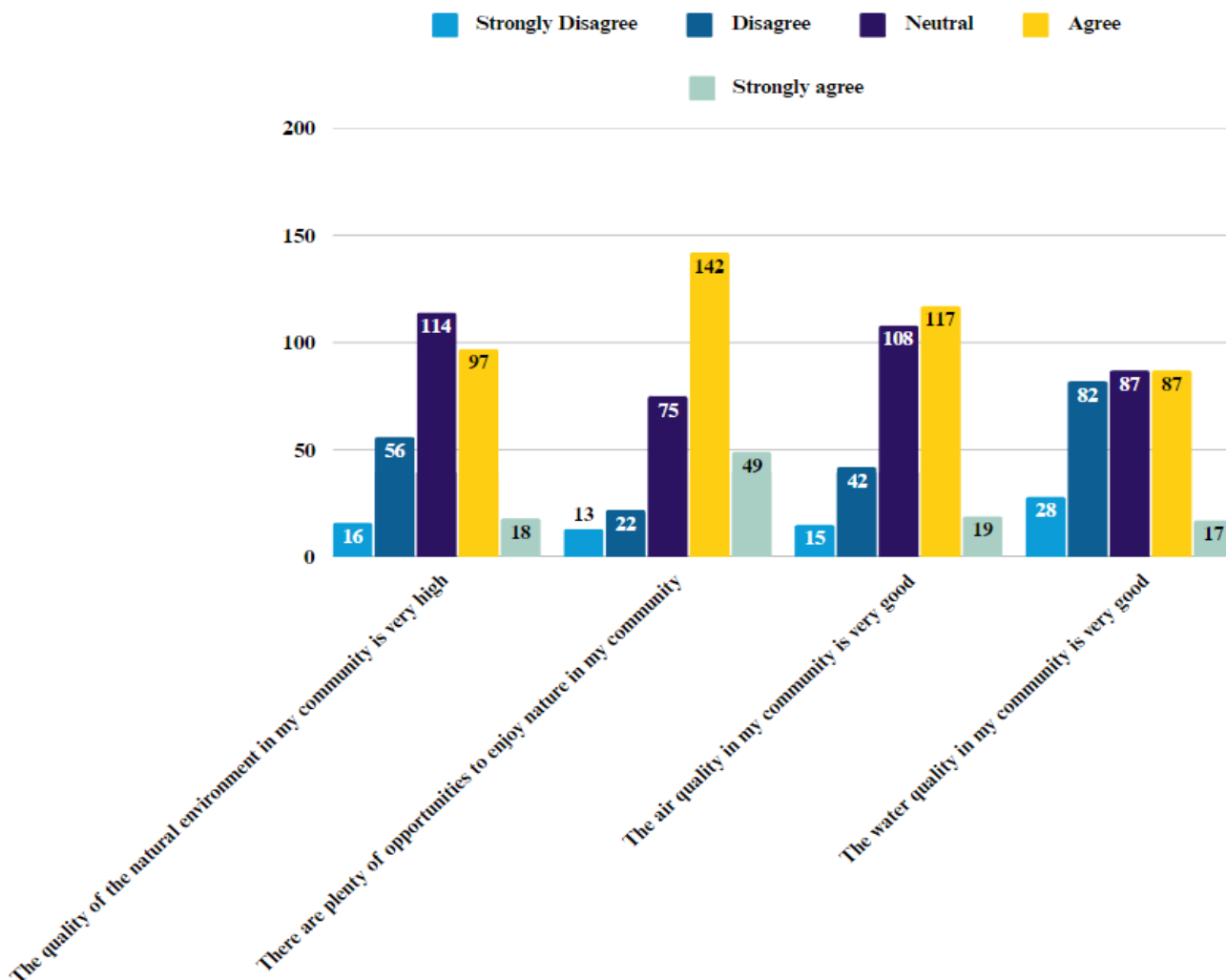
Participants were asked to identify the environmental issues they are most concerned about in their community. The results indicated that 25% of participants expressed significant concerns about climate change, making it the most pressing environmental issue in their view. Land use and water quality followed closely behind, with 16% and 15% of participants citing these issues, respectively. A deeper analysis of the comments revealed unique local dynamics, particularly given Brant's proximity to the Six Nations territory.

The concerns regarding land use emerged from two distinct perspectives. Some participants interpreted the question in the context of infrastructure development and its subsequent impacts on housing and affordability, emphasizing the need for sustainable urban planning and responsible resource allocation. Conversely, others approached the issue of land

use from a perspective of Indigenous rights and stewardship, advocating for the recognition and honouring of traditional land ownership by First Peoples.

This divergence in interpretation underscores the complexity of environmental concerns within the community and the necessity for nuanced discussions. Given the varied understandings of the question, this topic was subsequently addressed in a focus group to foster a more comprehensive dialogue. The focus group aimed to explore these perspectives in greater depth, facilitating a constructive conversation about environmental priorities and the implications for community health and well-being. Such insights are vital for developing targeted interventions and policies that reflect the diverse concerns of community members while promoting environmental justice and sustainability.

Participant's perceptions about their local environment



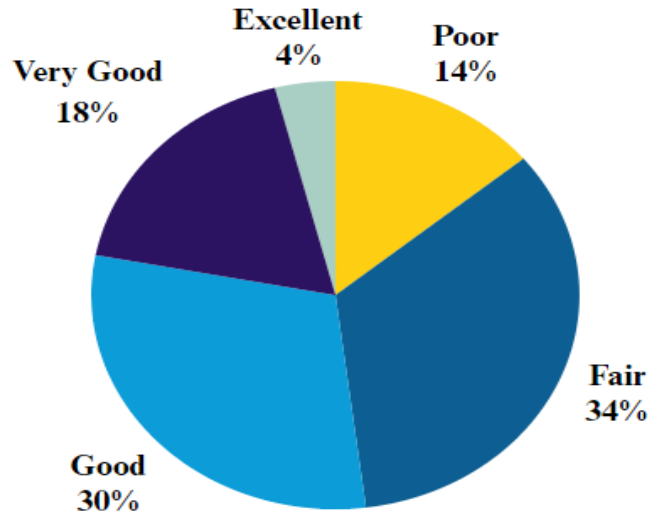
Despite the expressed concerns regarding broader environmental issues, when participants were asked to evaluate the quality of the natural environment within their specific community—including air and water quality—a significant majority indicated that they felt either agreeable or neutral about these conditions. This response suggests a notable disconnect between general environmental apprehensions and localized perceptions of environmental quality.

The findings indicate that while participants may recognize and worry about larger environmental challenges, such as climate change and its global implications, they simultaneously perceive their immediate surroundings as relatively satisfactory. This sense of contentment may stem from a variety of factors, including effective local environmental management practices, the presence of green spaces, or community efforts to enhance air and water quality.

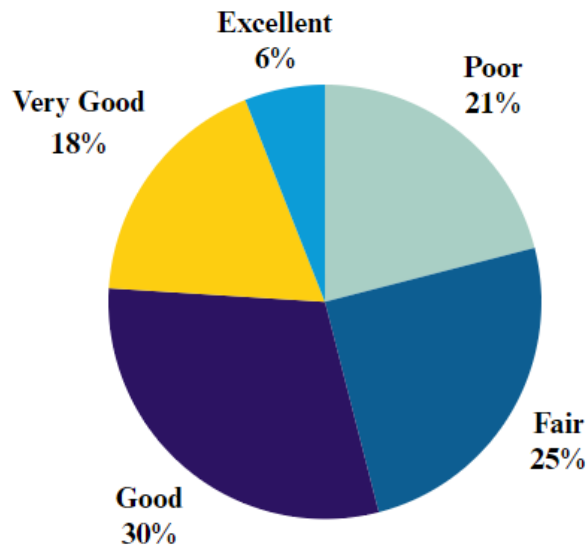
Furthermore, the neutral responses could imply a lack of awareness or engagement with specific environmental issues within the community, potentially highlighting an area for future education and outreach initiatives. Understanding this dichotomy is essential, as it informs public health strategies that can better address both local and global environmental concerns (Friden, 2014). This nuanced perspective underscores the importance of fostering a deeper awareness of local environmental issues, encouraging community engagement, and promoting sustainable practices that align with the broader goals of environmental health and community well-being.

Healthy Populations

Participant's perceptions of their health



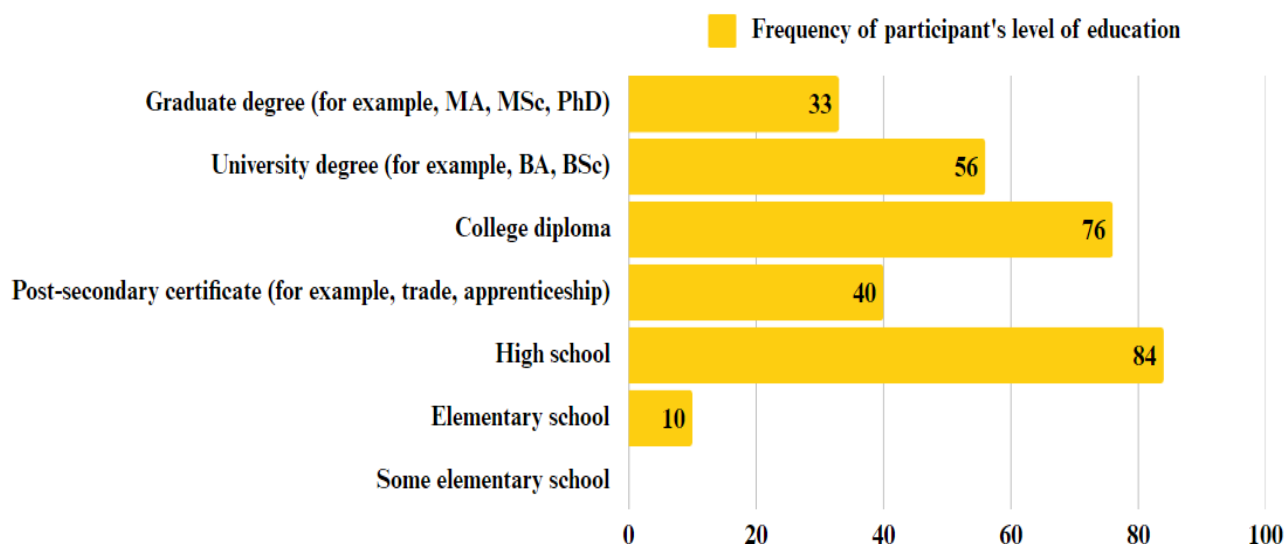
Participant's perceptions of their own mental health



Participants were asked to evaluate their perceptions of their own physical and mental health, and the results indicated that 52% rated their physical and mental health as good, very good, or excellent. This positive self-assessment highlights the overall well-being among respondents; however, to gain deeper insights into the underlying factors influencing these perceptions, it would be beneficial to include an open-ended comment section in future surveys. Such a modification would allow participants to elaborate on their individual experiences and the specific elements—such as lifestyle choices, healthcare access, or psychological factors—that contributed to their health ratings. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that a significant portion of the participant group comprised primary care clients, which likely impacted the findings. Their access to quality and consistent healthcare services may have positively influenced their health perceptions, potentially skewing the results. By considering these dynamics, future assessments can be refined to provide a more comprehensive understanding of health perceptions within this population.

Education

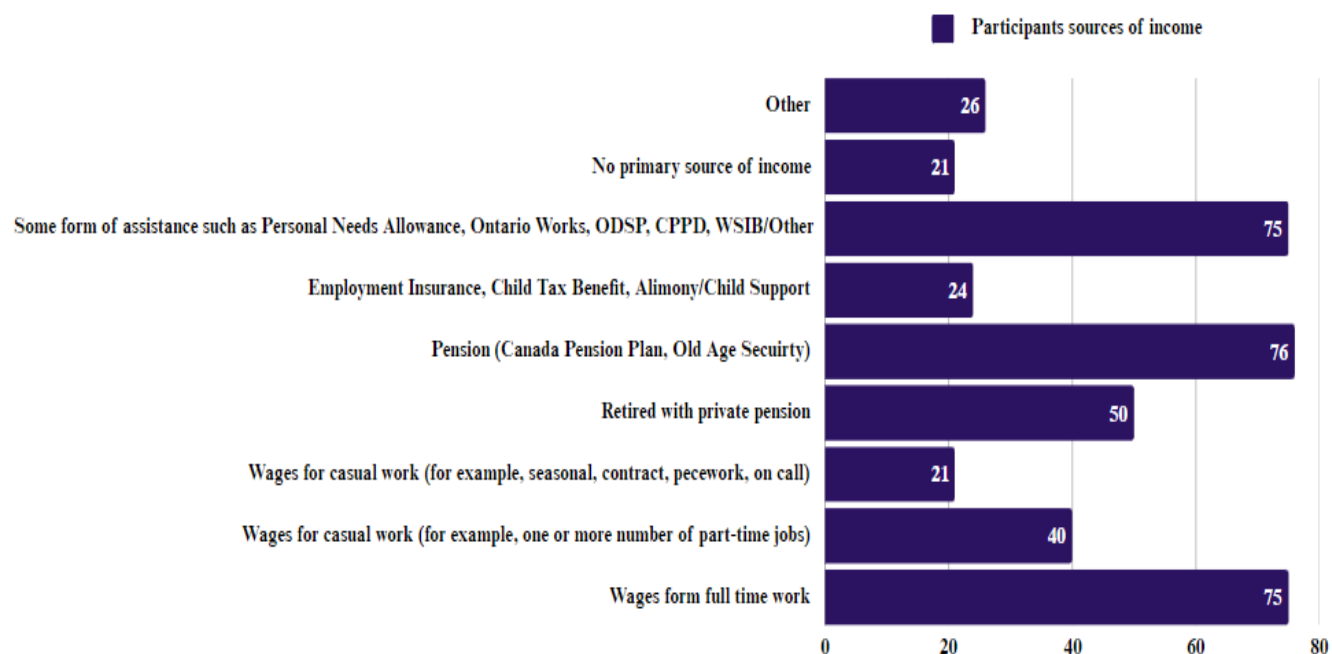
Participant's level of education



The survey showed that, 27% of participants reported that their highest level of education was high school, while 24% indicated that they had attained a college education. Notably, this educational distribution mirrors findings from 2018, suggesting a persistent trend in the educational attainment of this population. This data underscores a significant characteristic of Brant, where the proportion of residents with college and university degrees remains lower than the provincial average. According to the 2016 Ontario census, approximately 28% of individuals in the province hold a university degree, highlighting a disparity in educational qualifications within Brant (Province of Ontario, 2023). Understanding this educational landscape is crucial, as it can impact various socio-economic factors, including employment opportunities, income levels, and access to healthcare resources. Addressing these educational gaps may be vital for community development initiatives aimed at enhancing the overall quality of life and promoting equitable access to opportunities for all residents.

Living Standards

Participant's sources of income



When participants were asked about their primary sources of income, the responses revealed a diverse financial landscape. Notably, 24% of participants reported that their main source of income was wages from full-time employment, indicating a significant portion of the workforce engaged in stable, full-time positions. In contrast, 13% of participants indicated they relied on wages from part-time work, which may include juggling multiple part-time jobs to meet their financial needs. Additionally, 6% derived their income from casual work arrangements, such as seasonal employment, contracts, piecework, or on-call jobs, reflecting the variability and unpredictability often associated with this type of work.

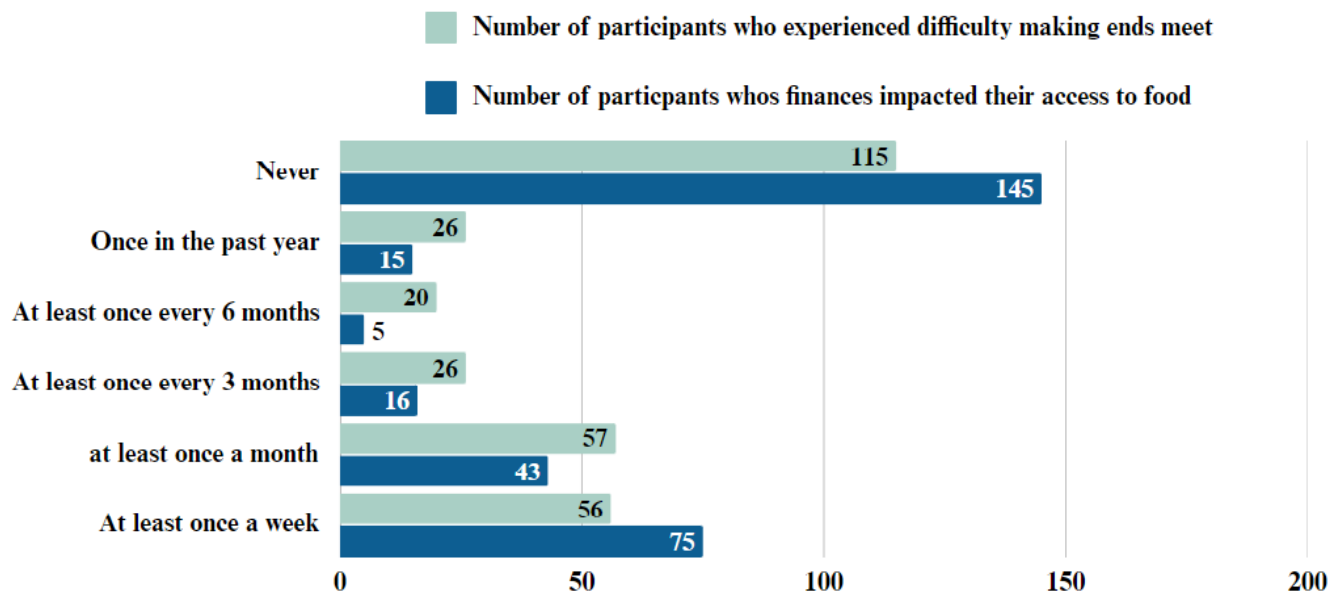
A substantial segment of the population, 16%, reported receiving income from retirement sources, specifically private pensions, highlighting the importance of pre-planned financial

security for older adults. Furthermore, 25% of participants reported income from government pensions, including the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Old Age Security (OAS), which serve as crucial financial supports for many retirees.

Income support programs also played a significant role, with 7% of participants receiving financial assistance from Employment Insurance (EI), the Canada Child Benefit, or alimony and child support payments. Additionally, 24% of respondents indicated that their income came from various forms of assistance, such as the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA), Ontario Works (OW), the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPPD), or other government benefits, highlighting the reliance on social safety nets within this community.

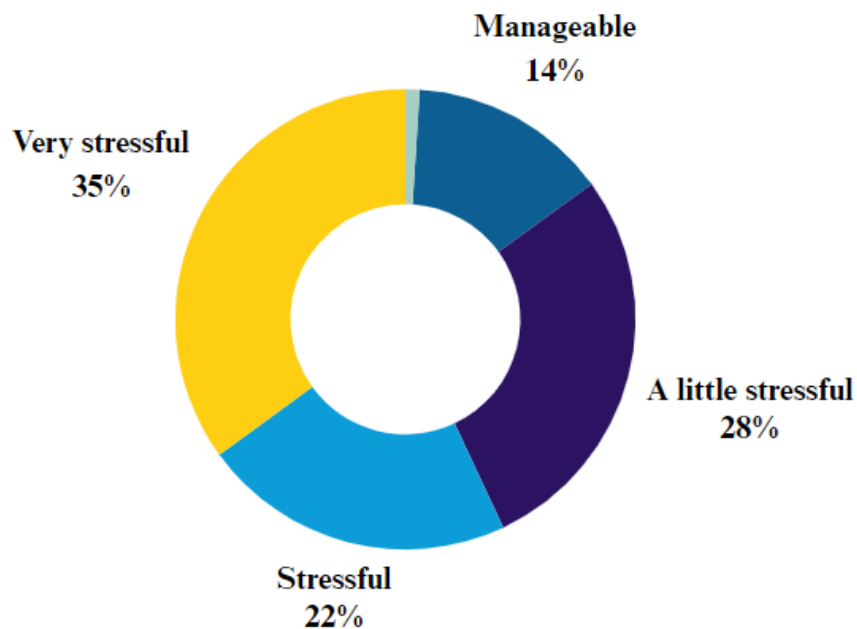
It is also noteworthy that 6% of participants reported having no primary source of income, which raises concerns about financial stability and potential vulnerabilities. Lastly, 8% indicated that their income stemmed from alternative sources, such as support from a spouse, private insurance, or investments, illustrating the varied financial strategies employed by different individuals to navigate their economic circumstances. This diverse income distribution underscores the complex economic realities faced by the participants and highlights the need for tailored support and resources to address the specific needs of each group.

Impact of participant finances on their access to food



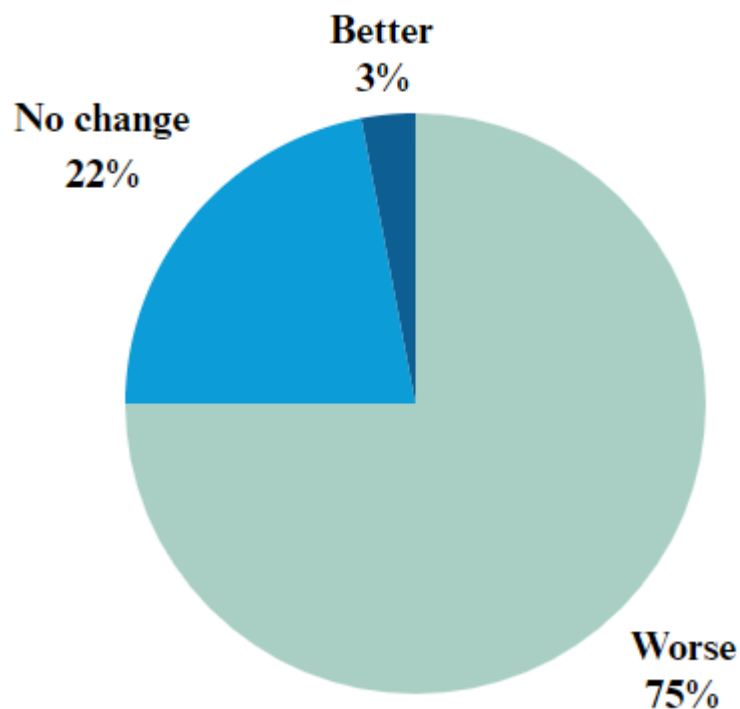
The survey results reveal significant insights into the financial struggles faced by participants over the past year, specifically regarding their ability to meet essential expenses. A notable 18% reported experiencing difficulty making ends meet at least once a week, indicating a persistent financial strain that could disrupt daily life, such as struggling to cover rent or mortgage payments, or managing basic utilities. Similarly, 19% indicated these challenges occurred at least once a month, highlighting a troubling frequency of financial instability. On a less frequent basis, 8% faced difficulties every three months, while 6% reported these issues every six months. Furthermore, 8% experienced financial challenges only once in the past year. Conversely, a significant portion of respondents—38%—reported never facing such difficulties, suggesting a divide in financial security among participants. This data not only features the prevalence of financial hardship for a considerable number of participants but also illustrates the varying degrees of financial stability experienced across the population surveyed.

Impact from increasing costs of living on households



When assessing the impacts of rising living costs on households, participants provided insights into their experiences and stress levels associated with these economic pressures. The findings revealed that 35% of respondents characterized the situation as "very stressful," while an additional 22% indicated it was "stressful." In contrast, only 13% felt that the situation was "manageable," and a mere 1% described it as "very manageable." These results reflect a broader consensus observed throughout the province, indicating that the escalating cost of living has rendered financial stability increasingly unattainable for many families. Furthermore, this issue is exacerbated in Brant, where the population tends to have lower educational attainment, which can lead to reduced income levels. As a result, the adverse effects of rising living costs are felt more acutely, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions to support vulnerable households in the face of economic challenges.

Impact of increasing costs on living in participant's household since last year



In assessing the impact of increasing living costs on households compared to the previous year, a significant majority of participants expressed a negative outlook. Specifically, 75% reported that their situation had worsened, indicating a marked decline in their financial well-being. In contrast, only 22% noted no change in their circumstances, while a mere 3% felt that their situation had improved. These findings suggest a pervasive sense of financial strain among respondents, highlighting the ongoing challenges posed by rising living costs and underscoring the need for further research and policy interventions to address the economic pressures faced by households and targeted support and interventions aimed at alleviating the financial pressures.

These results were mirrored in the Brant Health County's report on Health Equity noting that 20% of Brant household spend 30% or more on shelter alone (Brant County Health Unit, 2023).

Questions about food

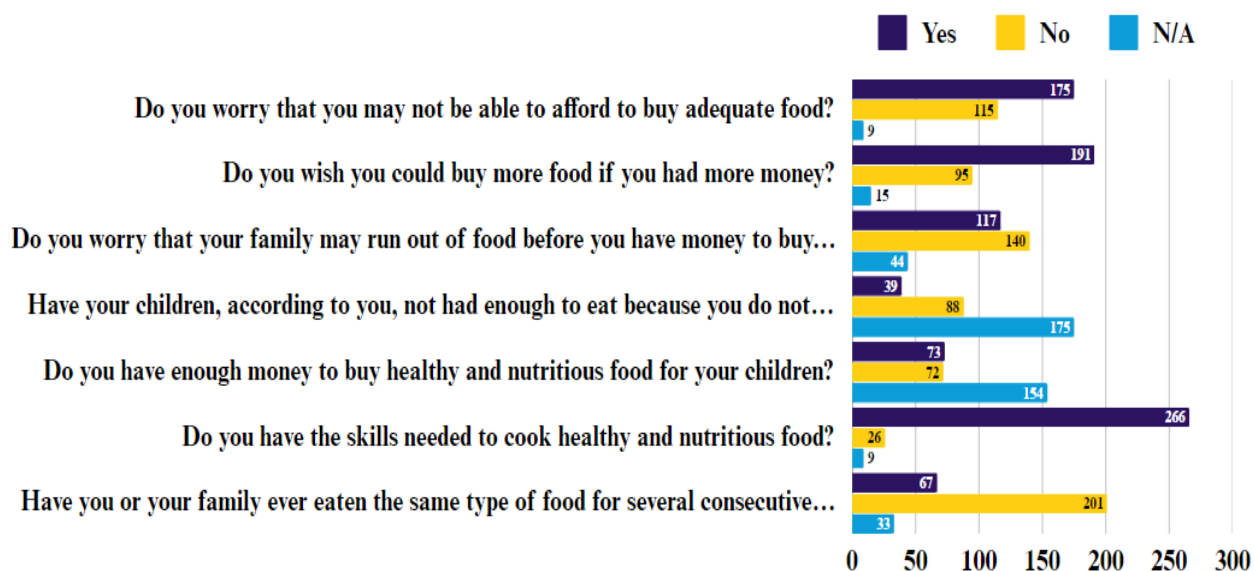


Figure 2 full questions can be found in Appendix

Survey results highlight significant concerns regarding food security and nutrition within our community. A substantial 58% of respondents expressed anxiety about their ability to afford adequate food, with an even higher percentage—63%—indicating a desire to purchase more food if financial resources allowed. These sentiments suggest a deep-rooted concern for household food availability, as 38% of respondents reported worrying that their family might run out of food before the next opportunity to purchase more arises.

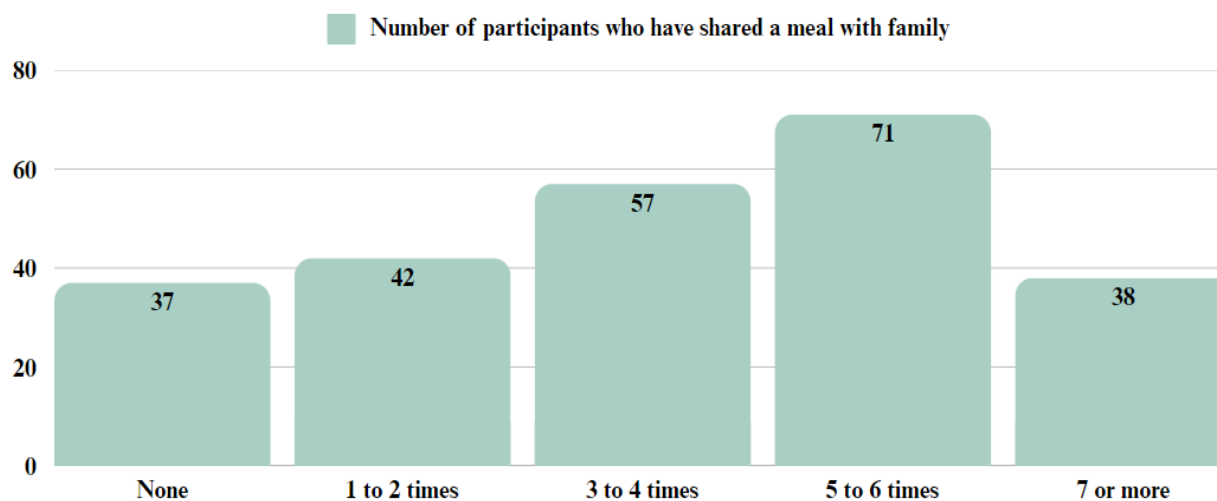
Notably, while 88% of respondents felt their children generally had enough to eat, 12% acknowledged that financial constraints have led to their children not having sufficient food at times. This is compounded by the fact that only 24% of families felt they could consistently buy

healthy and nutritious food for their children. The data also reveals a gap in culinary confidence; while 88% of respondents believe they possess the skills to cook healthy meals, 22% admitted to eating the same type of food for several consecutive days, indicating a potential lack of variety in their diets.

Overall, these findings underscore the critical need for targeted interventions to improve food access and nutritional education within the community, ensuring that all families can enjoy a varied and healthy diet. Addressing these issues will be vital for enhancing overall community wellbeing.

Time Use/ Leisure

Number of participants who have shared a meal with family

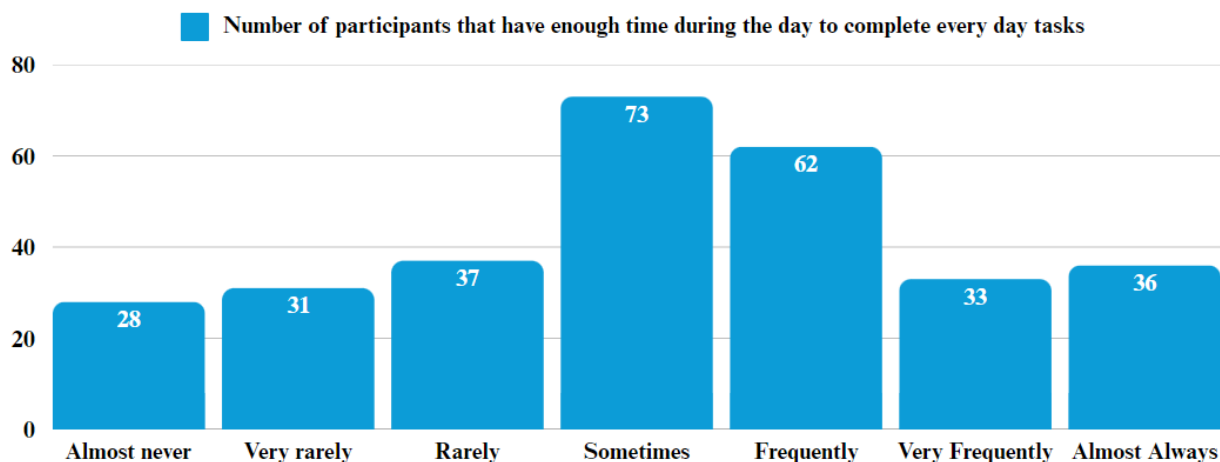


In examining the relationship between meal sharing and overall well-being, participants were queried about the frequency of shared family meals to assess time use—a critical component of sustainable living. The data revealed a diverse spectrum of meal-sharing habits

among respondents: 16% reported no shared meals, 17% shared 1 to 2 times per week, 23% shared 3 to 4 times per week, 29% shared 5 to 6 times per week, and 15% reported sharing meals daily, seven or more times a week. Notably, a significant 68% of participants indicated they were able to share meals with family three or more times per week. This prevalence suggests a strong correlation between regular family meal sharing and improved time management, ultimately enhancing participants' overall well-being. The findings represent the importance of communal dining as not just a social activity, but as a pivotal aspect of time sustainability and a contributor to holistic health within the Brant community.

To further investigate the dynamics of time use and its impact on individual well-being, participants were asked to reflect on the amount of personal time they experience. The responses revealed a concerning trend: 10% of participants indicated they have time to themselves almost never, while an additional 11% reported very rarely having personal time. A further 14% stated they rarely find moments for themselves. In contrast, 27% of participants felt they sometimes have personal time, and 23% claimed they frequently experience it. Notably, 12% of respondents stated they have personal time very frequently, and 13% reported almost always having time to themselves. This distribution highlights a significant divide in personal time availability within the community, with nearly half of participants (45%) experiencing limited to no time for self-reflection or relaxation. This lack of personal time can detrimentally affect mental health and overall well-being, emphasizing the need for initiatives that promote work-life balance and facilitate opportunities for individuals to reclaim their personal time, ultimately fostering a healthier community environment.

Participant's time to themselves



Conclusion

This community wellness report highlights key insights into the evolving dynamics within Brant, revealing both opportunities and challenges. The increase in younger survey participants reflects a growing engagement among these demographics, likely spurred by enhanced outreach through digital platforms. The predominance of female respondents emphasises ongoing trends in survey participation and highlights the perceived importance of community wellbeing to women. While this input is beneficial further strategy development is needed to find ways to reach other gender groups to ensure finding applicability.

Additionally, the rise in newcomer participation signals a diversifying population, enriched by the presence of local educational institutions and the city's affordability in respect to more urban areas. However, the economic data indicates that a substantial portion of the community faces financial challenges, with over half earning \$50,000 or less annually. This economic profile, which remains below provincial averages, underscores the need for targeted

interventions to support lower to middle-income households. Overall, these insights provide a crucial foundation for future initiatives aimed at enhancing community wellness and addressing the multi layered needs of the people of Brant.

While many participants reported a strong sense of belonging, declines in community participation and feelings of acceptance reflect a troubling trend towards alienation—an issue exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The drop in engagement from 39% to 22% in community events and the erosion of trust among residents accentuate the urgent need for revitalized community structures that foster meaningful connections. Developing "third places" and supportive environments is critical for enhancing community engagement and cultivating a culture of trust and collaboration. Ultimately enhancing the overall well-being and resilience of the Brant area. Continued exploration of the factors influencing social cohesion will be vital in shaping effective policies and initiatives that empower all residents to contribute to a thriving community.

The report also raises the trend of informal volunteering, which emerged strongly during the pandemic. The notable increase in informal volunteering, particularly during the pandemic, illustrates the adaptability of residents who have actively sought to foster social connections and promote physical activity through grassroots initiatives. These efforts underscore the crucial role of informal volunteering as a mechanism for community support, enhancing overall well-being amidst challenging circumstances. Additionally, the dramatic shift in political engagement—where previously significant apathy has transformed into near-universal interest in political matters—suggests a heightened civic consciousness among residents. This newfound engagement, likely influenced by pressing issues experienced such as the housing crisis and

rising food prices, points to an evolving understanding of the importance of governance and civic responsibility. Together, these insights suggest that strengthening democratic processes and encouraging active participation can further enhance community cohesion and resilience.

Continued exploration of these trends will be vital in developing effective strategies to support democratic engagement and community well-being in Brant, ultimately contributing to a more vibrant and responsive civic landscape.

Environmental concerns are prevalent, with climate change being the most cited issue. Alongside concerns about land use and water quality, the nuanced interpretations of these topics highlight the complex dynamics within the community. The dual perspectives on land use—balancing infrastructure development with Indigenous rights—underscore the necessity for inclusive and informed discussions that honour diverse viewpoints. Interestingly, despite these overarching environmental concerns, a majority of participants expressed contentment with their local natural environment, indicating a disconnection between global environmental apprehensions and localized perceptions of environmental quality. This paradox suggests that while community members are aware of larger environmental challenges, they may not fully engage with or recognize specific local issues, pointing to a potential gap in awareness and education. Addressing this dichotomy is crucial for developing effective public health strategies and promoting environmental justice. By fostering deeper community engagement and awareness of local environmental matters, stakeholders can enhance sustainability efforts and contribute to overall community well-being, ensuring that both immediate and broader environmental challenges are addressed in tandem the promotion of sustainability and justice.

Health perceptions are generally positive, with 52% of participants rating their physical and mental health favourably. However, to deepen our understanding of factors influencing perceptions is crucial, particularly considering the demographic composition of respondents. Particularly the presence of primary care clients, as their access to quality healthcare may have contributed to more favourable health perceptions. By addressing these complexities in subsequent assessments, researchers and policymakers can develop a more nuanced understanding of health perceptions, ultimately informing targeted interventions that support the diverse health needs of all Brant residents and enhance community well-being. Future surveys should include open-ended questions to capture the diverse health experiences of all community members.

Education disparities remain a significant concern, with 27% of participants having only a high school education and 24% completing college. The lower proportion of residents with college and university degrees not only reflects individual educational challenges but also signals broader socio-economic implications, such as limited employment opportunities and reduced access to healthcare resources. Addressing these educational gaps is crucial for fostering community development and enhancing the overall quality of life for Brant residents. By investing in educational programs and resources, stakeholders can promote equitable access to opportunities, ultimately contributing to a more educated and empowered community. This approach will be vital for improving socio-economic outcomes and ensuring that all individuals in Brant can achieve their full potential. Addressing these gaps through targeted educational initiatives is vital for enhancing socio-economic outcomes and ensuring equitable access to opportunities.

Financial challenges are pervasive, with many residents navigating precarious situations. A prominent portion relies on social safety nets, and 35% reported their economic circumstances as "very stressful." The diverse sources of income reveal a complex economic landscape, with a notable reliance on both stable employment and social safety nets. While 24% of participants reported wages from full-time jobs, a considerable segment depends on various forms of assistance, indicating that many households navigate precarious financial situations. The alarming frequency of reported difficulties in making ends meet underscores the pervasive financial strain experienced by members of the community. Furthermore, the insights regarding food security illustrate a critical need for interventions to enhance access to nutritious food and alleviate financial pressures. With 58% of participants expressing anxiety about affording adequate food, it is evident that the rising cost of living disproportionately impacts those with lower educational attainment and income levels in Brant. These findings collectively highlight the urgent need for targeted policy initiatives and community programs aimed at improving financial stability, food security, and overall well-being for all residents. By addressing these interconnected challenges, stakeholders can foster a healthier, more equitable community that supports the diverse needs of its population.

The data demonstrates that a considerable majority of participants engage in regular family meals, with 68% sharing meals three or more times a week, suggesting a positive correlation between communal dining and enhanced time management, social connection, and holistic health. However, the concerning trend regarding personal time availability indicates that a significant portion of the community—nearly 45%—struggles to find moments for self-reflection and relaxation. This lack of personal time can adversely affect mental health and well-

being, highlighting the urgent need for initiatives that promote work-life balance and encourage individuals to prioritize self-care. By fostering environments that facilitate both shared meals and personal downtime, community stakeholders can enhance the overall quality of life in Brant. Addressing these dimensions of time use will be vital for cultivating a healthier, more resilient community that values both connection and individual well-being.

Overall, the insights from this report provide a critical foundation for future initiatives aimed at enhancing community wellness and addressing the diverse needs of Brant residents. By focusing on economic stability, social cohesion, educational opportunities, and environmental awareness, stakeholders can work towards building a more vibrant and equitable community for all.

In conclusion, the findings from this report provide a critical foundation for future initiatives aimed at enhancing community wellness in Brant, through the lens of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing. By focusing on economic stability, social cohesion, educational opportunities, environmental awareness, and health, stakeholders can collaboratively work towards building a more vibrant and equitable community.

The path forward involves not only addressing the immediate needs highlighted in this report but also fostering a culture of engagement and empowerment that encourages residents to actively participate in shaping their community. Through sustained efforts and a comprehensive approach, Brant can thrive as a community that values well-being in all its dimensions, ultimately creating a healthier, happier, and more resilient population for generations to come.

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Appendix

Appendix A

Grand River Community Health Centre Wellness Survey

This survey covers many important aspects that affect your health and wellbeing. The information you provide will help Grand River Community Health Centre (GRCHC) develop a better understanding of what is keeping you well and what will help support the best health and wellbeing for our community.

This survey will take approximately 16 - 20 minutes of your time.

Your Participation is Voluntary: You may stop participating, or skip any question. Your decision on whether or not to participate will not affect the nature of the services you receive at GRCHC.

Your Responses are Confidential: Your name will not appear in any report or publication resulting from this survey. This is not a research activity. Your experiences will contribute to improving the quality and effectiveness of the services, programs and initiatives in our community.

If you have any questions, or concerns please contact OG at (519)754-0777 ext. 233 or oegiebor@grchc.ca

Thank you for your participation.

You and your Connections

1. How many relatives and close friends do you have who you feel close to, that is, who you feel at ease with, can talk to about what is on your mind, call on for help, or receive help from?

Number of Relatives:

Number of Close Friends:

2. How long have you lived in your community?

years and/or

months

3. How would you describe your sense of belonging to your community?
Sense of belonging is feeling like you are part of something, connected and accepted.

Would you say it is:

Very Weak

Somewhat Weak

Somewhat Strong

Very Strong

Comments:

4. To what extent do you participate in community events and activities?

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

5. To what extent do you feel accepted and valued in your community?

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

6. When there are important issues or problems in your community, to what extent do you get involved in order to address the issues or help solve the problem?

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

○ ○ ○ ○ ○

7. In the city or area where you live, imagine that you lost your wallet or something holding your identification or address and it was found by someone else. How likely do you think your wallet would be returned to you?

Not likely	Somewhat likely	Very likely
○	○	○

8. a) How often do you feel uncomfortable or out of place in your community because of the following:

	Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always
Age	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Race	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Disability	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Gender Identity	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always
Sexual orientation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ethnicity and culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mental Health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health Condition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Not Applicable (N/A)</i>	<input type="radio"/>						

Comments:

Your Activities, Groups and Interests

9. Approximately how much time (in hours and minutes) do you spend in social activities on a typical day (for example, visiting with a friend or talking on the phone)?

hours and/or

minutes per day

10. During the past year, did you volunteer formally (for example, with an organized group or organization)?

 Yes
 No

If yes, what type of group or organization did you volunteer with?

11. During the past year, did you volunteer informally (for example, help out a neighbour)?

 Yes
 No

12. How easy is it for you to complete each of the following tasks?

	Very Easy	Easy	A Little Difficult	Difficult	Very Difficult	Not Applicable (N/A)
Read medication instructions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Complete a job application	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Read your child's report card	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Adding and subtracting numbers
(for example spending in the grocery store)

Access the internet to find information online

13. What environmental issue are you most concerned about in your community?
Please select ONE (1) only.

- Air quality
- Climate change
- Land use
- Water quality
- Impact of pesticides or other chemicals on health
- Not concerned
- Other. Please specify:

14. Thinking about the environment in your community, to what extent do you agree or disagree that....

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

The quality of the natural environment in my community is very high

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
There are plenty of opportunities to enjoy nature in my community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The air quality in my community is very good	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The water quality in my community is very good	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. How interested are you in politics?

Please rate your level of interest for each of the following levels of government.

	Not Interested at All	Not very Interested	Somewhat Interested	Very Interested
Federal Politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provincial Politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Municipal Politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

16. In which of the following activities have you participated in the past 12 months?

Activity	Yes	No	Not Sure
I attended a municipal/city council meeting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Activity	Yes	No	Not Sure
I attended a Ward/neighborhood meeting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I attended a local planning meeting or open house	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I participated in a public demonstration or protest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wrote a letter to the editor of the newspaper about a local issue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I participated on social media around a local issue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I participated in a local event in support of a charitable organization (for example 5km run for breast cancer)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I participated in a local event in support of my community (for example “pick up litter days”, earth day)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Your Time and Health

17. How many times in the past week has your family (for example, your children and/or partner) or people you live with had a meal together?

- None
- 1 to 2 times
- 3 to 4 times
- 5 to 6 times
- 7 times or more
- Not Applicable (N/A)

18. Thinking about how much time you have for yourself, how often is there enough time during the day to do everything you need or want to do?

- | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Almost
Never | Very
Rarely | Rarely | Sometimes | Frequently | Very
Frequently | Almost
Always |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

19. How many days per week do you work from home?

Days per week

If the answer is zero (0) please answer question number 20

20. Approximately how much time (in hours and minutes) does it take to get from your residence to your place of work for your main job?

Hours

and

minutes per day

Not Applicable (N/A)

21. During the past month, where was your primary source of income from?
Please select all of the ones that apply.

- Wages for full-time work
- Wages for part-time work
(for example, one or more number of part-time jobs)
- Wages for casual work
(for example, seasonal, contract, piecework, on call)
- Retired with private pension
- Pension (Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security)

- Employment Insurance, Child Tax Benefit, Alimony/Child support
- Some form of assistance such as PNA/Personal Needs Allowance, Ontario Works, ODSP, CPPD, WSIB/Other government cheques
- No primary source of income
- Other. Please specify:

22. During the past year, did you ever eat less because there was not enough food or money for food? If so, how often did this happen?

- At least once a week
- At least once a month
- At least once every 3 months
- At least once every 6 months
- Once in the past year
- Never

23. How often during the past year did you have difficulty making ends meet (for example, making a rent or mortgage payment, paying bills, or having enough money for childcare or transportation)?

- At least once a week
- At least once a month
- At least once every 3 months
- At least once every 6 months
- Once in the past year
- Never

24. A) How would you rate the impact from the increasing costs of living on your household?

Very Manageable	Manageable	A Little Stressful	Stressful	Very Stressful
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. Is the impact of increasing costs on living on your household the same, better or worse than last year?

Worse	No change	Better
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

26. All about food

	Yes	No	Not Applicable (N/A)
Do you worry that you may not be able to afford to buy adequate food?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you wish you could buy more food if you had more money?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you worry that your family may run out of food before you have money to buy again?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have your children, according to you, not had enough to eat because you do not have enough money to buy food?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Yes	No	Not Applicable (N/A)
Do you have enough money to buy healthy and nutritious food for your children?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you have the skills needed to cook healthy and nutritious food?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you or your family ever eaten the same type of food for several consecutive days because you do not have the skills to cook a variety of different meals?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

27. In general, would you say your physical health is:

Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28. In general, would you say your mental health is:

Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

29. Are you a current smoker?

Yes	No
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other Information About You

30. Please select all of the ones that apply.

- Primary care client (see a Doctor or Nurse Practitioner)
- Participate in group services and/or programs
(for example: social group, exercise group, cooking class)
- Community member (no affiliation with GRCHC)

31. What is your postal code?

32. What is your current age?

I am years of age

33. What is the highest level of education you have completed (includes outside of Canada)?

- Some elementary school
- Elementary school
- High school
- Post-secondary certificate (for example, trade, apprenticeship)
- College diploma
- University degree (for example, BA, BSc)
- Graduate degree (for example, MA, MSc, PhD)

34. Were you born in Canada?

- Yes
- No

- Do not know
- Prefer not to answer

If **NO**, what year did you arrive in Canada?

- Prefer not to answer

35. What is your gender? Please select ONE (1) only.

- Female
- Male
- Intersex
- Trans Male
- Trans Female
- Gender Queer
- Non-binary
- Two-spirit
- Other. Please specify:

- Do not know
- Prefer not to answer

36. What was your total household income before taxes last year?
Please select ONE (1) only.

- \$0 to \$19,999

- \$20,000 to \$29,999
- \$30,000 to \$39,999
- \$40,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000to \$59,999
- \$60,000 to\$69,000
- \$70,000 to \$79,999
- \$80,000 or more

- Prefer not to answer

37. Which one of the following categories best describes the type of household in which you live?

- Couple with children living at home
- Couple with no children at home (i.e., “empty nester”)
- Couple with no children
- Adult with children living at home
- Adult living alone
- Adult sharing accommodation
- Three or more generations of the family living together (i.e., “intergenerational”)
- Other. Please specify:

- Prefer not to answer

38. What is your childcare arrangement?

- Stay at home parent
- Licensed child care provider
- Unlicensed child care provider
- Grand parent or other family member
- Not applicable (N/A)
- Other, Please specify

39. What is your housing situation?

- Own my home
- Rent my home
- Living with friends/couch surf
- Living in a shelter
- Other. Please specify:

40. We invite you to tell us one change that you think would improve the health and wellbeing of your community.

Other comments you would like to share are also welcome.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

If you have greater input and would like to be a part of a focus group at Grand River Community Health Centre please contact our Health Promoter OG at oegiebor@grchc.ca or (519) 754-0777 ext. 233

If you would like to be more involved with Grand River Community Health Centre please contact our Volunteer Coordinator Carly at cwatson@grchc.ca or (519) 754-0777 ext. 602

***If you would like to complete this survey on line go to:
www.surveymonkey.com/r/8ZX698L***