



# CANADIAN index OF WELLBEING

Measuring what matters  
Making measures matter



## THE WELLBEING OF WOOD BUFFALO

## A CLOSER LOOK AT WOOD BUFFALO:

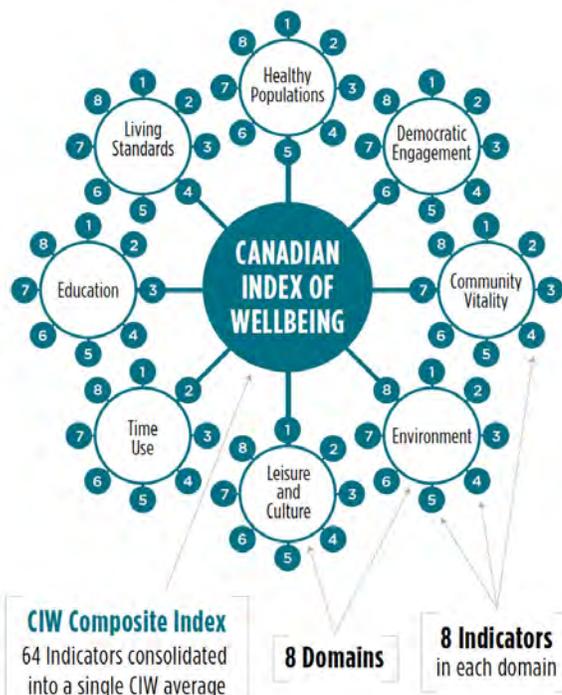
FACTORS RELATED TO RESIDENT WELLBEING  
BASED ON THE CIW COMMUNITY WELLBEING SURVEY

### WHAT IS THE CANADIAN INDEX OF WELLBEING?

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) regularly reports on the quality of life of Canadians – nationally, provincially, and locally. The CIW Survey asks residents what makes them happy, healthy and fulfilled. The results of the CIW Survey are used by governments, leaders and organizations to make decisions based on a greater understanding of resident day-to-day life and how to improve the wellbeing of everyone in the community.

### THE GAP BETWEEN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND WELLBEING IS WIDENING

When Canadians go to bed at night, they are not worried about GDP. They are worried about stringing together enough hours of part-time jobs, rising tuition fees, and affordable housing. They are thinking about the last time they got together with friends or the next time they can take a vacation.



### WE NEED TO FOCUS ON WHAT IS MEANINGFUL TO CANADIANS

For more than 10 years, the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW), based at the University of Waterloo, has provided comprehensive analyses of how we are really doing in the areas of our lives that matter most. It draws from almost 200 reliable data sources, primarily from Statistics Canada, that provide 64 indicators representing eight interconnected domains of vital importance to our quality of life. The CIW framework is the result of broad consultations with Canadians from across the country as well as with national and international experts. It is rooted in Canadian values and reflects what really matters in our lives.

The CIW takes a systems approach and identifies key leverage points that have a positive impact on our wellbeing across several domains – **Community Vitality, Democratic Engagement, Education, Environment, Healthy Populations, Leisure and Culture, Living Standards, and Time Use**. When we tackle challenges in one part of the system, the improvements can translate across a number of domains and to overall wellbeing.

## WHY DO A WELLBEING SURVEY IN WOOD BUFFALO?

### ABOUT THE SURVEY IN WOOD BUFFALO

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing Committee of Wood Buffalo is made up of local organizations and is assisted by the University of Waterloo. The organizations involved are the Canadian Red Cross, Canadian Natural, Edmonton Community Foundation, FuseSocial, Northern Lights Health Foundation, Oil Sands Community Alliance (OSCA), Suncor Energy Foundation, Syncrude, United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo, Wood Buffalo Community Foundation, and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. The committee completed a survey of Wood Buffalo residents in 2019 to measure the 'wellbeing' of the region.

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) compiles a national index report that uses "Wellbeing" as its measurement framework. Economic growth is very important, and a full assessment of wellbeing also considers what else makes communities happy, healthy and fulfilled so they can continue to grow. The CIW regularly reports on the quality of life of Canadians - nationally, provincially, and locally - and advocates for social change that reflects community values and places wellbeing at the heart of policy. The University of Waterloo has conducted research and reported on wellbeing since 2011 for communities across Canada.

The Wood Buffalo region first completed the CIW Community Wellbeing Survey in 2014 at the height of economic growth for the region. With the significant changes that the region has faced in recent years, it is important to hear again directly from residents about their current day-to-day life. Understanding the wellbeing of the residents of the community over time and using it to fuel evidence-based and community-focused decision-making, will only strengthen the region.

The focus of the survey is to identify where the community is thriving and where people are experiencing challenges.

- What we count and measure drives our understanding of whether we are better off than we used to be, whether we are leaving a better world for our children, and what we need to change.
- Our economy tells us only about one dimension of our wellbeing. The Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) provides Canadians with a complementary, but broader picture of wellbeing that measures real life, for real people. We start with eight domains that focus on key aspects of life and use them to measure what really matters to Canadians.
- The Wood Buffalo Community Wellbeing Survey asked residents about what matters to them and their families and about their aspirations for their community.
- In return, the survey results can be used to stimulate discussions about the types of policies, programs, and activities that will move Wood Buffalo toward achieving a higher quality of life for residents.

Supported by



Canadian Red Cross



WOOD BUFFALO COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



Syncrude



SUNCOR ENERGY FOUNDATION



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF WOOD BUFFALO

# OVERALL WELLBEING IN WOOD BUFFALO IN 2019

## THE WELLBEING OF WOOD BUFFALO

**Overall, the results of the survey revealed three urgent issues:**

- Social isolation;
- Mental health; and
- Financial insecurity.

**Further, some Wood Buffalo residents appear to be falling behind in their wellbeing as they struggle with these issues. The residents most at risk are:**

- Women;
- Lower income residents;
- Younger adults;
- Single, never married residents;
- Single parents; and
- Those living with a disability or chronic illness.

**So, what might be done to raise the wellbeing of residents most at risk?**

- Ensure greater access to opportunities in community;
- Strengthen connections to community;
- Build trust in institutions, especially government; and
- Ensure all voices are heard in policy development.



**SOCIAL ISOLATION**  
*URGENT ISSUE*



**MENTAL HEALTH**  
*URGENT ISSUE*



**FINANCIAL INSECURITY**  
*URGENT ISSUE*

**OVERALL WELLBEING IN WOOD BUFFALO IS DOWN SLIGHTLY  
IN 2019 COMPARED TO 2014.**

- Residents are most satisfied with the Environment domain, especially with their neighbourhood as a place to live, its environmental quality, and access to parks and recreational opportunities.
- Residents are least satisfied with the Democratic Engagement domain. While this domain did not score highly, it is worth noting that compared to 2014, there has been an increase in satisfaction with both how well the local government is responding to community needs and how well democracy is working in the community.

**What characterizes residents with *above average wellbeing*?**

<b>CIW Domain</b>	<b>Characteristics of residents with above average wellbeing</b>
<b>Demographics</b>	More married (not common-law); higher household income; fewer spend over 30% of their monthly income on housing
<b>Living Standards</b>	More work flexibility; higher job security; better job fit with opportunities for job promotion; have enough money to buy the things they need and want; shorter commute times; more likely to pay bills on time
<b>Healthy Populations</b>	Better self-rated physical and mental health; higher perceived quality and access to health care services; less likely to experience negative impacts due to their own or their family members' mental health issues
<b>Education</b>	More likely to take courses to improve skills for their current job; less likely to take courses to prepare for a job in the future; perceive more opportunities to take formal education courses; less likely to see obstacles to taking courses including cost or being offered at inconvenient times
<b>Environment</b>	Perceive quality of natural environment as higher; see more opportunities to enjoy nature in community; less likely to perceive traffic congestion as a problem; slightly more likely to recycle materials
<b>Democratic Engagement</b>	Feel better qualified to participate in politics; have a better understanding of important issues facing Wood Buffalo; feel better informed about politics and government; are more likely to participate in public demonstrations or protests, attend municipal/regional council meetings, and join social media on local issues
<b>Community Vitality</b>	Volunteer more; have a higher number of close relatives, close friends, and neighbours they know well enough to ask for a favour; have a higher sense of belonging to community; are less socially isolated; feel safer walking alone after dark; have higher needs fulfilment
<b>Leisure and Culture</b>	Use multi-purpose recreation centres and arenas more frequently; perceive better access to recreation and cultural facilities (e.g., easy to get to, facilities are welcoming); participate more in arts and cultural activities, social leisure activities, and physical activities (e.g., team sports, individual sports, physical exercise); participate less in computer-based leisure (e.g., computer games, socializing online, searching internet for interest)
<b>Time Use</b>	Have more time to keep in shape, nurture spiritual and/or creative side, be with children, form/sustain relationships, to be themselves, socialize, prepare or eat healthy meals, and to get enough sleep; higher perceived work-life balance; have flexible work schedules

# HOW HAS WOOD BUFFALO CHANGED FROM 2014 TO 2019?

## THE WELLBEING OF WOOD BUFFALO

### DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic profile of Wood Buffalo residents has changed since 2014. In 2019, there are more older residents, fewer young families with children, lower incomes, and more renters.

**The average age of participants in the survey rose from 40.1 years in 2014 to 43.3 years in 2019.**

Key Indicators	2014	2019	
Percentage of single, never married residents	12.1%	19.9%	↑
Percentage of residents 40 years of age and older	47.0%	57.6%	↑
Percentage of households with an annual household income of \$200,000 and over	50.4%	35.5%	↓
Percentage of residents living with a disability or chronic disease	7.8%	15.6%	↑
Percentage of residents renting the house they currently live in	13.0%	20.3%	↑
Percentage of residents who are couples living with children at home	52.1%	38.3%	↓

Note: Average score based percentage.

### LIVING STANDARDS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
	←						→	
	very strongly disagree						very strongly agree	
Key Indicators	2014	2019	Positive or Negative Change					
Average score on overall work-life balance	4.35	3.74	↓					
Average score on job fit:								
● Average score on job promotion	4.78	4.50	↓					
● Average score on job security	3.39	4.44	↑					
The average length of time to commute from residence to place of work for the main job (minutes per day)	35.5	31.5	↓					

Note: Average scores are based on a 7-point scale where 1 = very strongly disagree and 7 = very strongly agree.

Up and down arrows indicate changes from 2014 to 2019. Green arrows indicate when the change is better for wellbeing. Red arrows indicate when the change is worse for wellbeing. Arrows are added when a change of at least 1% has occurred.

### Financial insecurity in 2019:

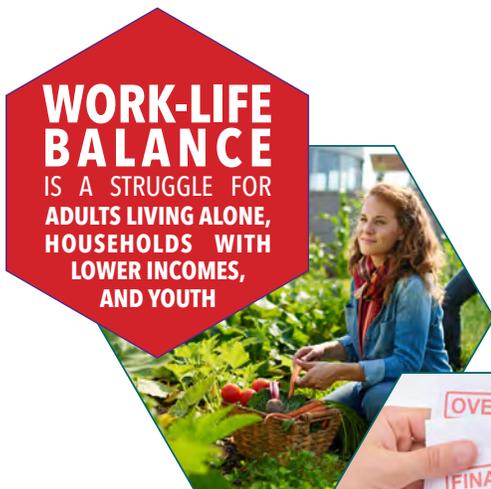
Wood Buffalo residents are considerably less financially secure:

- Over one in five residents (22.0%) are unable to pay bills on time.
- One in ten residents (9.4%) are unable to pay mortgage/rent on time.
- Almost half of the residents with annual household incomes under \$100,000 reported that they could not afford to purchase nutritious food.
- Nearly two-thirds of single parents (64.0%) spend more than 30% of their monthly income on housing.

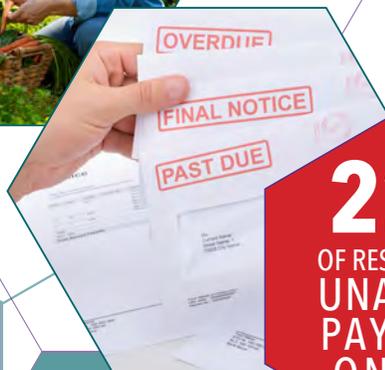
### Work-life imbalance in 2019

Work-life imbalance is more of a struggle for these groups:

- younger residents, 16 to 29 years of age (37.4%);
- adults living alone (38.8%); and
- residents with annual household incomes of \$40,000 to \$99,999 (43.2%).



**WORK-LIFE BALANCE**  
IS A STRUGGLE FOR  
ADULTS LIVING ALONE,  
HOUSEHOLDS WITH  
LOWER INCOMES,  
AND YOUTH



**22%**  
OF RESIDENTS ARE  
UNABLE TO  
PAY BILLS  
ON TIME

# THE WELLBEING OF WOOD BUFFALO

## HOW HAS WOOD BUFFALO CHANGED FROM 2014 TO 2019?

### HEALTHY POPULATIONS

Key Indicators	2014	2019	Positive or Negative Change
Average score on self-reported <i>mental health</i>	3.72	3.16	↓
Average score on self-reported <i>physical health</i>	3.42	3.30	↓
<small>Note: Average scores on self-reported health are based on a 5-point scale where 1 = poor and 5 = excellent.</small>			
Percentage of residents who perceive the <i>quality</i> of health care services as very good or excellent	19.6%	23.8%	↑
Percentage of residents who perceive the <i>accessibility</i> of health care services as very good or excellent	14.5%	20.1%	↑
<small>Note: Average score based percentage.</small>			

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#### Mental health and physical health in 2019

- Both self-assessed physical and mental health declined in 2019, especially mental health.
- Lower mental health is more prevalent among lower income residents, younger residents, and single parents.

#### Quality and accessibility of health care services in 2019

- Higher percentages of residents in 2019 rated the quality and accessibility of health care services as very good or excellent than in 2014. However, the percentages in 2019 on both indicators are much lower than seen in other communities, where they average 15% higher.

**MENTAL HEALTH DECLINED**  
FORM 2014 TO 2019



### EDUCATION

Key Indicators	2014	2019	Positive or Negative Change
Average score on perceptions of educational opportunities:			
Opportunities to know people from different cultures	4.78	4.79	–
Schools nearby to upgrade educational qualifications	4.42	4.29	↓
Plenty opportunities to take formal education courses	4.55	4.16	↓
Places nearby to take classes out of interest	4.40	4.11	↓
Courses are offered at inconvenient times	4.07	4.10	–
Courses are too expensive	4.07	4.07	–
Plenty of opportunities to take courses of interest	4.48	4.05	↓
<small>Note: Average scores are based on a 7-point scale where 1 = very strongly disagree and 7 = very strongly agree.</small>			

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#### Taking courses in Wood Buffalo in 2019

- The most common reported reason for taking courses is to improve skills for a current job (40.7%).
- A much greater percentage of women (41.4%) agree courses are too expensive compared to men (25.9%).



**40.7%**  
OF PEOPLE TAKING COURSES ARE IMPROVING SKILL FOR A CURRENT JOB

# HOW HAS WOOD BUFFALO CHANGED FROM 2014 TO 2019?

## THE WELLBEING OF WOOD BUFFALO

### ENVIRONMENT

Key Indicators	2014	2019	Positive or Negative Change
Percentage of residents participating in resource conservation and sustainable activities during the past 12 months:			
Recycle materials	99.7%	98.0%	↓
Reuse materials	98.4%	98.1%	–
Conserve energy	96.5%	98.7%	↑
Reduce household waste	96.2%	96.8%	↑
Conserve water	95.0%	96.5%	↑
Separate waste	74.8%	73.4%	↓

Note: Average score based percentage.

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#### Resource conservation and sustainable activities in 2019

- While at least 95% of residents engage in a variety of resource conservation and sustainable activities, separating waste continued to lag behind (73.4%).

#### Perceptions of environmental quality in 2019

- Men are more likely to agree (73.0%) that the quality of the natural environment in their community is very high compared to women (59.8%).

**73%**  
OF **MEN** AGREE THE QUALITY OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IS HIGH

**59.8%**  
OF **WOMEN** AGREE THE QUALITY OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IS HIGH

### DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

Key Indicators	2014	2019	Positive or Negative Change
Average level of interest in:			
Federal politics	4.75	6.36	↑
Provincial politics	5.06	6.57	↑
Municipal politics	5.66	5.82	↑

Note: Average scores are based on a 10-point scale, where higher scores reflect greater interest in politics.

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#### Interest in politics in 2019

- More residents in Wood Buffalo had a lot of interest in federal politics (56.9%) and provincial politics (60.7%). Conversely, fewer residents expressed a lot of interest in local politics (44.8%).
- Men and women reported a similar level of interest in local politics; however, men have somewhat more confidence in municipal government (29.1% vs 26.1%).

#### How well democracy is working in 2019

- Single parents and adults living alone feel they are as well informed about politics and government as most people.
- Residents with comparatively lower incomes agree somewhat more strongly public officials do not care what they think and feel less well informed about politics as any others in the community.
- Younger residents do not agree to the same extent as others that they have a say in what government does.

**RESIDENTS WITH COMPARATIVELY LOWER INCOMES FEEL LESS INFORMED ABOUT POLITICS**

## HOW HAS WOOD BUFFALO CHANGED FROM 2014 TO 2019?

### COMMUNITY VITALITY

Key Indicators	2014	2019	Positive or Negative Change
Percentage residents who volunteered in the past 12 months	55.7%	50.1%	↓
<small>Note: Average score based percentage.</small>			
Average number of social contacts:			
● Close relatives	5.98	4.58	↓
● Close friends	5.40	4.44	↓
● Neighbours from whom can ask a favour	3.16	2.60	↓
Sense of belonging in the community	4.74	4.61	↓
<small>Note: Average score based on a 7-point scale where 1 = very weak and 7 = very strong.</small>			
The extent to which residents feel they are proud of the community	5.15	5.23	↑
<small>Note: Average score based on a 7-point scale where 1 = very weak and 7 = very strong.</small>			

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#### Sense of community in 2019

- A higher percentage of women volunteer (56.8%) than men (44.5%).
- Women felt less safe walking alone after dark (12.0%) than men (7.0%).
- Social isolation is a serious concern in Wood Buffalo, regardless of income levels and age groups. Those residents experiencing social isolation to a greater extent include:
  - single parents;
  - adults living alone; and
  - adults sharing accommodation.

**RESIDENTS WHO VOLUNTEERED DECLINED FROM 2014 TO 2019**



**RECREATION PROGRAM COSTS PREVENT SINGLE PARENTS FROM PARTICIPATING**

### LEISURE AND CULTURE

Key Indicators	2014	2019	Positive or Negative Change
Percentage of residents who participated monthly in physical activities:			
● Vigorous exercise	57.9%	52.5%	↓
● Light exercise	88.5%	87.5%	↓
Percentage of residents who participated in cultural and arts activities in the past year:			
● Attending music concerts	64.6%	49.9%	↓
● Attending festivals	70.6%	46.6%	↓
Percentage of residents who participated in computer-based activities on a typical day:			
● Playing computer games online	50.1%	42.0%	↓
● Socializing with others online	86.7%	85.4%	↓
<small>Note: Average score based percentage.</small>			

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#### Access to recreation and cultural facilities in 2019

- As annual household incomes increase, so does perceived access to recreation and cultural facilities.
- Single parents agreed much more strongly that cost prevents their participation in recreation programs.
- Single parents, couples with no children, and adults sharing accommodation were less likely to agree that programs are offered at convenient times.

# HOW HAS WOOD BUFFALO CHANGED FROM 2014 TO 2019?

## THE WELLBEING OF WOOD BUFFALO

### TIME USE

Key Indicators	2014	2019	Positive or Negative Change
Percentage of residents who provide unpaid care to:			
● Children	22.6%	18.9%	↓
● Older adults	5.5%	6.2%	↑
Note: Average score based percentage.			
Average perceived adequacy of time to:			
● Be themselves	7.09	6.72	↓
● Be with their children	7.00	6.50	↓
● Form and sustain serious relationships	6.64	6.08	↓
● Socialize	6.52	6.14	↓
● Be active in the community	5.89	5.47	↓
Note: Average scores on time adequacy based on a 10-point scale, where higher scores reflect greater adequacy.			

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### Balance of activities in daily life in 2019

- Residents who are below average in wellbeing experience more interference of work to personal life than residents above average in wellbeing.
- Women more often felt rushed (54.5%) than men (43.7%).

**54.5%**  
OF **WOMEN**  
OFTEN FEEL RUSHED



**43.7%**  
OF **MEN**  
OFTEN FEEL RUSHED

### Having enough time for different activities in 2019

- Generally, as annual household incomes increase, feelings of having enough time for different activities also increase.
- For residents at least 30 years of age, feeling they have enough time for different activities increases with age.
- One-quarter of single parents feel they have adequate time for different activities, which is a significantly lower percentage than residents in any other living circumstances where one-third or more feel they have adequate time.

### Commuting in 2019

- Men reported longer average commute times from their residence to work (38.2 minutes) than women (22.5 minutes).
- Residents who are below average in wellbeing spend longer time commuting (32.3 minutes per day) compared to residents with above average wellbeing (28.7 minutes per day).

RESIDENTS WITH **LOWER WELLBEING** SPEND LONGER COMMUTING TO WORK



# THE WELLBEING OF WOOD BUFFALO

# A CLOSER LOOK AT WOOD BUFFALO:

FACTORS RELATED TO RESIDENT WELLBEING BASED ON THE CIW COMMUNITY WELLBEING SURVEY

This has been a highlight of the results from the The Wellbeing of Wood Buffalo Survey report, conducted by the University of Waterloo as part of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing.

Get more information at [FuseSocial.ca/ciw-wood-buffalo/](http://FuseSocial.ca/ciw-wood-buffalo/)



Measuring what matters  
Making measures matter

## HOW ARE CANADIANS DOING NATIONALLY?

### THE GAP BETWEEN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND WELLBEING IS WIDENING

There is a feeling that all is not well in Canada. But it's more than a feeling; it's a fact. When we compare trends in the wellbeing of Canadians to economic growth in the period from 1994 to 2014, the gap between GDP and our wellbeing is massive and it's growing. When Canadians go to bed at night, they are not worried about GDP. They are worried about stringing together enough hours of part-time jobs, rising tuition fees, and affordable housing. They are thinking about the last time they got together with friends or the next time they can take a vacation.

Maybe that's why we are getting less sleep than 21 years ago.

Find out more at [uwaterloo.ca/canadian-index-wellbeing](http://uwaterloo.ca/canadian-index-wellbeing)



Trends in the Canadian Index of Wellbeing and GDP (per capita) from 1994 to 2014

