

Toronto's Vital Signs report exposes Toronto's worsening inequality

Report from Toronto Foundation shows city faces growing pains amid narrow gains

TORONTO, October 7, 2019 – Released today, Toronto Foundation's 17th **Toronto's Vital Signs report** reveals the harsh realities of a city facing increasingly entrenched inequality despite massive growth. In North America's fastest growing city, youth, newcomers, and racialized communities are experiencing significantly worse outcomes when compared with white, long-time residents across the 10 issues areas examined by the report.

"Despite our self-image, Toronto does not work for all. In fact, for a growing majority, life in the city poses a serious struggle, and the trend lines suggest things will get worse before they get better," says Sharon Avery, president and CEO, Toronto Foundation. "For those who think that things are no tougher today, Toronto's Vital Signs is a wake-up call. We've compiled more data than ever before and the evidence is clear: inequality is the new normal."

The exclusions exposed in this year's report are starker than ever, and are often connected to widening income and wealth disparity. Racialized populations, newcomers, and young people have had no inflation-adjusted increases in income over the last 30 years. That's in contrast to older, Canadian-born, white residents who have had as much as 60% in income growth. The ripple effect means that lower-income families struggle with mounting debt (those earning in the bottom 20% had 420% debt as percentage of income) as well as the increasing cost of housing, transit, and basic staples at the grocery store. The full report and shareable infographics are available for download at www.torontofoundation.ca/vitalsigns2019.

"The report confirms that the old ways aren't working. New voices and new actors are needed at the table to fight inequality," says Avery. "Ahead of the upcoming election, we can use Toronto's Vital Signs report to ask our leaders how they will ensure Toronto's gains are not overwhelmed by growing pains and exclusions. At Toronto Foundation, we believe philanthropy is everybody. We want to build a culture of reciprocity in this city."

Twenty-five grassroots leaders reviewed an early summary of the report and provided their feedback through a joint letter (www.torontofoundation.ca/grassroots-message/). Several of their stories are profiled to illustrate that the findings are lived and experienced by too many in this city. Also reflected in the report is the feedback from scores of individuals, as well as policy recommendations from experts in the sector.

Toronto Foundation will formally launch the report at **CBC's Glenn Gould Studio on October 8**. The event will feature remarks from Toronto Foundation's president and CEO **Sharon Avery**, a keynote speech from award-winning placemaker and author, **Jay Pitter**, and a panel discussion featuring grassroots leaders who are driving real change on the ground. Avery will also announce a new Toronto Foundation grant program designed to surface and support high-impact activities and visionary leadership working to tackle our city's inequities. To learn more about this grant program, visit www.torontofoundation.ca/tvsgrants.

How Toronto is growing:

- The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is up. Between 2011 and 2016, the city's GDP grew by 3.2% annually, almost twice the national pace (1.8%).
- Toronto's population is the fastest growing compared to all Canadian cities, as well as the four fastest growing cities in the United States - combined - and by a considerable margin.
- As of July 2019, Toronto has 120 cranes constructing buildings, which is far more than any other city in North America.

Our growing pains amidst narrow gains:Income and Wealth

Gain: Overall poverty is decreasing.

Pain: Racialized populations, and young people have had NO inflation adjusted increases in income over the last 30 years. Compare that though to older, Canadian-born, white residents who have had as much as 60% in income growth.

Housing

Gain: Toronto is regularly listed as one of the best places to live.

Pain: Housing prices have grown four times faster than income.

Work

Gain: Unemployment rates are the lowest in decades, though still higher than most other cities in Ontario, with large gains for immigrants and newcomers.

Pain: Over the last decade, temporary jobs grew five times faster than permanent jobs, self-employment grew three times faster than permanent jobs, and part-time work grew two times faster than full-time jobs. Immigrants, racialized populations, and newcomers disproportionately work in these more precarious jobs, contributing to a lack of income growth for these populations over the last 30 years.

Arts, Culture, and Recreation

Gain: Arts, culture, and recreation fuel livability in the city and make Toronto a top tourist destination.

Pain: Toronto's arts programming and recreational facilities are not serving everyone equally, with far higher participation rates among high-income groups and those in the downtown versus those in Etobicoke and Scarborough.

Environment

Gain: Toronto has made great progress at reducing its greenhouse gas emissions targets for 2020, though real investments are needed for further reductions and to build the city's resilience for climate change impacts.

Pain: The number of days above 30 degrees Celsius is projected to more than double, from 12 to 31 by 2050.

Getting Around

Gain: There have been new investments in transit. Recent city initiatives such as two-hour transfers on the TTC and discounted fares for those on welfare and disability have improved transit affordability for some.

Pain: Two-thirds of unemployed residents live in parts of the city with low access to transit making it harder for people without jobs to find jobs.

Civic Engagement and Belonging

Gain: More people are feeling a sense of connection and belonging to the city of Toronto.

Pain: People are volunteering less of their time. Those earning less are contributing a higher percentage of their income: people earning \$50,000 or less - 2.29%; \$100,000 -1.63% and \$800,000 - 2.02%.

Health and Wellness

Gain: Torontonians are physically healthier and have a higher life expectancy than other Canadians.

Pain: Toronto is also one of the least happy cities in the country with a growing youth mental health crisis and low life satisfaction.

Learning

Gain: Toronto is among the most educated cities in the world.

Pain: High school students in the lowest income groups are three times more likely to drop out than those in the highest income groups.

Safety

Gain: After a decade of decreasing crime rates, major crimes have been increasing in Toronto and the rest of Canada, though it is still far lower than 15 years ago.

Pain: The highest crime neighbourhoods have more than 50 times the rate of crime as the lowest.

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About Toronto Foundation

Established in 1981, Toronto Foundation is one of 191 Community Foundations in Canada. We pool philanthropic dollars and facilitate charitable donations for maximum community impact. Our individual, family and organizational Funds number more than 500 and we administer more than \$400 million in assets. Through strategic granting, thought leadership and convening, we engage in city building, mobilizing people and resources to increase the quality of life in Toronto. Visit www.torontofoundation.ca and follow @TorontoFdn and #TOVitalSigns.