



# Measuring Rural Community Vitality

## A FACT-FINDERS GUIDE TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL DATA:

How To Find National Statistics



RURAL ONTARIO  
INSTITUTE

**2017**

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ▼

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Thank you to our illustrious panel of experts for participating in our peer review process: **Tracy Birtch**, Director Social Research & Planning Council / Community Impact - Perth-Huron Social Research and Planning Council; **Stephen Morris**, Economic Development Specialist – OMAFRA; **Dr. Ken Clarke**, DAC Perth-Middlesex; **Jon King**, Municipal Advisor – MMA; **Michael Florio**, Economic Development Specialist – OMAFRA; **Tanya Stuart**, Communications Coordinator – Rural Ontario Institute; **Chris Fullerton**, Associate Professor and Chair Department of Geography – Brock University; **Erica Clark**, Epidemiologist – Huron County Health Unit; **Spencer Sandor**, Municipal Advisor – MMA; **Sam Coghlan**, Library Executive (retired); **Mark Cassidy**, Project Manager – Rural Ontario Institute; **Myles Buck**, Economic Development Specialist – OMAFRA

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## Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	3
<b>METHODOLOGY</b> .....	3
<b>PILOT PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS</b> .....	4
Lanark County Planning Council for Children, Youth & Families .....	4
Lanark Renfrew Health & Community Services .....	4
Municipality of North Grenville .....	4
Town of Mississippi Mills .....	4
Lanark County Local Immigration Partnership.....	4
Communal Services Working Group .....	4
Community Schools Working Group .....	5
Trails Hub Communities Working Group .....	5
Rural Transportation Working Group .....	5
<b>SADG RESOURCES</b> .....	5
SADG INDEX .....	5
SADG USER WORKBOOK.....	5

## INTRODUCTION

A major challenge facing small municipalities and rural community organizations is the need to deal with the overwhelming volume of data from many sources. While data is available on a community basis directly from Statistics Canada, analysis across Ontario geographies requires a significant investment of time to differentiate any rural versus urban trends. Organizations or municipalities in rural and small town Ontario may not have the resources to compare local happenings with broader trends. As a result, small rural communities and organizations are forced to make a choice:

- Hiring consultants to find data and perform analytics and environmental scans – often with unsatisfactory results due to lack of familiarity with the local context, or
- Avoiding an evidence-based approach for data analytics due to being overwhelmed by this huge and ever-changing field, and making policy and program recommendations based on tradition, political priorities, or “gut instinct”.

Since 2013 the Rural Ontario Institute has approached this issue with the annual publication of [Focus on Rural Ontario Fact Sheets](#) providing socio-economic data and trends for rural Ontario geographies. The *Fact-Finders Guide* goes a step further in providing municipalities help with their data needs.

The SADG addresses two issues - finding and using data. ROI commissioned Ray Bollman, former Chief of Statistics Canada Rural Research Group, to develop a resource rural communities can use to help them to *find* the data they need. The SADG provides an index of sources of data that are available from Canadian federal departments and agencies. Next, to address the issue of *using data*, ROI commissioned the *Big Data for Small Places* initiative to produce a user workbook to equip municipal staff and community organizations with rudimentary data analysis capability. Together these two comprise the *Fact-Finders Guide*. Our pilot testing indicates this new resource will help municipal staff and community organizations find and use the data they need on a day-to-day basis.

## METHODOLOGY

The SADG takes a capacity-building approach in the areas of data access and analysis for rural communities. Using the SADG, staff of a rural municipality and/or community-based organizations, come together around a challenge or opportunity that is currently “on their plate” – that is, a real issue not a hypothetical one. They are guided through a process involving mentoring, networking and real-time training using the SADG to identify and analyse data for evidence-based decision-making and progress-tracking.

The SADG is an entry-level, user-friendly approach to finding and using data to make rural communities better places to live, work, play, and invest.

# PILOT PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS



## Lanark County Planning Council for Children, Youth & Families

- Jane Torrance, Community Coordinator
- Lanark Planning Council
- Kevin Clouthier, Executive Director, Open Doors
- Emily Cassell, Data Analysis Coordinator Children's Resources on Wheels
- Tanis Cowan, Executive Director
- YAK Youth Centre Perth

## Lanark Renfrew Health & Community Services

- John Jordan, Executive Director, North Lanark CHC
- Jane Coyle, Director, Health Services, North Lanark CHC
- Doug Kersey, Data Coordinator, North Lanark CHC
- Kara Symbolic, Community Health Promoter, North Lanark CHC
- Bonny Johnson, Director of Health Services, Whitewater Bromley CHC

## Municipality of North Grenville

- Mark Guy, Director Parks, Rec. Culture
- Brian Carre, CEO
- Lisa Kmiel, Event Coordinator
- Anne Hunt, Arena Booking & Advertizing Assist

## Town of Mississippi Mills

- Diane Smithson, CAO
- Pam Harris, CEO/Chief Librarian
- Troy Dunlop, Director Public Works
- Stephen Stirling, Director Building & Planning
- Tiffany MacLaren, Director, Econ Cultural Dev

## Lanark County Local Immigration Partnership

- Chéla Breckon, Project Manager
- Natasha Lacelle, Project Officer
- Janna DesRoches, Project Assistant
- Lorraine Mackenzie, Exec Director, UOV Chamber of Commerce

## Communal Services Working Group

- Joe Gallivan (Lead), Dir. Planning/Econ Dev., County of Frontenac
- Reid Shepherd, Community Planner, County of Frontenac
- Tara Mieske, Clerk, Twp. of North Frontenac
- Darlene Plumley, CAO, Twp. of Frontenac Islands



## FACT-FINDERS GUIDE TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL DATA How to Find National Statistics

- Alex Lemieux, Financial Analyst, County of Frontenac
- Kevin Farrell, GIS Specialist, County of Frontenac

### Community Schools Working Group

- Doug Reycraft (Co-Lead), Chair, Community School Alliance
- Denis Doyle (Co-Lead), Councillor/Mayor, Twp. Frontenac Islands
- Angelique Tamblyn, Executive Assistant, County of Frontenac
- Kelly Pender, CAO, County of Frontenac
- Tabitha Morton, Data Analyst, N. Hastings, Frontenac, L&A

### Trails Hub Communities Working Group

- Alison Vandervelde (Lead), Community Dev. Officer, County of Frontenac
- Frances Smith, Warden/Mayor, County/Twp. Central Frontenac
- Cathy MacMunn, Clerk-Administrator, Twp. Central Frontenac
- Michael McGovern, Treasurer, Twp. Central Frontenac
- Kevin Farrell, GIS Specialist, County of Frontenac
- Stephen Keeley, Public Works Manager, Tay Valley Twp.

### Rural Transportation Working Group

- Louise Moody (Lead), Exec. Director, N. Frontenac Comm. Services
- Gail Young, Super. Transport, N. Frontenac Comm. Services
- David Townsend, Exec. Director, S. Frontenac Comm. Services
- John McDougall, Councillor, County/Twp. South Frontenac
- Jannette Amini, Mgr. Legislative Ser/Clerk, County of Frontenac
- Susan Brant, Deputy Treasurer, County of Frontenac
- Marian VanBruinessen, Director of Corporate Services/Treasure

## RESOURCES



- [FACT-FINDERS GUIDE \(81 pages\)](#)
- [BIG DATA FOR SMALL PLACES WORKBOOK \(60 pages\)](#)

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