

Non-metro income: Levels and trends

Vol. 3, No. 16, 2015

Highlights

- Non-metro family income has been increasing faster than inflation, although the level was generally flat during the last half of the 2000s.
- Similarly, the level of income for non-metro unattached individuals has been generally increasing relative to inflation over the past 20 years.
- The incomes in non-metro Ontario are about 15% less than the incomes in metro Ontario.

Why look at income levels and trends?

Income is central to an individual's economic well-being. If income levels are growing more than inflation, this would indicate that levels of economic prosperity are increasing. Spending by households on shelter, food, transportation, services and durable goods makes up a significant proportion of overall spending in the economy and is linked directly to income. Levels of income affect household spending which often drives growth or decline in the economy as compared with business or government spending¹.

This FactSheet portrays the level and trends of non-metro income. An on-line [Appendix](#) presents the income level and trend for each economic region.

Findings

In 2013, the median² level of income for a non-metro family³ was \$66,600 (Figure 1).

The level of non-metro income has increased from about \$52,000 in the late 1990s (calculated in constant dollars) to over \$60,000 in the 2000's and above \$65,000 in recent years⁴. Thus, the non-metro family income has been increasing in real terms (i.e. relative to inflation). However, income levels were relatively flat in the late 2000s.

¹ See "Gross domestic product, income and expenditure, second quarter 2015" (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150901/dq150901a-eng.htm>).

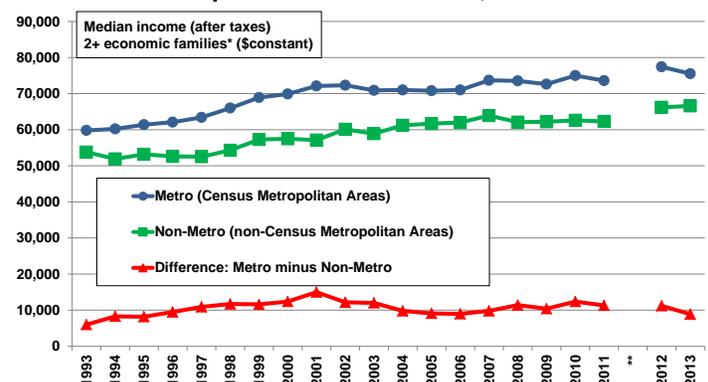
² A median income is the level where one-half of the families have an income above this level and one-half have an income below this level.

³ An economic family is defined in the footnote to Table 1.

⁴ There is a break in the data series. The Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) provided the estimates for 1993 to 2011 and the Canada Income Survey (CIS) is now providing the annual income estimates.

Figure 1

In 2013, income gap of \$8,900 for non-metro families, compared to metro families, Ontario



*An economic family is a group of two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law or adoption. A couple may be of the same or of a different sex. Foster children are included.

**Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Labour & Income Dynamics, 1993-2011 (\$2011) & Canada Income Survey, 2012-2013 (\$2013).

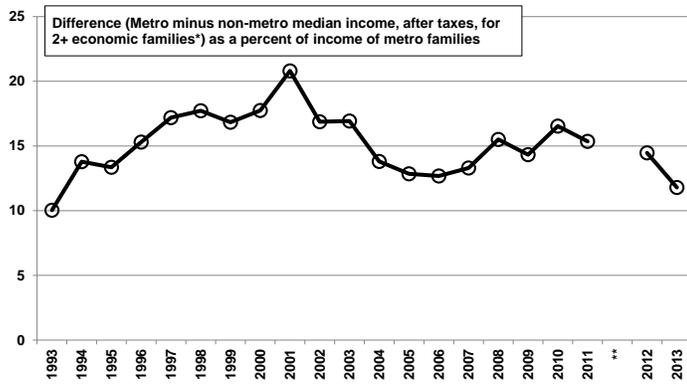
The pattern in metro areas has been similar. The result is that the metro<>non-metro gap in median family incomes has been about \$10,000 (in constant dollars) over the period from 1993 to 2013. However, the gap has varied between \$6,000 in 1993 and \$15,000 in 2001. Thus, the gap as a percent of metro family income has ranged between 10% and 20% over the past 20 years (Figure 2).

At present, 87% of individuals live in an "economic family" and thus 13% are "unattached individuals" (see on-line [Appendix](#)).

The pattern for each Economic Region (ER) is shown in an on-line [Appendix](#). The general patterns show the ERs of Toronto (and area) and Ottawa (and area) have slightly higher family income. The ERs of Kitchener-Waterloo-Barrie and Hamilton-Niagara Peninsula have essentially the same family income levels as Ontario as a whole. The remaining ERs have had lower incomes than the Ontario average in most of the past 20 years.

Figure 2

Income gap for non-metro families was 12% of income of metro families in 2013, Ontario

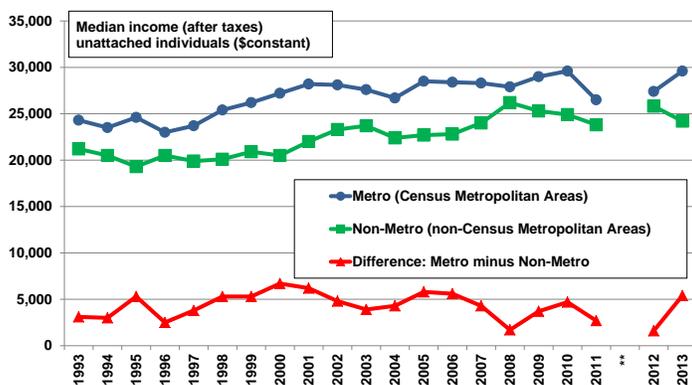


*An economic family is a group of two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law or adoption. A couple may be of the same or of a different same sex. Foster children are included.
Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, 1993 to 2011 and Canada Income Survey, 2012-2013.

In non-metro areas of Ontario, the median income of unattached individuals was \$24,200 in 2013 (Figure 3). This is an increase from \$20,000 (measured in constant dollars) recorded in the late 1990's. The gap, compared to metro areas, has ranged between \$1,600 and \$6,700 over the 20 year period from 1993 to 2013. As with the gap for economic families, the income gap for unattached individuals in non-metro areas, compared to metro areas, has fluctuated around 15% over this period (Figure 4).

Figure 3

In 2013, income gap of \$5,400 for non-metro unattached individuals, compared to metro unattached individuals, Ontario



**Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Labour & Income Dynamics, 1993-2011 (\$2011) & Canada Income Survey, 2012-2013 (\$2013).

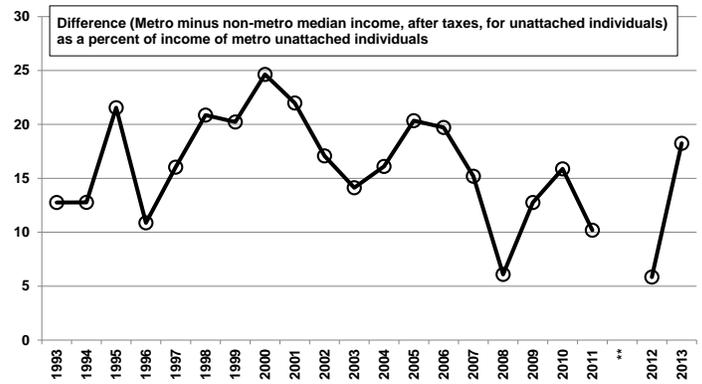
Summary

The level of family income in non-metro Ontario has been increasing faster than inflation, although the level was generally flat during the last half of the 2000s.

Similarly, the level of income for unattached individuals has been generally increasing relative to inflation over the past 20 years.

Figure 4

Income gap for non-metro unattached individuals was 18% of income of metro unattached individuals in 2013, Ontario



Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, 1993 to 2011 and Canada Income Survey, 2012-2013.

Table 1

Level of economic family income in each economic region compared to the overall Ontario level	
Economic Region (by % non-metro)	Average income
Metro (1% non-metro) Economic Regions	
3530 Toronto (and area)	Higher (slightly)
Mostly metro (9-26% non-metro) Economic Regions	
3510 Ottawa (and area)	Higher (since 2001)
3540 Kitchener - Waterloo - Barrie	Same
3550 Hamilton - Niagara Peninsula	Same
3560 London (and area)	Lower (slightly)
Mostly non-metro (46-71% non-metro) Economic Regions	
3515 Kingston - Pembroke	Lower
3520 Muskoka - Kawarthas	Lower
3570 Windsor - Sarnia	Lower (since 2008)
3590 Northeast	Lower
3595 Northwest	Same (lower 2006-2011)
Non-metro (100% non-metro) Economic Regions	
3580 Stratford - Bruce Peninsula	Lower (slightly)

Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Labour & Income Dynamics, 1993-2011 & Canada Income Survey, 2012-2013.

The incomes in non-metro Ontario are about 15% less than the incomes in metro Ontario.

The Economic Regions of Toronto and Ottawa now have average incomes above the Ontario average. Two Economic Regions with larger metro populations (Kitchener-Waterloo-Barrie and Hamilton-Niagara) have incomes similar to the Ontario average. The non-metro Economic Regions have family incomes below the Ontario average.

Rural Ontario Institute gratefully acknowledges the work of Ray Bollman in preparing this edition of *Focus on Rural Ontario*. Questions on data sources can be directed to RayD.Bollman@sasktel.net. Any comments or discussions can be directed to NRagetlie@RuralOntarioInstitute.ca.