
Number of non-metro communities by size

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Highlights

- **There are 393 ‘communities’ or census subdivisions in non-metro Ontario.**
- **There are another 155 ‘communities’ in partially-non-metro Ontario.**
- **These ‘communities’ differ greatly in terms of size. There are 216 very small ‘communities’ with fewer than 1,000 residents and another 288 with 1,000 to 25,000 residents.**

Why look at communities?

‘Communities’ are typically the centre of governance for the provision of local services and they have traditionally been the centre for social interaction. For the reporting of census results, census subdivisions are equivalent to municipal jurisdictions or Indian reserves¹. For some, the municipal jurisdiction is their meaning of community. For others, there may be a number of communities within the municipal jurisdiction. An example where there are a number of communities within a large one-tier municipal jurisdiction is Kawartha Lakes.

The number and size of communities is one way to understand a region’s capacity to pursue development objectives. Providing effective governance/services for areas with a smaller population base is challenging where a small tax base might only resource a skeletal staff. Larger municipal jurisdictions with a broader tax base may be able to afford a staff complement and recreational or economic development services not within the reach of smaller places.

Findings

In 2011, there were 393 ‘communities’¹ within non-metro² census divisions (Table 1). In addition, there

were 155 ‘communities’ within partially-metro³ areas. The population size of these ‘communities’ varies widely. Simcoe County for example has 14 communities with over 10,000 and under 25,000 residents.

Among the 393 ‘communities’ in non-metro census divisions, 52 have less than 100 residents. This includes census subdivisions¹ (CSDs) that are geographic units with no residents and some Indian Reserves with under-enumerated populations. Another 288 communities had a population of 1,000 to 24,999 residents.

This variation in ‘communities’ by size illustrates a considerable variation in the capacity for local governance and service provision. The ‘smaller communities’ are most prevalent among non-metro census divisions. Metro census divisions have fewer smaller ‘communities’. For example, a metro census division such as Halton has the communities of Acton and Georgetown in the municipality of Halton Hills.

Summary

‘Community’ size matters for the effective provision of local services and for pursuing development initiatives. Non-metro census divisions have a relatively higher share of ‘communities’ that are small(er).

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.

¹ ‘Community’ is in quotes to indicate that the appropriate definition of ‘community’ will differ according to the issue being addressed. Here, a ‘community’ is represented by a census subdivision which, as defined below, is the municipal authority to which one pays property taxes. However, in many localities, a group of rural municipalities plus a larger town might constitute a ‘community’ in terms of the way it functions (e.g. for schools, hospitals, shopping and commuting to work).

Census subdivision (CSD): is the general term for incorporated towns and municipalities (as determined by provincial / territorial legislation) or areas treated as municipal equivalents for statistical purposes (e.g., Indian reserves, Indian settlements and unorganized territories).

² A ‘non-metro’ census division has no CSDs delineated as part of a Census Metropolitan Area (CMA)

³ A ‘partially-metro’ census division has some CSDs delineated as part of a CMA and other CSDs that are not part of a CMA.

Table 1

Number of census subdivisions by population size class, for each census division, Ontario, 2011															
Census Division identifier	Census Division name	Population size class of the census subdivision													All population size classes
		Less than 100	100 to 499	500 to 749	750 to 999	1,000 to 2,499	2,500 to 5,000	5,000 to 9,999	10,000 to 24,999	25,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 499,999	500,000 and over		
3506	Ottawa													1	1
3519	York		1						2	2	2	3			10
3520	Toronto													1	1
3521	Peel										1			2	3
3524	Halton										2	2			4
3525	Hamilton													1	1
3553	Greater Sudbury		1									1			2
3529	Brant			1				1		1	1				4
Metro (subtotal)		0	2	1	0	0	0	1	2	3	6	6	5	26	
3526	Niagara							1	6	2	2	1			12
3510	Frontenac					2	1		1			1			5
3539	Middlesex		2		1	1	2	2	3				1		12
3518	Durham	1							3		2	3			9
3530	Waterloo							1	3		1	2			7
3515	Peterborough		1			2	2	4	1		1				11
3558	Thunder Bay	5	13	1	3	5	3	2					1		33
3537	Essex		1						4	3			1		9
3523	Wellington							3	3	1			1		8
3534	Elgin						2	4	1	1					8
3522	Dufferin						5	2		1					8
3543	Simcoe	1			1	1		3	10	4			1		21
3502	Prescott and Russell							2	2	4					8
3511	Lennox and Addington							1	1	2					4
Partially-non-metro (subtotal)		7	17	1	5	11	18	25	41	12	6	12	0	155	
3552	Sudbury	3	3	2		5	1	1							15
3501	Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry	1						1	5	1					8
3507	Leeds and Grenville			1			4	5	3						13
3509	Lanark						1	7	1						9
3512	Hastings		1	2	1	3	7	1		2					17
3513	Prince Edward									1					1
3514	Northumberland		1					2	5						8
3516	Kawartha Lakes										1				1
3528	Haldimand-Norfolk		1		1					1	1				4
3531	Perth						1	2	2	1					6
3532	Oxford							4	3	1					8
3536	Chatham-Kent		1										1		2
3538	Lambton	1		2	1	2	3	2	2		1				14
3540	Huron						3	6							9
3541	Bruce			2			1	5	2						10
3542	Grey							5	4						9
3544	Muskoka	1	1			1	1	1	3						8
3546	Haliburton					1	1	2							4
3547	Renfrew		2			3	7	5	2						19
3548	Nipissing	2	1	1	2	6	1		1		1				15
3549	Parry Sound	2	6	2	6	9	4	1							30
3551	Manitoulin	2	7	2	3	1	2								17
3554	Timiskaming	2	12	6		3	1	1	1						26
3556	Cochrane	5	2	4	1	5	2	3		1					23
3557	Algoma	4	7	6	1	9	2	1	1		1				32
3559	Rainy River	7	9	2	4	2	1	1							26
3560	Kenora	22	20	3	5	4	1	3	1						59
Non-metro (subtotal)		52	74	35	25	54	44	59	36	8	5	1	0	393	
Ontario		59	93	37	30	65	62	85	79	23	17	19	5	574	

Source: Statistics Canada. (2012) GeoSuite: 2011 Census (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 92-150) (<http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/bsolc/olc-cel/olc-cel?catno=92-150-X&chprog=1&lang=eng>)