



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Rural Community Wellbeing Project – Building capacity in rural communities for data-driven decision making.**

GUELPH, ON, April 27th, 2023 – The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) is pleased to announce the completion of Phase 1 of the Rural Community Wellbeing Project. The project aims to help rural communities assess and interpret their wellbeing within their local context by improving access to community data.

“Rural areas are facing many new challenges and opportunities related to COVID-19, global economic trends, climate change, extreme weather events, and demographic changes,” says ROI Executive Director, Ellen Sinclair. “To comprehend and respond effectively to these challenges and opportunities, rural communities need easy access to accurate data that helps to translate information into understanding and action.”

Phase 1 of the Rural Community Wellbeing Project involved the creation of a pilot dashboard to present indicators selected from the Canadian Standards Association’s (CSA) standard: [CSA R113:22](#). Initial dashboard design was informed through feedback from four rural community partners: Tay Valley Township, the Town of Prescott, the Town of Goderich, and the City of Temiskaming Shores. The results: a simple and interactive presentation of the data allowing pilot communities to better understand their wellbeing by enabling them to:

- 1) Easily identify stand-out indicators for their community.
- 2) Compare their community to others.
- 3) Track changes in their community over time.

“ROI’s wellbeing dashboard will be very helpful for Tay Valley Township and rural communities who do not have the capacity to undertake complex data analysis,” says Amanda Mabo, CAO of Tay Valley Township. “The information provided through this dashboard will help us make strategic decisions that will improve the wellbeing of people in our community.”

“Many rural areas are challenged to find data that can help us understand our local situation or monitor change over time. This project is bridging this gap in a very accessible way. Having access to community-level data is so helpful in providing a more focused perspective and allowing us to tailor our work to match the needs of each community,” says Amanda Mongeon, Manager of Community and School Health, Timiskaming Health Unit.

The summary report for the first phase of the wellbeing project is available on the ROI website.

Phase 2 of the project will commence in June 2023 and is focused on improving the pilot dashboard, expanding indicator selection, identifying data sources, and engaging with communities to mobilize knowledge.

“ROI is grateful to our partners for supporting this important project and we are delighted to be working with existing and new partners during Phase 2, including the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, and York University,” says Danielle Letang, ROI Senior Data Analyst.

During Phase 2 of the project, ROI is seeking rural Data Champions to help ensure the final product is as useful as possible. Interested communities or organizations wishing to take part in the project are encouraged to visit the [Rural Community Wellbeing project page](#) for more information and to contact ROI.

## **ABOUT**

The Rural Ontario Institute is a non-profit organization committed to developing leaders, informing decision makers and facilitating collaboration on issues and opportunities facing rural and northern Ontario communities.

## **ASSOCIATED LINKS**

[RURAL ONTARIO INSTITUTE](#)

[RURAL COMMUNITY WELLBEING PROJECT](#)

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