RURAL COMMUNITY WELLBEING

SEPTEMBER 2026

COMMMUNITY WELLBEING REPORT

HURON COUNTY



PREPARED BY:

ROI RURAL ONTARIO INSTITUTE

PREPARED FOR: HURON COUNTY

RURAL COMMUNITY WELLBEING

ABOUT

ROI has developed a dashboard that displays wellbeing indicators for communities across Ontario. The dashboard was developed in collaboration with project partners, including the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, and EcoCanada.

The dashboard development and indicator selection were informed through engagement with a focus group of rural data champions whose involvement was integral to this process.

ROI's Community Wellbeing Dashboard improves access to data and evidence for local decision making. The information on the dashboard and in this report can help communities:

- establish baselines
- identify priorities for change and research
- share stories and celebrate successes
- reveal data gaps for decision making
- monitor progress over time in future reports

This report was prepared using indicators and data from ROI's Community Wellbeing Dashboard. See the website for definitions, data sources, and references.



Building
vision, voice & leadership

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI), Mitacs and the University of Guelph's School of Environmental Design and Rural Development (SEDRD) have partnered on a two-year postgraduate internship training program. Through this multi-year partnership, a team of master's and PhD students supports ROI's work on rural data and leadership development. The program gives graduate students hands-on experience while advancing innovation and data-driven decision-making in rural Ontario.

Mitacs partners with Canadian academic institutions, private industry and government to deliver research and training programs related to industrial and social innovation.

The University of Guelph's SEDRD brings together academic fields focused on creating strong communities in Canada and around the world. Its six programs span Landscape Architecture, Rural Planning and Development, Capacity Development and Extension, and Rural Studies. Through these fields, SEDRD reflects the interdependent roles that planners, leaders, communicators, landscape architects, citizens and politicians play in building strong, authentic communities.

To learn more about this partnership, please visit https://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/mitacs-partnership



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SUMMARY

In 2021, Huron County had a population of 61,366. The four largest communities, South Huron, Huron East, Goderich, and Central Huron had the highest population, accounting for 57% of the County's population.

In 2021, there were **75 economically dependent people per 100 working aged people** in Huron County.

75:100

3%

Community population increased by 3% between 2016-2021.

Huron County Median Age

46.8

In 2021, the median age was 46.8 with Goderich (52.8 years), Bluewater (52.0 years), and Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh (51.2 years) being the oldest median age in the county.

12% of households in Huron County earned a **low income** in 2021.

12%

In 2021, **39%** of people aged 15 or older in Huron County **commuted to work locally.**

39%

In 2024, only 97% of households in Huron County had access to broadband internet with 50/10 Mbps and 0.1% of households had no internet service at all.

97%

76

Huron County has 76 health facilities; 28 of which are pharmacies, 12 mental health and addiction organizations, and 5 hospitals.

83%

In 2021, 83% of people aged 25-64 had a high school diploma and 56% of people had achieved some level of post-secondary education.

Opportunities to engage in **arts and culture are relatively diversified for a rural region of this size, with 22 facilities across the county**, 11 libraries or archives, 6 theatre and concert halls, 4 museums, and 1 gallery.

22

HURON COUNTY
COMMUNITY CONTEXT

COMMUNITY LOCATION, TYPE AND CLASSIFICATION

The census subdivision of Huron County is located in Western Ontario. This community is made up of 9 lower tier municipalities. Local services are delivered through the County of Huron and the lower tier municipalities.

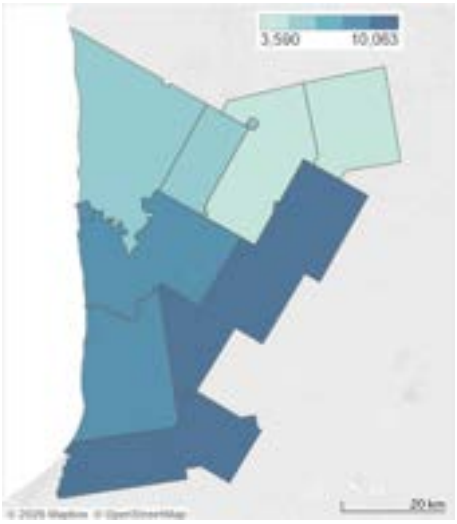
All 9 municipalities are classified as rural.

POPULATION

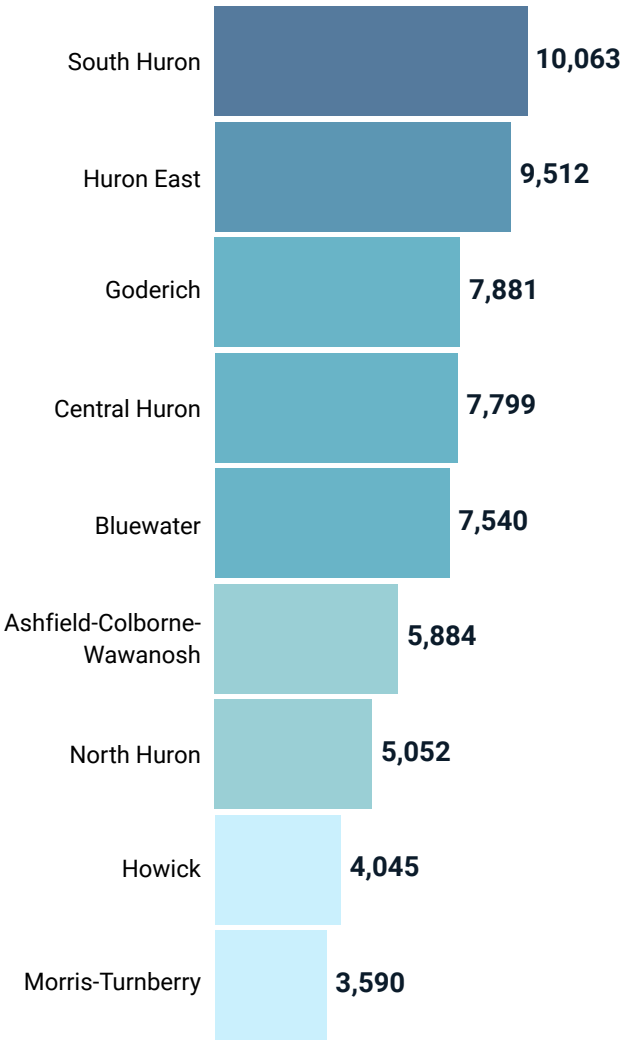
In 2021, Huron County had a population of 61,366. The four largest communities, South Huron, Huron East, Goderich, and Central Huron, accounted for 57% of the County's population.

61,366
People

Huron County



DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATOR: 2021 POPULATION

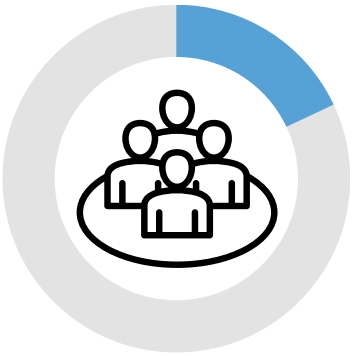


POPULATION DENSITY

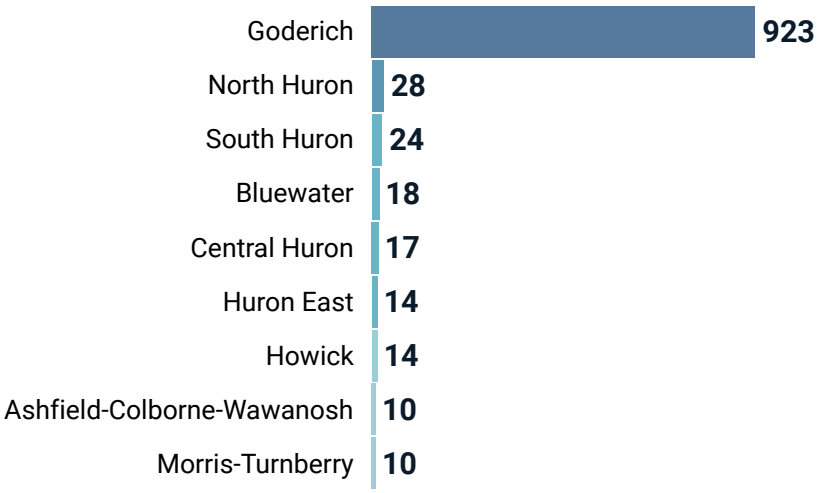
In 2021, Huron County had a population density of 18 people per square kilometre, which is higher than the rural Ontario average of 3 people per square kilometre.

Goderich is the smallest community by land area but had a significantly higher population density than the rest of the county with 923 people per square kilometre. The next two most densely populated communities are North Huron (28 people per square kilometre) and South Huron (24 people per square kilometre).

18 people per km^2



DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATOR: POPULATION DENSITY



POPULATION CHANGE

Between 2016 and 2021, the population of Huron County increased by 3%. In comparison, the population of rural Ontario grew by 5%

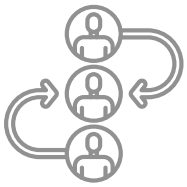
3%



Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh	9%	Central Huron	3%
Bluewater	6%	Morris-Turnberry	3%
Howick	4%	North Huron	2%
Huron East	4%	South Huron	0%
Goderich	3%	Rural Ontario	5%

POPULATION DEPENDENCY RATIO

75:100

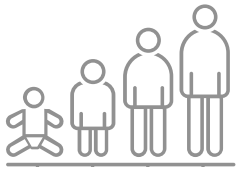


In 2021, Huron County had 75 economically dependent people for every 100 working-age residents. Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh, Goderich, and South Huron recorded the highest dependency ratios in the county. All communities except North Huron had a higher ratio than rural Ontario's ratio of 66.

Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh	**84**	Bluewater	**72**
Goderich	**82**	Howick	**70**
South Huron	**78**	Huron East	**69**
Morris-Turnberry	**77**	North Huron	**65**
Central Huron	**76**	Rural Ontario	**66**

MEDIAN AGE

In 2021, the median age in Huron County was 46.8. Goderich, Bluewater, and Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh had the oldest median age in the region. Overall, the County's median age is close to the rural Ontario average of 47.



Huron County Median Age

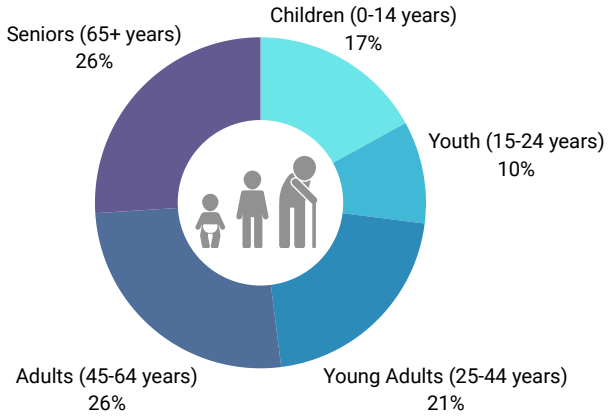
46.8

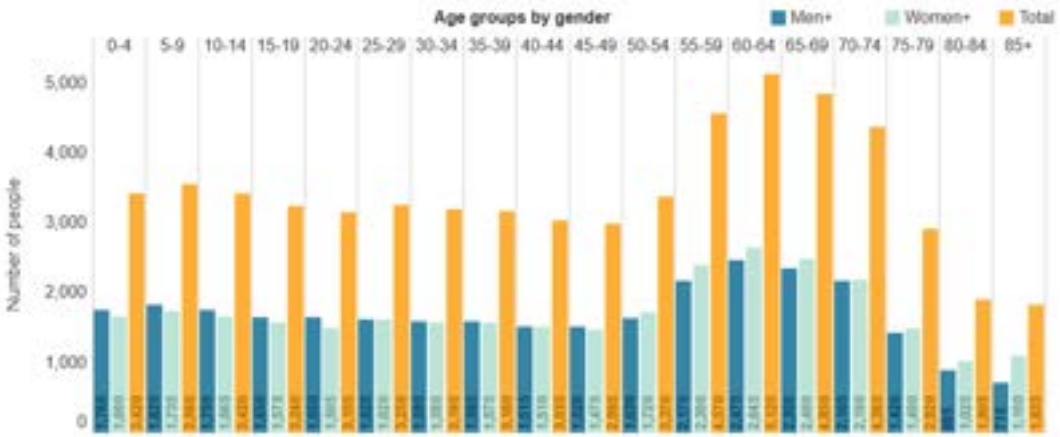
Goderich	**52.8**	North Huron	**44.0**
Bluewater	**52.0**	Huron East	**41.6**
Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh	**51.2**	Morris-Turnberry	**40.0**
South Huron	**50.0**	Howick	**35.2**
Central Huron	**48.8**	Rural Ontario	**47.0**

AGE DISTRIBUTION

In 2021, adults aged 45–64 accounted for 26% of Huron County's population, and adults aged 65 and older accounted for another 26%. Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh, Bluewater, Central Huron, and Goderich had the highest proportions in this age group. By contrast, only 21% of residents were young adults aged 25-44, with Huron East, North Huron, and Howick recording the largest shares. Children accounted for 17% of the population with Howick, Morris-Turnberry, and Huron East having the highest proportions. Youth accounted for 10% of the population with the highest shares in Howick, Morris-Turnberry, and North Huron.

HURON COUNTY AGE GROUPS





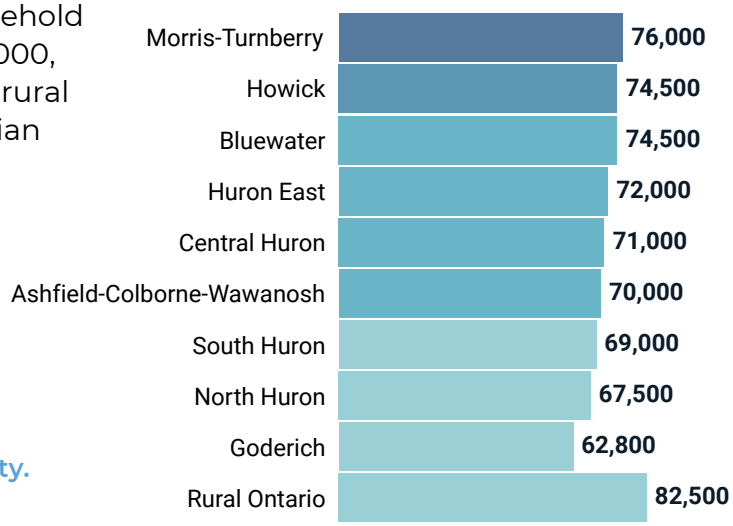
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

In 2020, the median after-tax household income in Huron County was $70,000, more than $10,000 lower than the rural Ontario average. The highest median incomes were in Morris-Turnberry, Howick, and Bluewater.



$70,000
Median household income in Huron County.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME ($)



TOP EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRIES

In 2024, the leading employment sectors in Huron County were health care and social assistance, agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and manufacturing. By comparison, health care and social assistance and manufacturing were also the top industries across rural Ontario.

TOP 3 EMPLOYMENT SECTORS IN THE COUNTY

Health Care & Social Assistance	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	Manufacturing
3,777 JOBS	**3,644** JOBS	**3,420** JOBS
$54,257 *Average wage*	$54,257 *Average wage*	$54,257 *Average wage*

TOP 3 EMPLOYMENT SECTORS IN RURAL ONTARIO

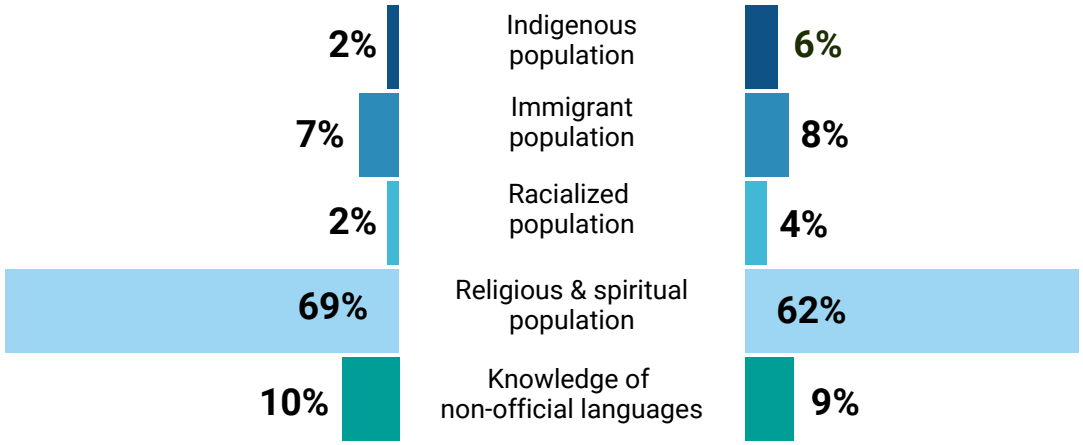
Health Care & Social Assistance	Retail Trade	Manufacturing
163,740 JOBS	**127,661** JOBS	**124,511** JOBS
$55,565 *Average wage*	$55,554 *Average wage*	$55,441 *Average wage*

POPULATION DIVERSITY

In 2021, Huron County had low population diversity, which is consistent with rural Ontario. Comparatively, urban communities in Ontario had much higher levels of population diversity.

Low
Population diversity





ECONOMICS

LOW-INCOME MEASURE

In 2020, the proportion of low-income households (Statistics Canada's after-tax Low-Income Measure, LIM-AT) in Huron County was 12%, similar to the rural Ontario average.

COMMUNITY	LOW INCOME MEASURE
Bluewater	9%
South Huron	10%
Central Huron	10%
Huron East	10%
North Huron	12%
Goderich	12%
Morris-Turnberry	13%
Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh	17%
Howick	18%
Rural Ontario	11%

LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

In 2021, 39% of Huron County residents aged 15 and older commuted to work locally, which is lower than the rural Ontario average of 50%. Goderich, South Huron, and North Huron, and Bluewater had the highest proportions of local commuters, all over 40%.

COMMUNITY	LOCAL EMPLOYMENT
Goderich	75%
North Huron	54%
South Huron	45%
Bluewater	41%
Central Huron	30%
Huron East	30%
Howick	20%
Morris-Turnberry	11%
Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh	4%
Rural Ontario	50%



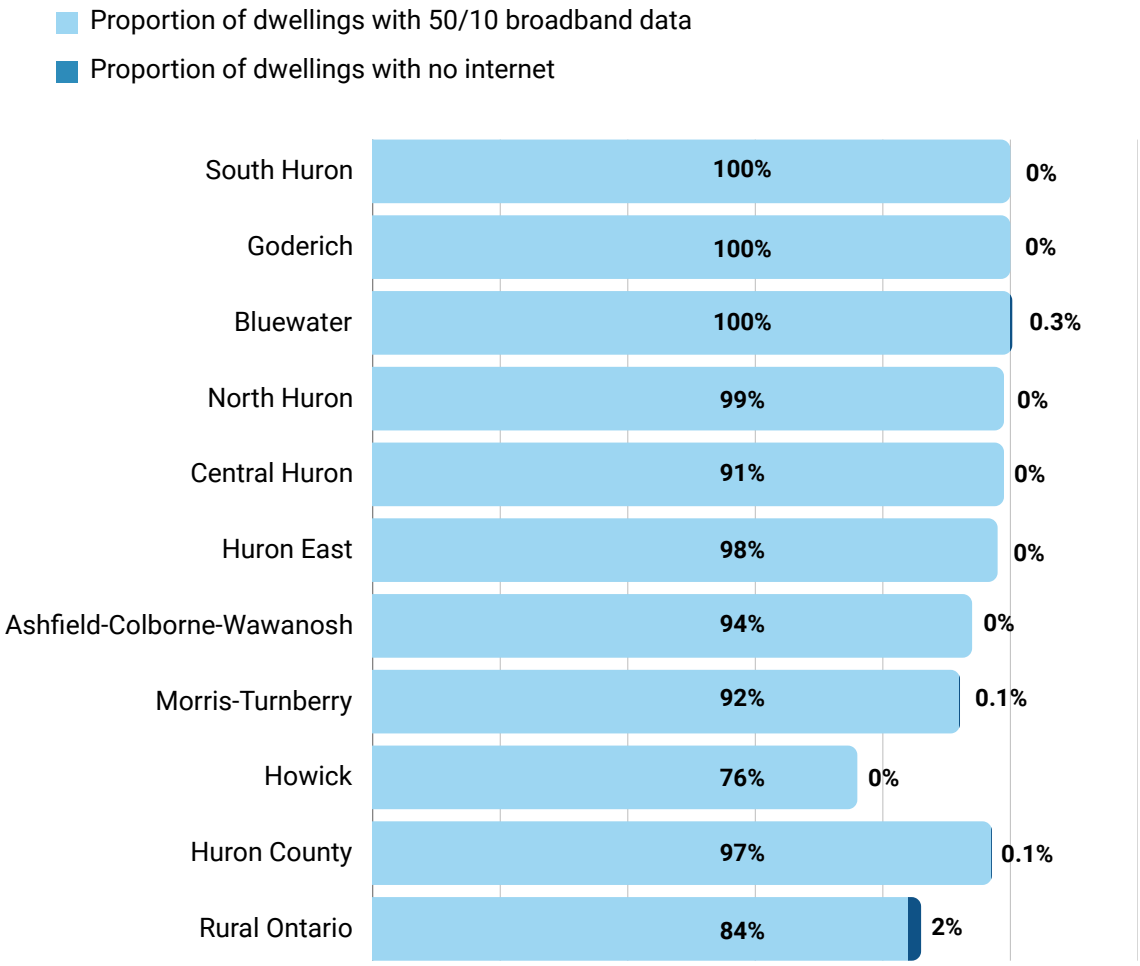
This map illustrates local employment across Huron County communities, ranging from a low of 4% in Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh (lighter blue) to a high of 75% in Goderich (darker blue).

INTERNET

In 2024, 97% of dwellings in Huron County had access to broadband internet with 50/10 Mbps. This is higher than the average of 84% in rural Ontario.

Overall, there is particularly good access to broadband internet in the community. 8 of 9 communities in Huron County have more than 92% of dwellings with access, and 100% of three communities' dwellings have access. Additionally, all communities have less than 1% of dwellings with no internet.

PERCENTAGE OF DWELLINGS WITH BROADBAND DATA AND WITHOUT INTERNET



HOUSING

CORE HOUSING NEED

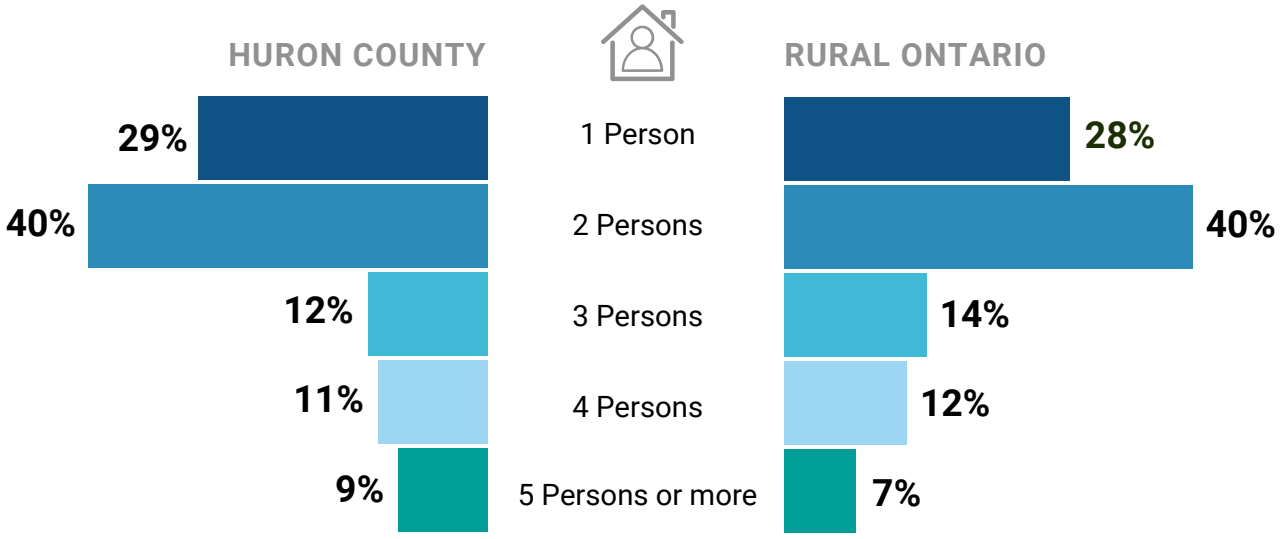
In 2021, 5% of households in Huron County were in core housing need, which is lower than the rural Ontario average of 7%.

Goderich	13%	Morris-Turnberry	3%
North Huron	6%	Central Huron	3%
Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh	5%	Howick	2%
South Huron	4%	Huron East	1%
Bluewater	4%	Rural Ontario	7%

HOUSEHOLD TYPE

In 2021, two-person households accounted for 40% of households in Huron County. Compared to rural Ontario, the region has a lower proportion of 3 and 4-person households and a higher proportion of households with 1 and 2-person households, indicating a higher prevalence of smaller household sizes.

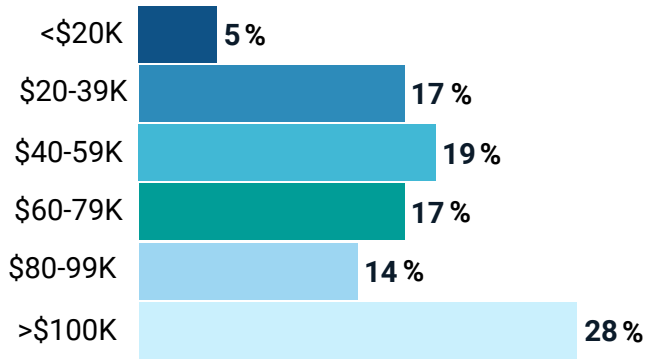
PERCENTAGE OF EACH HOUSEHOLD SIZE IN THE TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS IN HURON COUNTY AND RURAL ONTARIO



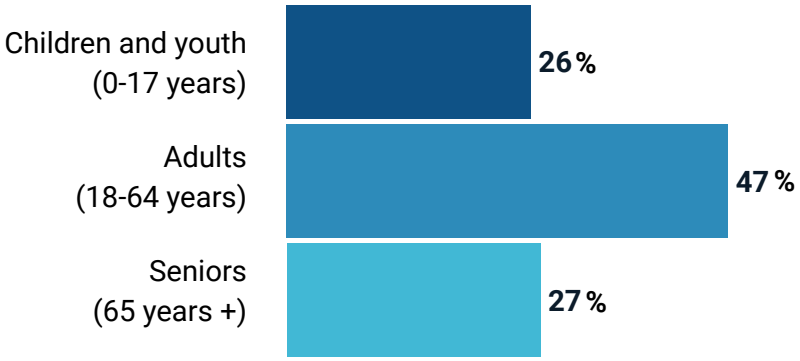
HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The median individual income in Huron County in 2020 was $36,800, the median household income was $70,000, and 12% of households were considered low income. 22% of households fall below $40,000 (5% under $20,000 and 17% at $20,000–$39,999), 36% are between $40,000 and $79,999 (19% at $40,000–$59,999 and 17% at $60,000–$79,999), 14% are in the $80,000–$99,999 range, and 28% are above $100,000. Among individuals identified as earning a low income, adults aged 18–64 make up the largest share (47%), followed by seniors 65+ (27%) and children and youth 0–17 (26%).

HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRUBUTION AFTER TAXES



DISTRIBUTION OF LOW INCOME INDIVIDUALS BY AGE GROUP



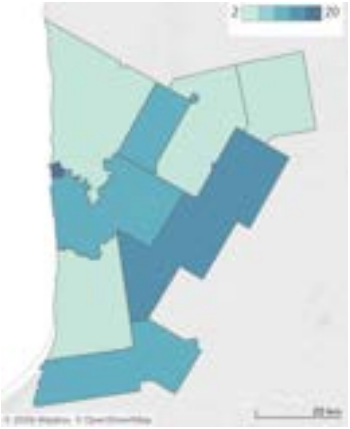
HEALTH

NUMBER & TYPE OF HEALTH FACILITIES

There are 76 health facilities across Huron County. Morris-Turnberry and Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh have no health facilities however, they neighbour communities with more than 10 facilities.

Goderich, Huron East, and North Huron are the communities with the highest number of health facilities (see table). They are also some of the communities with the highest population density. South Huron and Central Huron also have greater 10 health facilities.

Communities	Number of health facilities (2023)
Goderich	20
Huron East	16
North Huron	12
South Huron	11
Central Huron	11
Bluewater	4
Howick	2
Morris-Turnberry	0
Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh	0



Below is a list of health facilities in Huron County. The county has 5 hospitals located in Central Huron, Goderich, Huron East, North Huron, and South Huron.

Health Facility	Number in the CD
Pharmacy	28
Mental Health and Addiction Organization	12
Long-Term Care Home	8
Licensed Lab and Specimen Collection Centre Locations	8
Licensed Retirement Home	6
Hospital	5
Family Health Team	4
Community Support Service	3
Seniors Active Living Centre	1
Midwifery Clinic	1

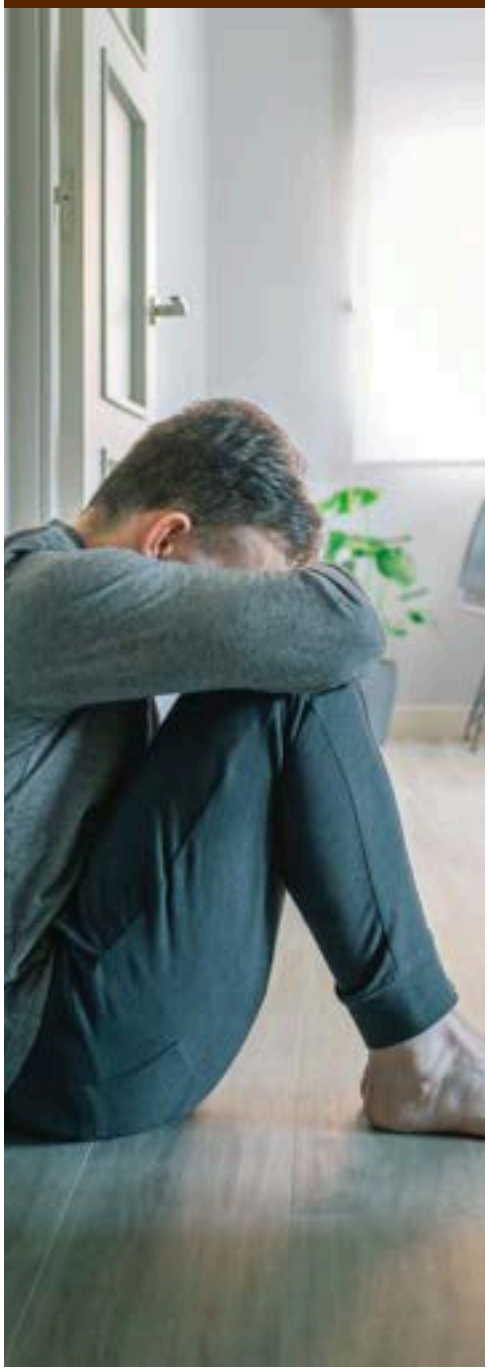
WAIT TIMES FOR LONG TERM CARE

There are no long-term care homes in Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh and Morris-Turnberry. Huron County's long-term care system consists of eight homes ranging in size from 33 to 183 licensed beds. Most of the long-term care spaces are in the more populated communities like Huron East and Goderich. In 2022-23, people waited an average of 98 days for a long-term care space in the region, which represents a 13% decrease from the previous year. In the county, there are 33 long term care spaces for every 100 people aged 85 and over, which is higher than the ratio for rural Ontario ratio of 28 to 100.

MEDIAN NUMBER OF DAYS WAITED TO MOVE INTO A LONG-TERM CARE HOME (2022/23)

Community	Wait Time (days)
South Huron	157
North Huron	118
Huron East	88
Bluewater	87
Goderich	84
Howick	79
Central Huron	73
Morris-Turnberry	No data
Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh	No data
Huron County	**98**

2023 | 9% INCREASE IN CALLS



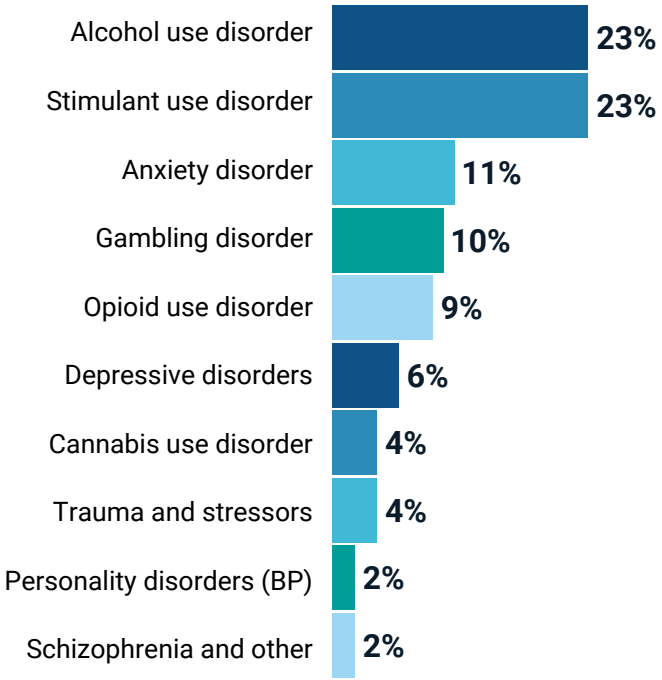
NUMBER OF CALLS FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES & REASONS FOR CALLING

ConnexOntario is a government agency that improves access to services for mental health and substance use. People may call ConnexOntario for themselves, or on behalf of someone else, such as a family member, friend, or patient.

142 calls were made to ConnexOntario from Huron County In 2023, a 9% increase from 2022.

In 2023, the most common reasons for calling ConnexOntario were alcohol use disorder, stimulant use disorder, and anxiety disorder. Calls for stimulant use disorder and anxiety disorder both increased, however, calls for alcohol use disorder decreased over the year. Opioid disorder, depressive disorder, and trauma and stressors also saw a decrease in calls. Cannabis use disorder and personality disorders saw an increase in calls while calls for depressive disorders and schizophrenia and other disorders remained the same.

MOST COMMON REASONS FOR CALLING CONNEXONTARIO IN 2023

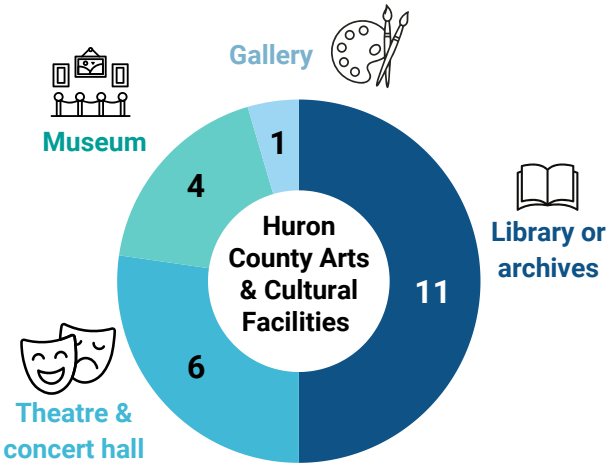


SOCIETY

NUMBER & TYPES OF ARTS & CULTURE FACILITIES

There are a total of 22 arts and cultural facilities in Huron County. With the most located in North Huron and Goderich (5 each) and the fewest in Morris-Turnberry and Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh (0 each).

The most common types of arts and cultural facilities are libraries and archives and theatres and concert halls, found in Bluewater, Central Huron, Goderich, Howick, Huron East, North Huron, and South Huron. The museums and gallery are all in Goderich, Huron East, and North Huron.



HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ACHIEVED

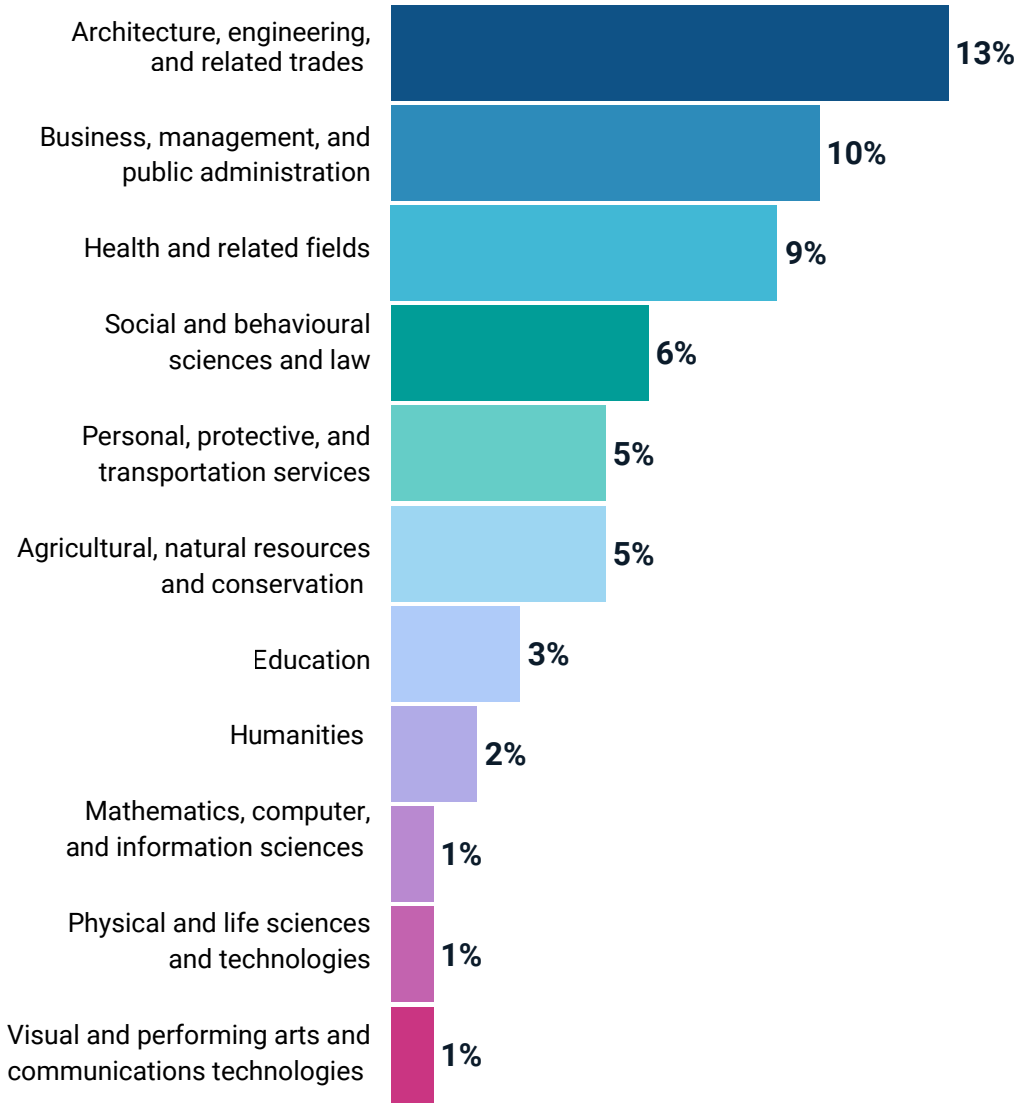
In 2021, 56% of people aged 25-64 had achieved some level of post-secondary education (i.e., college diploma, bachelor's degree or higher, or apprenticeship), which is slightly lower than the rural Ontario average of 58%. 83% of adults aged 25-64 have completed their high school diploma, slightly lower than the rural Ontario rate of 86%. The distribution of highest education for this age group shows that 30% hold a college, CEGEP, or other non-university certificate or diploma; 29% hold a high school diploma; 15% hold a bachelor's degree or higher; 9% hold an apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma; 1% hold a university certificate or diploma below the bachelor level; and 15% hold no certificate, diploma, or degree.

The most common fields of study in 2021 in Huron County were architecture, engineering, and related fields; business, management, and public administration; and health and related fields.

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ACHIEVED (HURON COUNTY, AGES 25–64)

Level of Education Achieved	Share (%)
College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	30%
High school diploma or equivalency certificate	29%
Bachelor's degree or higher	15%
No certificate, diploma, or degree	15%
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	9%
University certificate or diploma below bachelor level	1%

MAJOR FIELD OF POST-SECONDARY STUDY (HURON COUNTY, AGES 25–64)



ENVIRONMENT

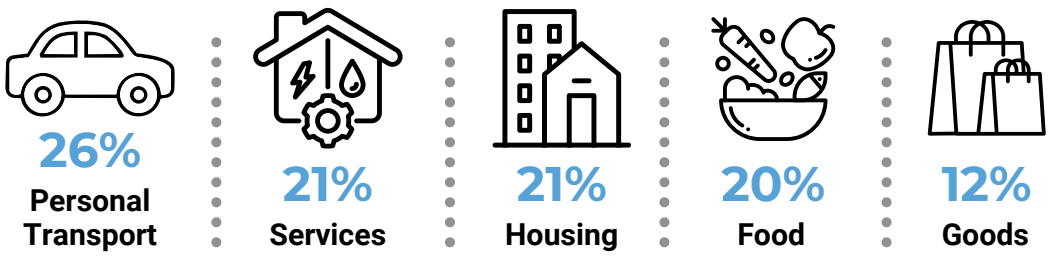
ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

Ecological Footprint is the area needed to support the human consumption of ecosystem goods and services measured in global hectares per capita (Gha/capita). The ecological footprint is 6.2 Gha/capita in Huron County, which is similar to the rural Ontario value of 6.3.

Community	Ecological footprint (global hectares per capita)
Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh	7.3
Bluewater	7.0
Central Huron	6.5
Huron East	6.0
North Huron	5.9
Goderich	5.8
Howick	5.8
South Huron	5.8
Morris-Turnberry	5.8
Huron County	**6.2**
Rural Ontario	**6.3**

Ecological Footprint is influenced by many factors including population, population change, dwelling types and sizes, income, and commuting patterns. Most communities in Huron County have an ecological footprint similar to or lower than the rest of rural Ontario. The carbon component accounts for about 66% of the ecological footprint, meaning it is largely driven by the consumption of carbon-intensive goods and services by public administrations, private organizations, and households. 26% of the household consumption is the consumption of personal transport. The proportion attributed to each type of consumption is fairly similar to the proportion in rural Ontario as well as Ontario overall.

HOUSEHOLD SUBCATEGORIES OF CONSUMPTION

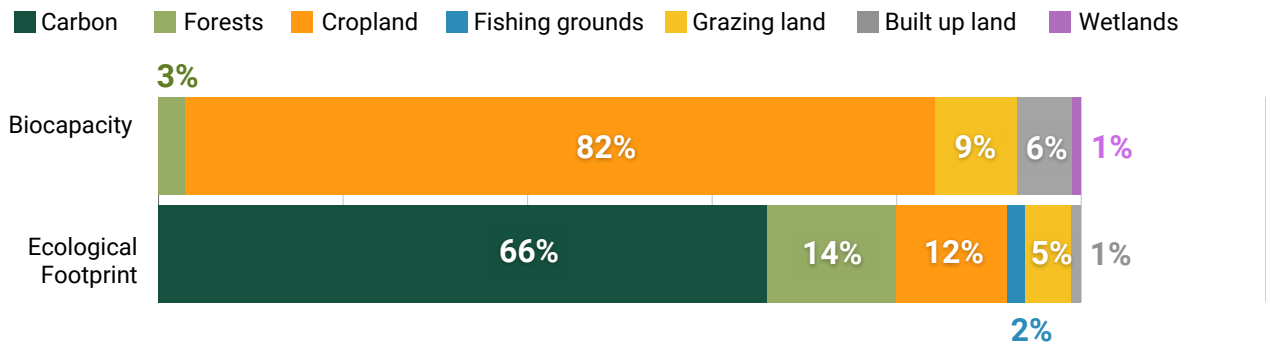


BIOCAPACITY

Biocapacity is the ecosystem supply of goods and services in the community. Huron County's biocapacity is high, but still lower than rural Ontario's, which in part, can be explained by the higher population density. Like many other communities in southwestern Ontario, a lot of the land is used for agriculture (grazing and cropland) (91%) and built-up land (6%). In contrast, the more bio productive wetlands and forests account for 4% of the land.

Community	Biocapacity (Gha/ capita)	Population density
Huron East	33.4	14
Howick	28.1	14
Bluewater	25.4	18
Central Huron	24.5	17
Morris-Turnberry	21.7	10
Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh	21.2	10
South Huron	10.0	24
North Huron	7.4	28
Goderich	0.5	923
Huron county	**18.9**	**18**
Rural Ontario	**31.4**	**3**

COMPONENTS OF ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT & BIOCAPACITY



BIOCAPACITY BALANCE

Biocapacity balance is calculated as the difference between a community's biocapacity and its Ecological Footprint.

The biocapacity balance in Huron County is 12.6 Gha per capita, compared to 25.1 Gha per capita in rural Ontario. All communities within Huron County except Goderich have a positive biocapacity balance, meaning that the levels of consumption in the positive balance communities are sustainable. However, in Goderich a negative biocapacity balance indicates that there is overconsumption within the community.

Communities	Biocapacity balance (Gha/capita)
Huron East	27.5
Howick	22.3
Bluewater	18.3
Central Huron	18.0
Morris-Turnberry	15.9
Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh	13.9
South Huron	4.2
North Huron	1.5
Goderich	-5.3
Huron County	**12.6**
Rural Ontario	**25.1**

DURATION OF COMMUTE

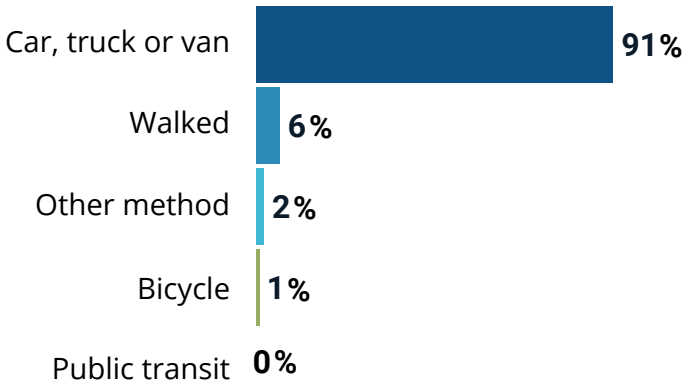
In 2021, 91% of commuters in Huron County travelled to work by car, truck, or van. 73% of commuters in Huron County commute less than 30 minutes to work, higher than the rural Ontario average of 69%. This is likely due to the economic opportunities within Huron County with most jobs in healthcare, agriculture, and manufacturing as well as the county being surrounded by other rural communities. 14% of commuters had a long commute of over 45 minutes, which is similar to the rural Ontario average of 16%. Fewer than 20% of workers had long commutes in any of the communities.

HURON COUNTY

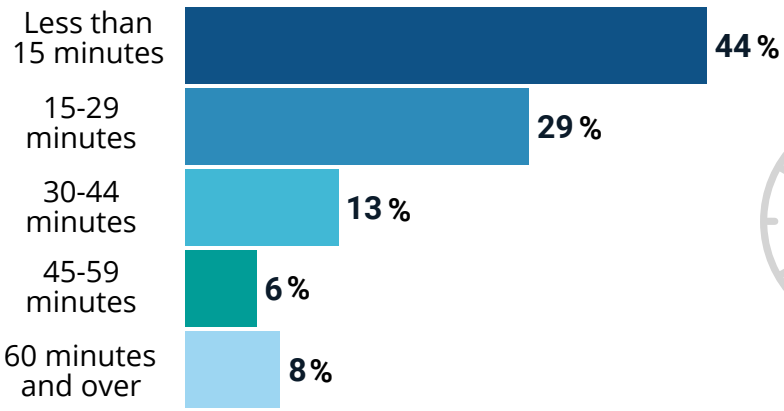


of residents commute by car, truck or van

MODE OF COMMUTING



DURATION OF COMMUTE





of residents commute less than 30 minutes

CONTACT US

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Questions and Comments?

Contact the Rural Ontario Institute for more information.

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RURAL COMMUNITY WELLBEING