MARCH

20
26

COMMMUNITY WELLBEING REPORT

KAWARTHA LAKES

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.

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.

This report includes commentary that contextualizes and assesses wellbeing based on the experiences and insights of people who live and work in this community.

For context, overall values for rural Ontario are also presented.

Building
vision, voice
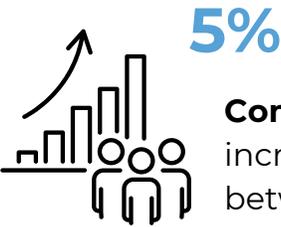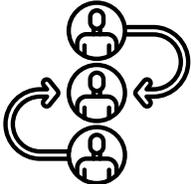**& leadership**

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SUMMARY

In 2021, there were **79,247 people living in Kawartha Lakes**. Although classified as rural, **Kawartha Lakes** is the **2nd most populated rural community in Ontario**.

71:100

In 2021, there were 71 **economically-dependent** people per 100 working age people.

5%

Community population increased by 5% between 2016-2021.

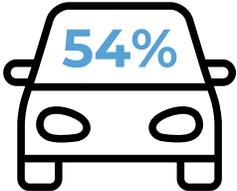**Kawartha Lakes Median Age**

52

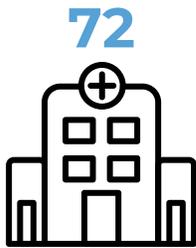In 2021, this community had a **median age of 52**, close to the rural Ontario median.

10% of households in Kawartha Lakes earned a low income in 2021.

10%

In 2021, **54%** of residents in Kawartha Lakes **commuted to work locally.**

54%

In 2024, **94% of households** in Kawartha Lakes had **access to broadband internet with 50/10 Mbps.**

94%

72

There are **72 health facilities** located in the community and on **average the waiting time for long-term care is 169 days.**

In 2021, 32% of people aged 25-64 had a high school diploma and 56% of people had achieved some post-secondary education.

32%

There are **seven arts and cultural facilities** in the community. Five of these are museums, and **none are libraries**.

7

KAWARTHA LAKES
COMMUNITY CONTEXT

COMMUNITY LOCATION, TYPE AND CLASSIFICATION

The census subdivision of Kawartha Lakes is a single-tier municipality in Central Ontario. The Census Division of Kawartha Lakes is composed of the City of Kawartha Lakes in the geographic areas of Statistics Canada in the 2021 Census. Local services are delivered through the City of Kawartha Lakes.

This community is classified as rural, which means it is not a part of a census metropolitan area.

POPULATION

In 2021, there were 79,247 people living in Kawartha Lakes. Although classified as rural, Kawartha Lakes is the 2nd most populated rural community in Ontario, just behind Chatham-Kent, another single tier municipality.

79,247
People

Kawartha Lakes

30   175,383

© 2026 Mapbox © OpenStreetMap   100 km
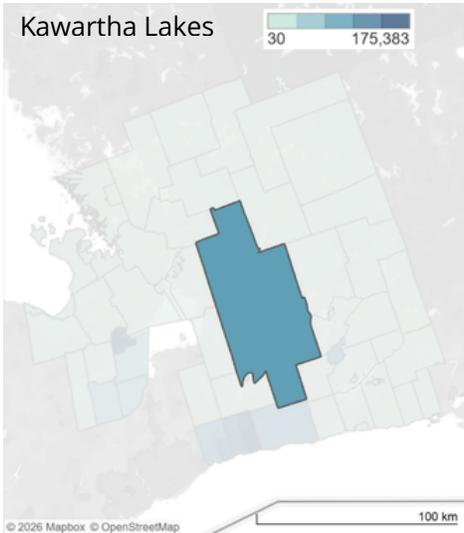
POPULATION DENSITY

In 2021, the population density of Kawartha Lakes was 26 people per square kilometre. This is higher than the average population density of rural Ontario, which was 3 people per square kilometre, and higher than the provincial average for Ontario overall, at 16 people per square kilometre.

KAWARTHA LAKES
26 people per km^2

RURAL ONTARIO
3 people per km^2

POPULATION CHANGE

Between 2016 and 2021, the population of Kawartha Lakes increased by 5%. The population of rural Ontario grew by 5%.

+5%

Kawartha Lakes **5%**
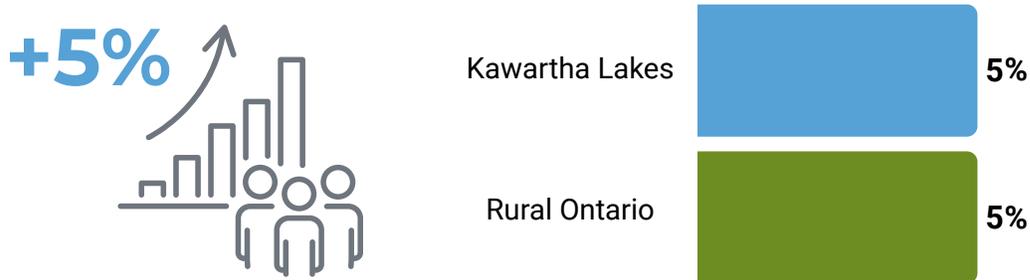
Rural Ontario **5%**

POPULATION DEPENDENCY RATIO

In 2021, there were 71 economically dependent people per 100 working age people in Kawartha Lakes. The ratio for rural Ontario is 66.

KAWARTHA LAKES   71:100
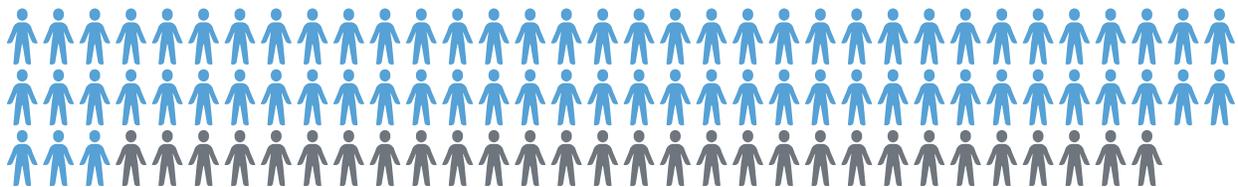
RURAL ONTARIO   66:100

MEDIAN AGE

In 2021, people in Kawartha Lakes had a median age of 52, which is close to the median age for rural Ontario at 50.

Kawartha Lakes Median Age
52

Rural Ontario Median Age
50

AGE DISTRIBUTION

29% of people in Kawartha Lakes were adults aged 45-64 years in 2021. This compares to 28% of people in the same age group in rural Ontario. This community had fewer people in the young adult age group than in rural Ontario where 22% of people are aged 25-44.

KAWARTHA LAKES AGE GROUPS

Children (0-14 years)
13%

Seniors (65+ years)
28%

Youth (15-24 years)
9%

Young Adults (25-44 years)
21%

Adults (45-64 years)
29%
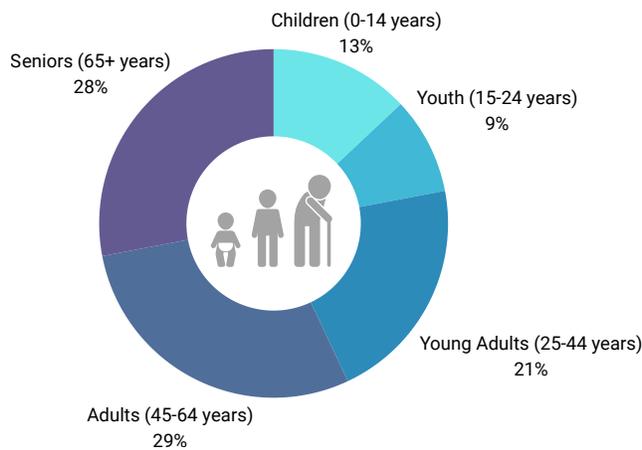
RURAL ONTARIO AGE GROUPS

Children (0-14 years)
15%

Seniors (65+ years)
25%

Youth (15-24 years)
10%

Young Adults (25-44 years)
22%

Adults (45-64 years)
28%
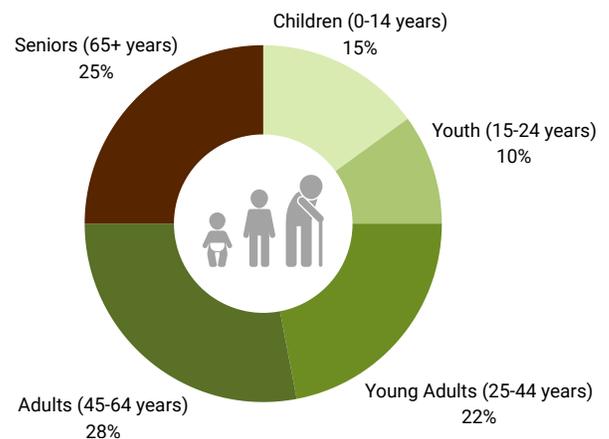
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The median, after-tax household income for Kawartha Lakes was $72,500 in 2020, which is similar to the broader rural Ontario value of $71,500.

$72,500
Median household income
in Kawartha Lakes

$71,500
Median household income
in Rural Ontario

TOP EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRIES

The healthcare and social assistance, retail, construction and public administration industry was the top employer for this community in 2024. Similarly, the top employer for rural Ontario was the health care and social assistance industry.
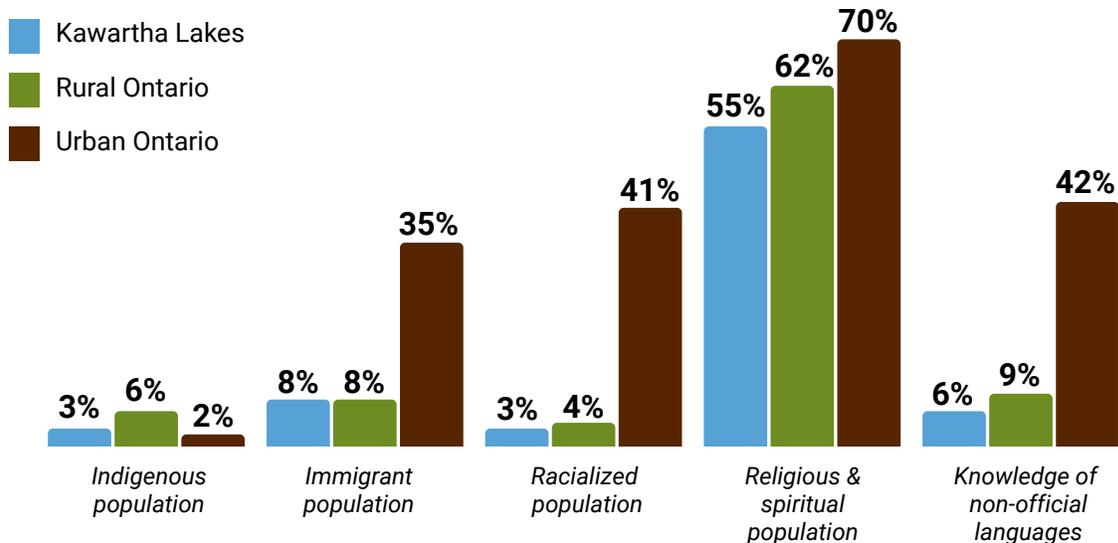
TOP 3 EMPLOYMENT SECTORS IN KAWARTHA LAKES

Health Care & Social Assistance	Retail Trade	Public Administration
4,418 JOBS	**3,789** JOBS	**2,848** JOBS
$52,820 *Average wage*	$31,573 *Average wage*	$64,600 *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
$51,611 *Average wage*	$32,214 *Average wage*	$62,867 *Average wage*

POPULATION DIVERSITY

In 2021, Kawartha Lakes had low population diversity, which is consistent with rural communities in the region and with rural Ontario. In contrast, urban communities in Ontario had much higher levels of population diversity.

Low **Population diversity**

Legend:
- Kawartha Lakes
- Rural Ontario
- Urban Ontario

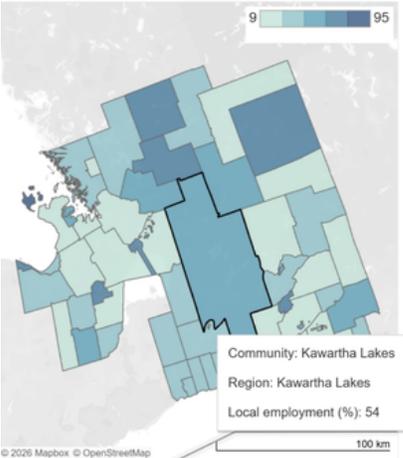|	Kawartha Lakes	Rural Ontario	Urban Ontario
Indigenous population	3%	6%	2%
Immigrant population	8%	8%	35%
Racialized population	3%	4%	41%
Religious & spiritual population	55%	62%	70%
Knowledge of non-official languages	6%	9%	42%

ECONOMICS

LOW-INCOME MEASURE

In 2020, 10% of households in Kawartha Lakes earned a low income. This is similar to the proportion of households in low income for rural Ontario.

LOW INCOME MEASURE

Kawartha Lakes | 10%
Rural Ontario | 11%
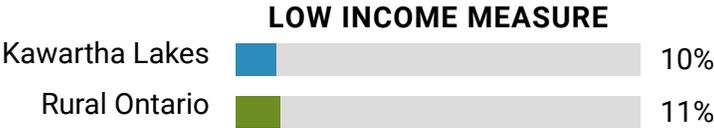
LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

In 2021, 54% of residents in Kawartha Lakes commuted to work locally. The top industries for employment are health care, retail and construction sectors. About half of the people in the region are locally employed, which is consistent with the overall value for rural Ontario of 50%.

LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

Kawartha Lakes | 54%
Rural Ontario | 50%

Community: Kawartha Lakes

Region: Kawartha Lakes

Local employment (%): 54

100 km

© 2026 Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

INTERNET

In 2024, 94% of households in Kawartha Lakes had access to broadband internet with 50/10 Mbps. This is higher than the rural Ontario average of 84% for households. Less than 1% of households in Kawartha Lakes have no internet service at all.
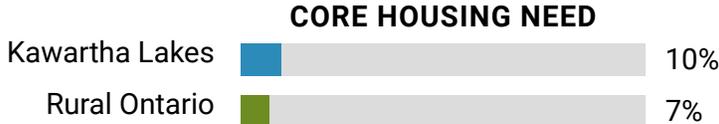
BROADBAND ACCESS 50/10 MBPS

Kawartha Lakes | 94%
Rural Ontario | 84%

94% of households had access to broadband internet with 50/10 Mbps

HOUSING

CORE HOUSING NEED

In 2021, 10% of households in Kawartha Lakes were in core housing need, which is slightly higher than the rural Ontario proportion of 7%.

CORE HOUSING NEED

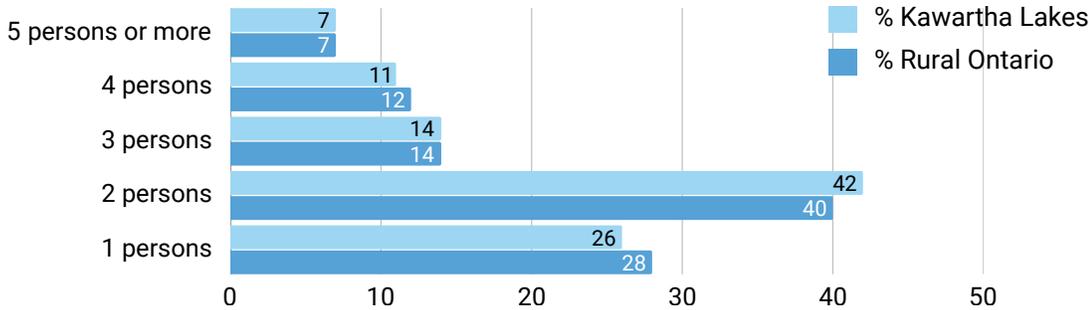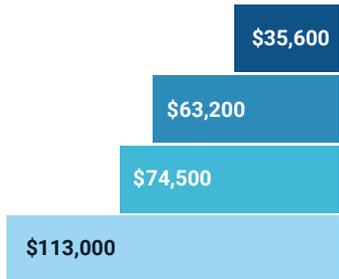|		
Kawartha Lakes		10%
Rural Ontario		7%

HOUSEHOLD TYPE

In 2021, two persons households accounted for 42% of households in Kawartha Lakes, compared to 40% in rural Ontario. The percentage of one-person households is similar in Kawartha Lakes as in rural Ontario. One-person households make up 26% of households locally and tend to have the lowest incomes.

The income levels for each household type in Kawartha Lakes are similar to the average values in rural Ontario.
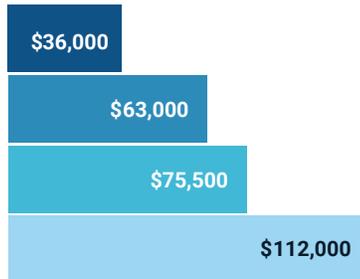
PROPORTION OF EACH HOUSEHOLD SIZE IN THE TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS IN KAWARTHA LAKES AND RURAL ONTARIO

Legend: % Kawartha Lakes, % Rural Ontario

Household size	% Kawartha Lakes	% Rural Ontario
5 persons or more	7	7
4 persons	11	12
3 persons	14	14
2 persons	42	40
1 persons	26	28

KAWARTHA LAKES
MEDIAN AFTER-TAX INCOME FOR HOUSEHOLD TYPES IN 2020

Household type	Kawartha Lakes	Rural Ontario
One-person	$35,600	$36,000
One-parent	$63,200	$63,000
Couples	$74,500	$75,500
Couples with children	$113,000	$112,000

RURAL ONTARIO
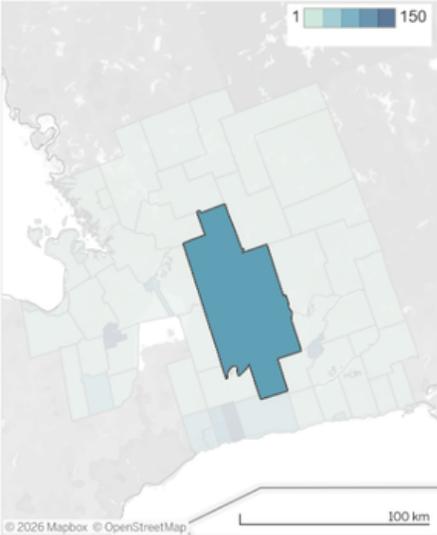**MEDIAN AFTER-TAX INCOME FOR HOUSEHOLD TYPES IN 2020**

HEALTH

NUMBER & TYPE OF HEALTH FACILITIES

There are 72 health facilities located in the community of Kawartha Lakes. Pharmacies make up half of the health facilities in the region.
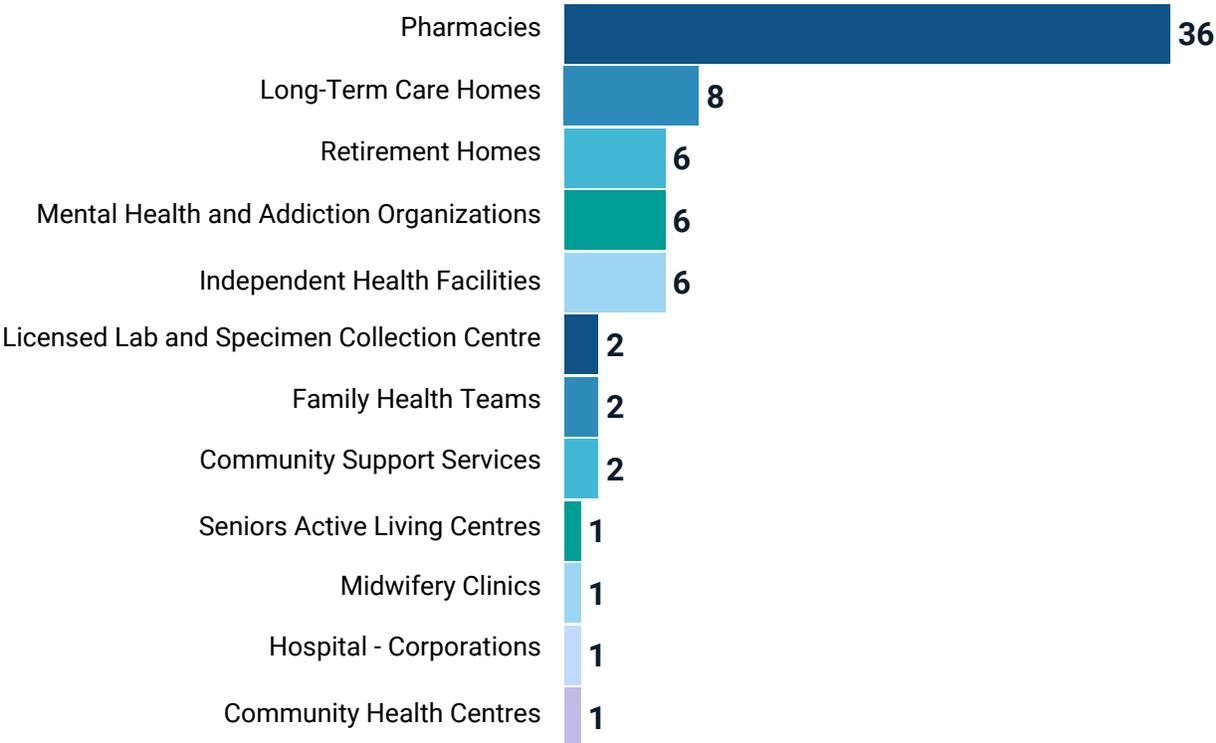
72

health facilities in Kawartha Lakes

2,752

health facilities in rural Ontario

NUMBER OF HEALTH CARE FACILITIES BY TYPE

Type	Number
Pharmacies	36
Long-Term Care Homes	8
Retirement Homes	6
Mental Health and Addiction Organizations	6
Independent Health Facilities	6
Licensed Lab and Specimen Collection Centre	2
Family Health Teams	2
Community Support Services	2
Seniors Active Living Centres	1
Midwifery Clinics	1
Hospital - Corporations	1
Community Health Centres	1

WAIT TIMES FOR LONG TERM CARE

Kawartha Lakes' long-term care system includes eight homes ranging in size from 62 to 166 licensed beds, and the sector is predominantly for-profit, with Victoria Manor Home for the Aged operating as a not-for-profit home. Wait lists vary widely, from 129 people at Pinecrest Nursing Home (Bobcaygeon) to 496 at Extendicare Kawartha Lakes, indicating substantial demand pressures across the region. Several mid- to large-sized homes are managing particularly high wait lists relative to capacity, including Extendicare Kawartha Lakes (64 beds; 496 on the wait list) and Victoria Manor Home for the Aged (166 beds; 441 on the wait list), while other homes such as Fenelon Court (67 beds; 295 on the wait list) and Case Manor Community (96 beds; 315 on the wait list) also show elevated demand alongside comparatively modest bed counts.

MEDIAN NUMBER OF DAYS WAITED TO MOVE INTO A LONG-TERM CARE HOME (2023/24)

ONTARIO (BENCHMARK)

Prior Location	Median wait (days)
All	121
Community	200
Hospital	72

CITY OF KAWARTHA LAKES – LTC HOMES

LTC home	All (days)	Community (days)	Hospital (days)
Victoria Manor Home for the Aged	219	343	180
Caressant Care on Mary Street	187	485	115
Caressant Care McLaughlin Manor	NR	NR	NR
Extendicare Kawartha Lakes	132	368	108
Frost Manor	130	LV	LV
Pinecrest	135	182	66
Fenelon Court	318	236	568
Case Manor Community	183	247	134

NR = Facility not required to report   **LV** = Number is too small to report

Placed from community = residents placed from assisted living residences, cluster care residences, group homes, private dwellings, retirement homes, and supportive housing.

Placed from hospital = residents placed from acute care hospitals (explicitly excludes placements from rehab, CCC, etc.).

All placements = includes residents placed from hospitals (acute, rehab, CCC, etc.) plus community-type settings.
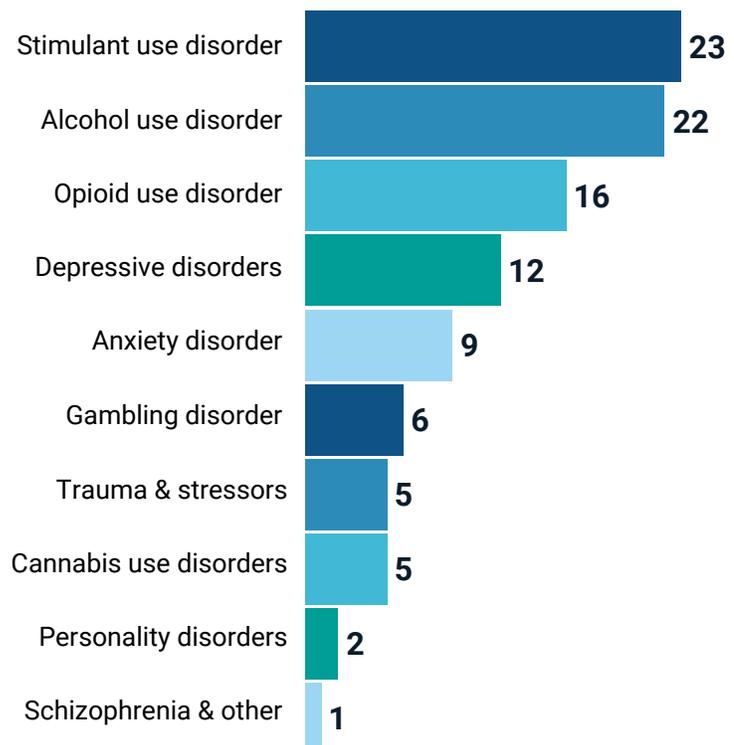
2022-2023
25%
DECREASE IN CALLS

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.

In 2023, 60 calls for stimulant use disorders were made to ConnexOntario from this community, which is fewer than 87 calls in 2022. Calls decreased by 25% between 2022 and 2023. In the region, the most common reasons for calling were substance use disorders, followed by alcohol use disorder.

In total, 281 calls were made in 2023 to ConnexOntario.

MOST COMMON REASONS FOR CALLING CONNEXONTARIO IN 2023

Reason	Calls
Stimulant use disorder	23
Alcohol use disorder	22
Opioid use disorder	16
Depressive disorders	12
Anxiety disorder	9
Gambling disorder	6
Trauma & stressors	5
Cannabis use disorders	5
Personality disorders	2
Schizophrenia & other	1

SOCIETY

KAWARTHA LAKES

7

arts & culture facilities

RURAL ONTARIO

511

arts & culture facilities

NUMBER & TYPES OF ARTS & CULTURE FACILITIES

In 2020, there were 7 arts & culture facilities in Kawartha Lakes: 5 museums, 1 gallery and 1 heritage site.
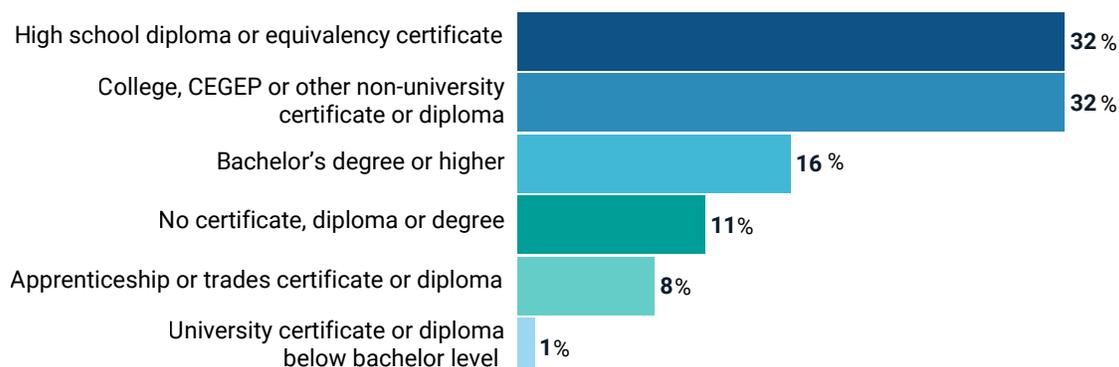
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ACHIEVED

In 2021, 56% of people aged 25-64 had achieved some post-secondary education (i.e., college diploma, bachelor's degree or higher, or apprenticeship), which is very close to the value for rural Ontario at 57%. In this community, 87% of people have a high school diploma, which is consistent with 86% in rural Ontario communities.

For people with post-secondary education, the most common field of study was architecture, engineering and related trades at 13%, followed by health and related fields, and then business, management and public relations.
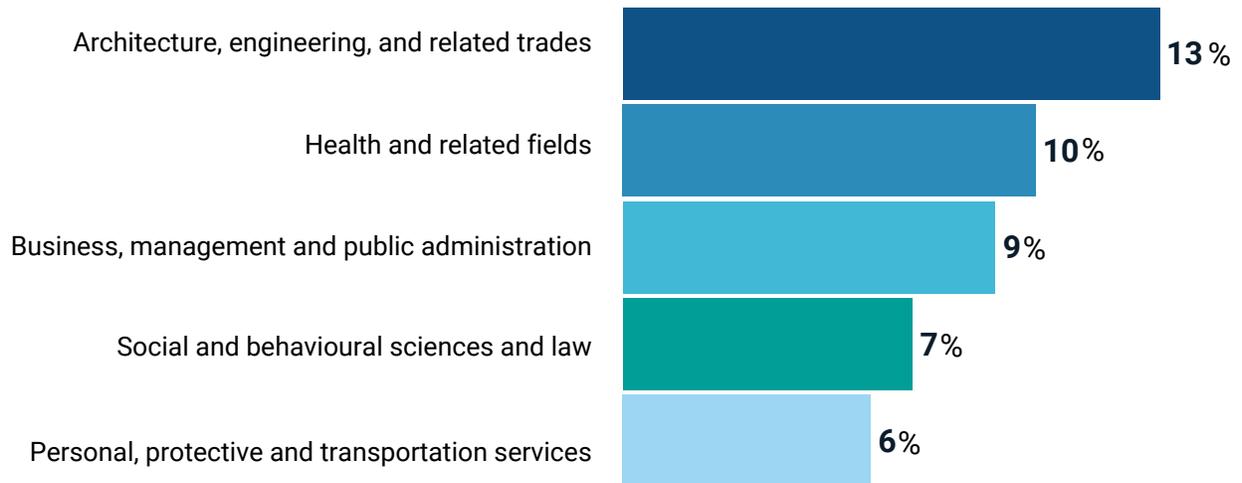
56%
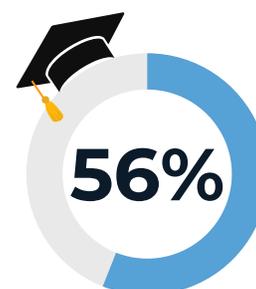
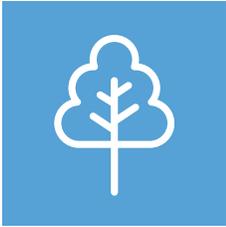of Kawartha Lakes residents have post-secondary education

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ACHIEVED FOR PEOPLE AGED 25-64

Level	Percentage
High school diploma or equivalency certificate	32 %
College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	32 %
Bachelor's degree or higher	16 %
No certificate, diploma or degree	11%
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	8%
University certificate or diploma below bachelor level	1%

MAJOR FIELD OF POST-SECONDARY STUDY FOR PEOPLE AGED 25-64

Note: The percentage is the proportion of the population completing their highest level of studies in that field amongst the population aged 25-64 in private households.

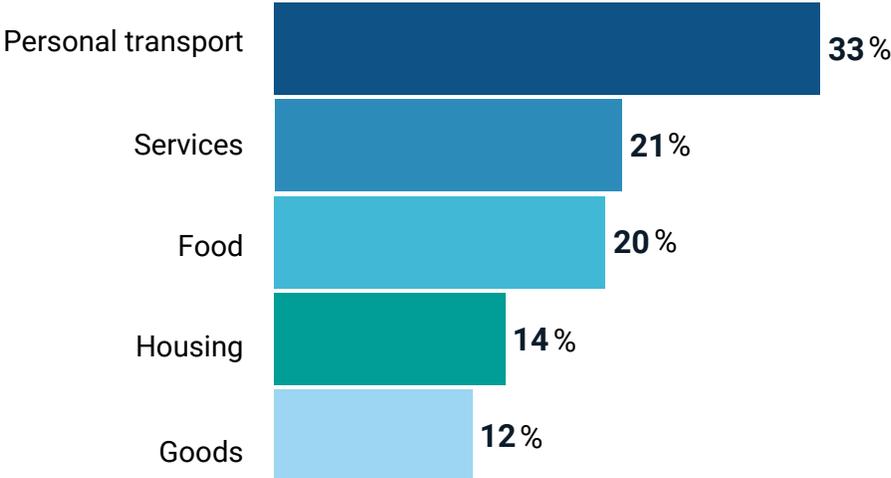| Field	Percentage
Architecture, engineering, and related trades	13%
Health and related fields	10%
Business, management and public administration	9%
Social and behavioural sciences and law	7%
Personal, protective and transportation services	6%

ENVIRONMENT

ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

Ecological Footprint is the area needed to support the human consumption of ecosystem goods and services. The Ecological Footprint for people in Kawartha Lakes is 6.3 global hectares per capita, which is the same value for rural Ontario at 6.3.

Ecological Footprint is influenced by many factors including population, population change, dwelling types and sizes, income, and commuting patterns. This community has a large population and a large land area – compared to other rural communities. 33% of the Ecological Footprint can be attributed to consumption associated with personal transport. The proportion attributed to each type of consumption is somewhat similar to the proportion for rural Ontario as well as for overall Ontario.

KAWARTHA LAKES
Ecological Footprint
6.3
Gha/capita

RURAL ONTARIO
Ecological Footprint
6.3
Gha/capita
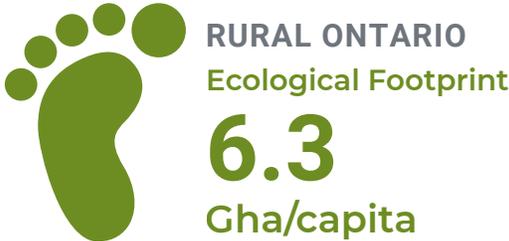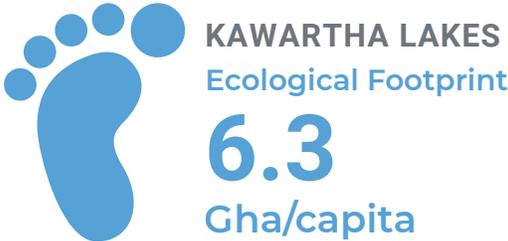
HOUSEHOLD SUBCATEGORIES OF CONSUMPTION

- Personal transport **33**%
- Services **21**%
- Food **20**%
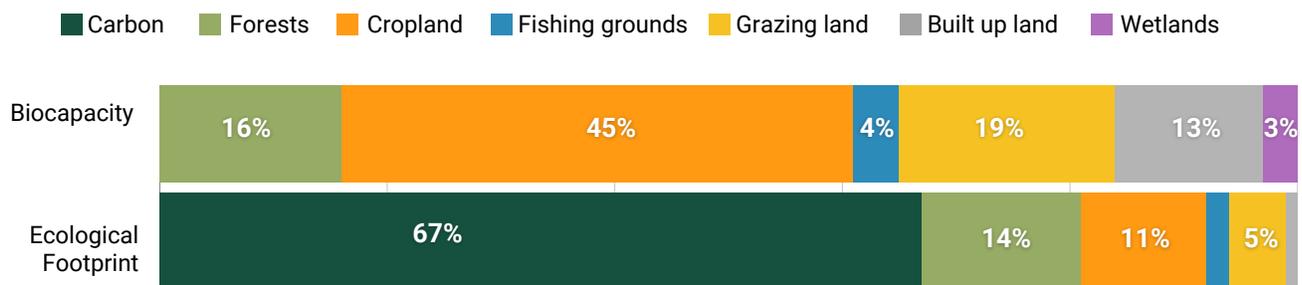- Housing **14**%
- Goods **12**%

BIOCAPACITY

Biocapacity is the ecosystem supply of goods and services in the community. Kawartha Lakes has large land area and extensive natural features. But its biocapacity per capita is smaller than the biocapacity per capita in rural Ontario, which can be partially explained by its large population for a rural area. Its biocapacity of 6.6 gha per capita is very close to the average of all Ontario.

BIOCAPACITY (GLOBAL HECTARES PER CAPITA)

Kawartha Lakes	6.6
Rural Ontario	31.4
Ontario	6
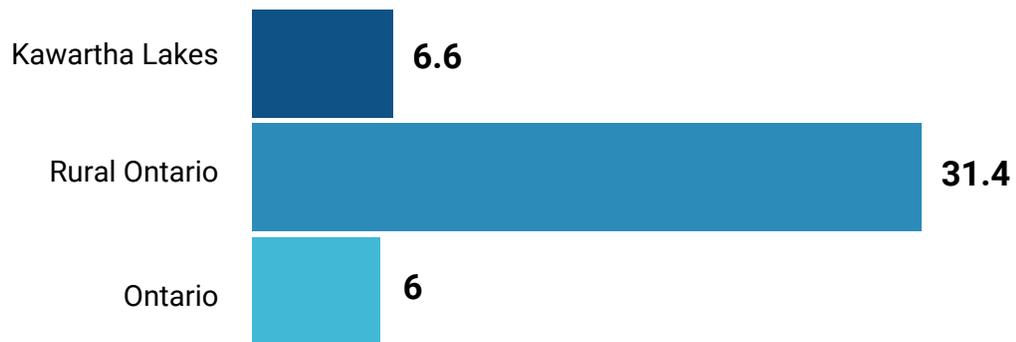
COMPONENTS OF ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT & BIOCAPACITY

Biocapacity and Ecological Footprint accounts are made up of components that reflect different land uses. Rural areas have most of Ontario's natural land cover and accordingly, most of Ontario's productive ecosystems. Cropland make up most of the ecosystems in this community and account for 45% of the community's biocapacity. This community has a larger Ecological Footprint when compared to its biocapacity. But as with most communities in Ontario, the carbon component comprises most of this community's Ecological Footprint.

Legend: Carbon · Forests · Cropland · Fishing grounds · Grazing land · Built up land · Wetlands

Biocapacity		16%	45%	4%	19%	13%	3%
Ecological Footprint	67%		14%	11%	5%		

KAWARTHA LAKES
Biocapacity balance

0.3
Gha/capita

RURAL ONTARIO
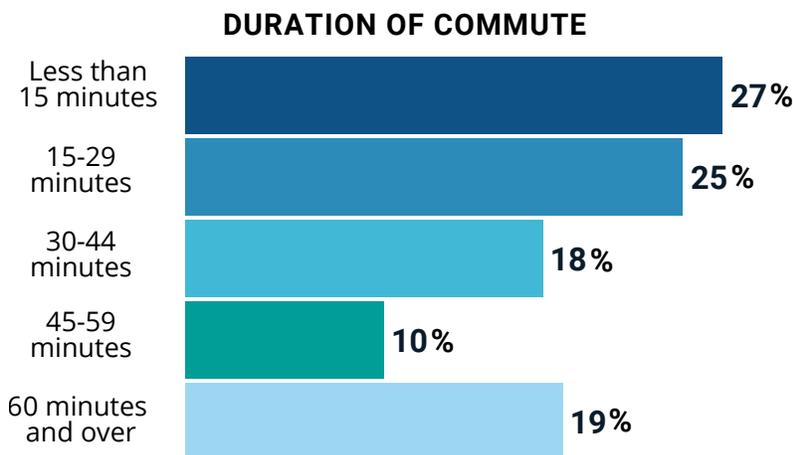### Biocapacity balance

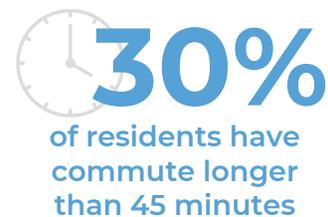# 25.1
Gha/capita

BIOCAPACITY BALANCE

Biocapacity balance is calculated as the difference between a community's biocapacity and its Ecological Footprint. Kawartha Lakes has a biocapacity balance of 0.3 global hectares per capita, which is significantly less than for rural Ontario at 25.1. The positive biocapacity balance indicates that levels of consumption are sustainable, but a value close to 0 indicates that the consumption almost equals the biocapacity which can be a risk for the community. Reducing the carbon component – meaning reducing carbon emissions – is the best lever to reduce the Ecological Footprint and thus have a large biocapacity balance.
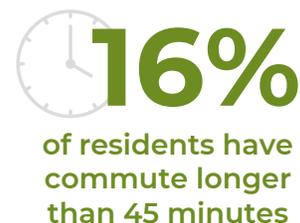
DURATION OF COMMUTE

In 2021, 94% of commuters who live in Kawartha Lakes drove to work in a car, truck, or van. Most commuters drove less than 30 minutes. But 30% of commuters drove longer than 45 minutes to get to work, which makes sense given the large land area and limited opportunities for local employment – 54% of workers commute within the community. In comparison, the proportion of commuters with a long commute in rural Ontario is 16%.

94%
of residents commute by car, truck or van

KAWARTHA LAKES
30%
of residents have commute longer than 45 minutes

RURAL ONTARIO
16%
of residents have commute longer than 45 minutes

DURATION OF COMMUTE

Duration	Percent
Less than 15 minutes	27%
15-29 minutes	25%
30-44 minutes	18%
45-59 minutes	10%
60 minutes and over	19%

CONTACT US

Recommended citation

Community Wellbeing Report for Kawartha Lakes. Prepared by the Rural Ontario Institute. January 2026.

Questions and Comments?

Contact the Rural Ontario Institute for more information.

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