



# RURAL WELLBEING

## Internet Factsheet

### HIGHLIGHTS



- As of December 2024, 84% of rural households had access to high speed internet.
- High speed internet access in rural areas increased by 8% between 2023-2024.
- More than 24,000 rural households lack internet access.

### Overview

Access to reliable, fast, and affordable internet is vital to economic wellbeing and overall quality of life. The level of internet connectivity varies across Ontario. There are still significant gaps in connectivity for many communities, especially in rural and northern Ontario. Telecommunications infrastructure is the responsibility of federal and provincial governments, who have promised to expand access to broadband internet service. This information can help communities track progress on government commitments and identify priorities for investment.

**This factsheet presents information about internet indicators from ROI's [Community Wellbeing Dashboard](#).**

**Explore the dashboard to view interactive maps and data visualizations.**



### Data source

[Ontario Broadband Resource Hub](#). December 2024. Community Level Summaries.

## Definitions

**Community:** Census subdivisions, municipalities, and areas treated as municipal for statistical purposes, such as unorganized territories.

**Community type:** Categories of communities as rural or urban.

**Rural:** Any municipality outside of census metropolitan areas. Does not include communities designated as First Nations reserves or settlements.

**Urban:** Any municipality within a [census metropolitan area](#). Does not include communities designated as First Nations reserves or settlements.

**50/10 Mbps:** Broadband internet speeds of 50/10 megabits per second. This is considered to be high-speed internet according to the CRTC. However, it is important to note that internet speeds greater than 50 Mbps are needed to accommodate multiple users and devices for streaming or downloading data.

**25/5 Mbps:** Broadband internet speeds of 25/5 megabits per second. This is the minimum speed needed to stream content for one device or user.

**10/2 Mbps:** Broadband internet speeds of 10/2 megabits per second. This speed is sufficient for general web browsing or email by one or two users.

**5/1 Mbps:** Broadband internet speeds of 5/1 megabits per second. This speed may be sufficient for general web browsing or email by one or two users.

**No internet service:** The proportion of households without internet service as of December 2024.

**Worked from home:** The proportion of the employed labour force who worked from home in 2021 (sourced from the 2021 Census).

As of December 2024, almost all urban households had access to high speed broadband internet (Table 1). Only 84% of rural households have high speed internet, which reflects an 8% increase since 2023. Ten percent of rural households have access to a lower speed of broadband internet of 25/5 Mbps (Table 2). However, it is troubling that more than 24,000 rural households have no internet service at all.

Since the 2021 Census took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, many people who reported working from home were likely working a virtual office job, which would require high speed internet. In five rural communities with a higher proportion of remote workers, less than 50% of households have access to high speed internet (Table 3). Out of these five, two communities do not have any high speed internet access. Looking at the top 10 rural communities for lack of internet access in Table 4, we see that more than half of households in seven communities are without internet of any speed.

**Table 1.** Overview of internet access by community type.

Community type	Total households	Number of households with 50/10 Mbps (2023)	Number of households with 50/10 Mbps (2024)	Proportion of households with 50/10 Mbps (2024)	Change in access to 50/10 broadband service (2023-2024)	Households without internet service (2024)	Proportion of households without internet (2024)
<b>Rural</b>	1,202,076	937,262	1,011,033	84%	8%	24,609	2%
<b>Urban</b>	4,700,237	4,624,750	4,662,250	99%	1%	1,563	0%
<b>Ontario</b>	5,902,313	5,562,012	5,673,283	96%	2%	26,172	0%

**Table 2.** Breakdown of internet speed by community type.

Community type	50/10 Mbps	25/5 Mbps	10/2 Mbps	5/1 Mbps
<b>Rural</b>	84%	10%	1%	1%
<b>Urban</b>	99%	1%	0%	0%
<b>Ontario</b>	96%	3%	0%	0%

**Table 3.** Top 10 rural communities for working from home and their access to high speed broadband.

Communities	Total households	Worked from home	Proportion of households with 50/10 Mbps (2024)
<b>Burpee and Mills</b>	291	48%	20%
<b>Johnson</b>	421	46%	31%
<b>Thornloe</b>	53	43%	0%
<b>The Blue Mountains</b>	7,387	42%	95%
<b>Head, Clara and Maria</b>	132	42%	0%
<b>Manitoulin, Unorganized, West Part</b>	366	40%	25%
<b>Wellesley</b>	3,439	38%	98%
<b>Huron-Kinloss</b>	4,101	33%	98%
<b>Howick</b>	1,410	33%	76%
<b>Nairn and Hyman</b>	215	32%	69%

**Table 4.** Top 10 rural communities for households without internet.

Communities	Total households	Proportion of households without internet (2024)
Nipissing, Unorganized, South Part	334	96%
Timiskaming, Unorganized, East Part	38	80%
Mattawan	101	64%
Casey	140	63%
Plummer Additional	518	55%
Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan	996	52%
Limerick	532	50%
Sudbury, Unorganized, North Part	2,820	48%
Joly	154	40%
Carlow/Mayo	660	40%

## Summary

Internet access is critical to quality of life and wellbeing in this digital age. People without internet or with slow internet may face challenges related to work, education, and entertainment. Improving access to high speed broadband would enable the expansion of opportunities for remote work that were initiated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While there has been an increase in the proportion of rural households with access to high speed internet since 2023, there are still far too many rural households with slow internet or no internet at all.

The information presented in this factsheet and on the dashboard can help hold the government accountable for promises and progress in improving internet access, especially for people in rural communities across Ontario.

Detailed community data about internet indicators can be found on the [Community Wellbeing Dashboard](#).



This factsheet was prepared by the Rural Ontario Institute. Questions about data sources and comments or feedback can be directed to [info@ruralontarioinstitute.ca](mailto:info@ruralontarioinstitute.ca).

This factsheet complements ROI's [Community Wellbeing Dashboard](#). Factsheets provide insight and analysis of rural facts and trends featured in the dashboards.

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