



together we



Durham's Vital Signs Report 2023



Durham Community Foundation





Community Vitality

Eight Areas of Focus

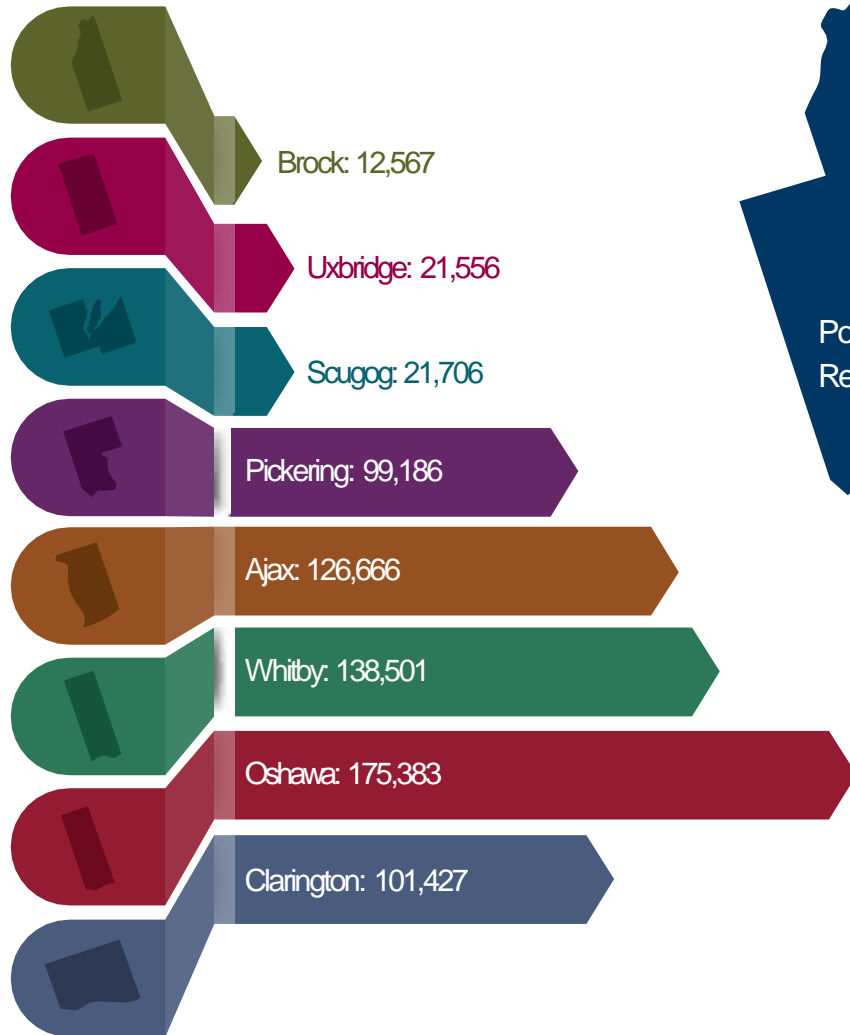
- Community
- Civic Engagement
- Children and Youth
- Environment
- Housing
- Health
- Income and Work
- Safety



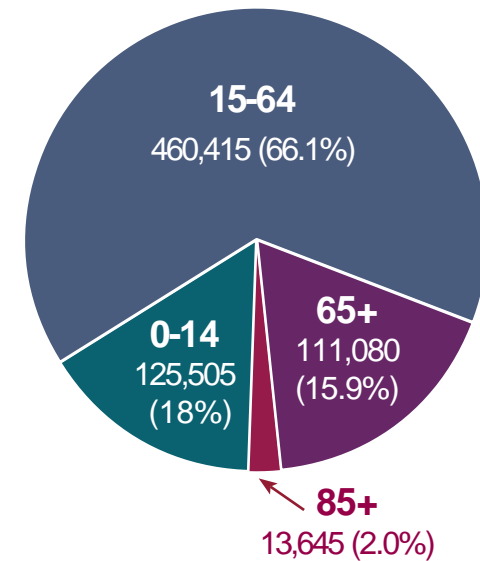
Overview of Our Rapidly Changing and Growing Community



Population²



Population by age group



- Average age: 40.2
- Median age: 40.0
- Education levels: 67.1% of population aged 25 to 64 have post-secondary education
- Average after-tax income for one-person household: 48,520
- Average after-tax income for two-or-more person households: \$117,600



Overview of Our Rapidly Changing and Growing Community

Progress Report

Strong Community Development:

Durham's growing population, sustained growth in the birth of children, increasing diversity, and high education levels forecast the potential for strong community development.

Social Support:

A key enabler for successful communities is to provide social supports for newcomers, seniors, and children which enables them to thrive and contribute to the community. Government, businesses, organizations, donors, and volunteers are helping to address their needs. Nonprofits require additional funding to better support these populations.

Support for Nonprofits:

During the pandemic, Durham Community Foundation and many funders across Canada provided unrestricted funding (donations that can be used for purposes for which the charity determines are most important, based upon the aims and objectives of its governing documents) to charities to enable them to address new and extreme community needs. By and large, nonprofits are well-governed organizations with competent boards of directors, and well regulated by the CRA. We put our full faith into their expertise to determine how to best respond to community needs, where to deploy resources, and to be nimble in doing so. The Foundation encourages all levels of government, including Regional and municipal, businesses, and individuals to support nonprofits' operational needs by giving unrestricted funding.

Giving and Volunteering:

We are encouraged by the Region of Durham's recognition that the nonprofit sector is important for healthy and vibrant communities across Durham. We echo their open appeal to the community to support the sector by giving financially and volunteering to local organizations. We hope that in due course the Region will also provide a dedicated, unrestricted fund that enables local nonprofits to apply for operational funding to sustain organizational health and resilience.





Defining Insights

945 vital registered charities serve Durham Region.

Each community in Durham has a unique array of registered charities:¹⁶

Oshawa - 246	Uxbridge - 55
Whitby - 173	Scugog - 45
Pickering - 130	Brock - 42
Ajax - 128	Mississaugas of Scugog Island - 1
Clarington - 125	



Registered charities provide vital and critical services such as emergency food relief, shelter, education and mentoring, religious services, culture and arts activities, sports and recreation, health care, mental health, and community support. They are also one of the largest employers in Durham Region.¹⁷

Financial pressures on nonprofits combined with increased needs.^{18,19}

88% of Durham's nonprofits saw an increase in operational costs in 2023 versus the previous year.



68% experienced staffing challenges with recruitment and/or retention between April 1, 2022-March 31, 2023, with staff burnout a significant barrier for many



55% scaled back programs or services in 2022 and 12% discontinued some programs entirely. In 2023, a further 39% scaled back programs or services and 22% noted waitlists have increased.



64% reported a decrease in revenue in the first year of the pandemic with 40% experiencing at least a significant 25% decline. Between April 1, 2022-March 31, 2023, 24% saw an increase in revenue of 1% to 24%; however, 31% saw no change and 28% saw a continued decrease. In 2023, 61% of nonprofits expected finances to remain the same and 22% thought they would worsen.



69% faced an increase in demand for their services in 2022 versus before the pandemic. In 2023, that figure increased to 82%. 31% nonprofits believe they are unable to meet the increased demand, 46% believe they are somewhat able to meet demand, and 23% can meet the demand.



Covid-19 devastated many of the Region's nonprofits, resulting in program cutbacks, closures, and bigger waitlists at a time when their assets, skills, and services were needed the most. Nonprofits are still feeling the effects.

For Donors, Funders, and Policymakers

- All funders join both Durham Community Foundation and the United Way of Durham Region in providing unrestricted funding to nonprofits to empower these organizations to optimize their ability to meet existing and emerging community priorities.
- Embrace the richness and benefits of diversity, which includes reflecting diversity and embedding equity and inclusion in our organizations, policies, programs, and services.

“Being a social enterprise structured charity historically assured our sustainability and growth, but COVID changed that. We have the skills and ability to do great things for child scientists. Unrestricted funding would provide critically needed funding to ensure these bright young minds ultimately lead Durham’s growing science hub.” Cindy Adams, Scientists in School

For Individuals

- Donate to the best of your ability to mental health and consider giving non-perishable items to food banks.
- Volunteer as much time as you can and connect with community minded leaders.
- Be an influencer and encourage family, neighbours, friends, and co-workers to better understand the connections between mental and physical health.

“Providing unrestricted funds is critical to support an organization’s ability to achieve its overall mission. This type of funding is flexible and allows organizations to allocate funds towards self-identified organizational priorities in order to develop and strengthen their programs, services and internal systems.”
Cindy Murray, United Way of Durham Region

What I am struck upon reading the report is that there has never been a more urgent need for more cross-sector collaboration. I've spent a career focused on health care, but as the report so nicely illustrates, health is enabled by so much more than access to doctors, making good choices, and inherited good genes. I'm heartened by what I see as emerging efforts to bring social, regional, and health services to the table; it starts with building relationships and understanding what we all do.

You've identified the marginalized groups that have higher rates of experiencing homelessness, and rightly recommended the need to: Assess and build capacity to serve populations overrepresented among the homeless (Indigenous Peoples, older adults, former foster care/ youth group home residents, and 2SLGBTQI+). Early intervention through supportive and preventative measures targeting these groups, and placing support upstream in other 'pipelines to homelessness' (correctional facilities, the military, and mental health institutions), are equally as important as managing the needs of those who are already homeless, but it's an approach that defies our usual way of doing things: pulling drowning folks out of the river instead of preventing them from falling in.

I sincerely hope that the Vital Signs report succeeds in generating actions that improve the lives of residents of Durham Region!

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