

Navigating Change

A Decade of Vital Signs®



About Vital Signs®

Vital Signs® is Canada's most extensive community-driven data program. Prince Edward County's version is led by The County Foundation in coordination with Community Foundations of Canada, offering a consolidated snapshot of key community trends and issues.

Its purpose is to inform decision-making, support actions to enhance our collective quality of life, and help direct resources where they will have the greatest impact.

Overview

2013 to 2023

Since the first Vital Signs® report in 2013, Prince Edward County has experienced significant changes in population, economy, education, environment, and more. The 2024 report reflects on a decade of progress, highlights emerging priorities, and anticipates future challenges as the community continues to evolve.

Community	Prince Edward County has recently seen population growth following a decade of decline, along with increased turnover and a rise in seasonal residents—the fastest-growing demographic. Shifts in age and minority groups reflect changing community dynamics, with a median age 16.5 years above the provincial average, making it one of the oldest populations in Ontario. A slight increase in the youth population during the pandemic has strained the capacity of childcare services and primary classrooms.
Economy	Socioeconomic challenges are deepening, with widening income gaps and declining affordability. A shrinking workforce-age population exacerbates these issues, and limited access to childcare has become a barrier to employment. Small businesses, which make up 99.1% of local establishments, are under pressure. However, self-employment and remote work are growing, while Thrive PEC continues to push for sustainable growth.
Education	While there has been progress in adult educational attainment and high school graduation rates, challenges remain. Skilled trades certification has declined, performance gaps in student math and literacy persist, and under-resourced early childhood development remains a crucial factor in long-term educational success.
Environment	As the County grows, balancing development with environmental sustainability is key. Priorities include protecting farmland, mitigating climate change, safeguarding water resources, and preserving ecologically sensitive areas.
Food Security	Food insecurity rates remain high, worsened by rising food costs. Addressing these challenges and shaping food priorities in Prince Edward County are critical for community well-being.
Health	One of the primary care challenges is that our local system lacks the capacity to support population growth, having been chronically underfunded for years. Healthcare staffing shortages continue to strain the system, though new resources are improving primary care access. Older adults face greater health risks, and mental health issues are prevalent, with limited support infrastructure available.
Housing	Rising housing costs are impacting community well-being, increasing the risk of homelessness. While PEC has limited emergency housing options, efforts are underway to address this gap. New housing developments and alternative housing solutions are on the horizon, potentially offering some relief.
Safety	Prince Edward County maintains a lower crime severity compared to the Ontario average, but issues like fraud, impaired driving, and intimate partner violence persist. The Community Safety & Well-being (CSWB) Plan is taking steps to address these concerns.
Transportation	Improving transit options and preparing for increased traffic are essential as the population grows. Initiatives to expand electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure and connect more of the community are underway.

Summary

Overall, the 2024 Vital Signs® report emphasizes the need for continued focus on sustainable growth, addressing socioeconomic disparities, and enhancing community well-being across various sectors.



Read the full report online at [PECdata.ca](https://pecdata.ca)