

Hamilton



HAMILTON'S
**COMMUNITY SAFETY
& WELL-BEING PLAN**





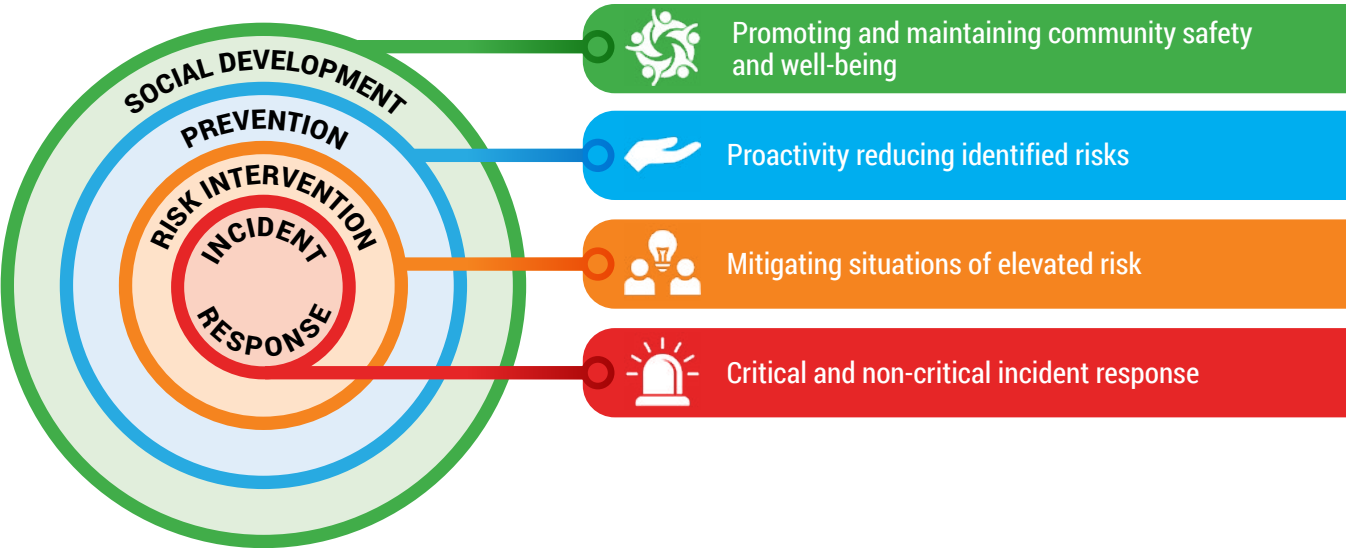
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Under the Province’s Safer Ontario Act, 2018 municipalities are required to develop a Community Safety and Well-Being Plan. The aim of Community Safety and Well-Being plans is to ensure all residents in the community feel safe, have a sense of belonging and can meet their needs for education, healthcare, food, housing, income, and social and cultural expression.

Community Safety and Well-Being Plans support safe and healthy communities through a community-based approach to address root causes of complex social issues. Planning seeks to achieve a proactive, balanced and collaborative approach to community safety and well-being across four key areas: **social development**, **prevention**, **risk intervention**, and **incident response**.³⁴



Hamilton’s Community Safety and Well-Being Plan offers a framework for partners working together to promote safety and well-being for all residents. This framework includes a series of guiding principles that will be applied in all aspects of the plan as well as six local priorities where opportunities for action have been identified. These local priorities include: hate incidents, violence, mental health and stigma, substance use, housing and homelessness and access to income.



WHO WAS INVOLVED IN THE PLAN?

Hamilton's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan development was overseen by an Advisory Committee which both meets legislative requirements and brings together various sectors' perspectives to provide strategic advice and direction to the City of Hamilton on the development and implementation of the plan.

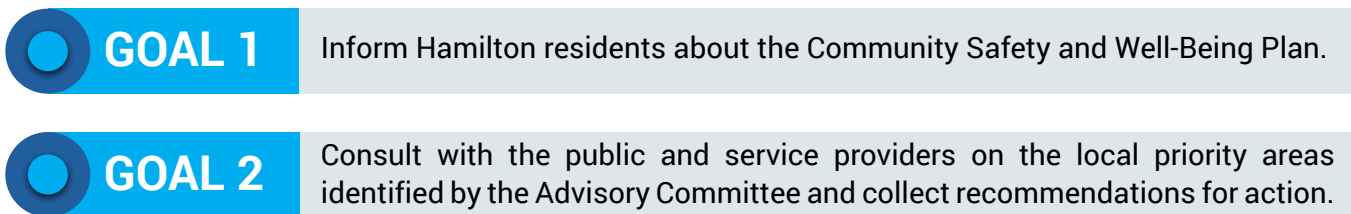
The following organizations participated as part of the Advisory Committee:



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

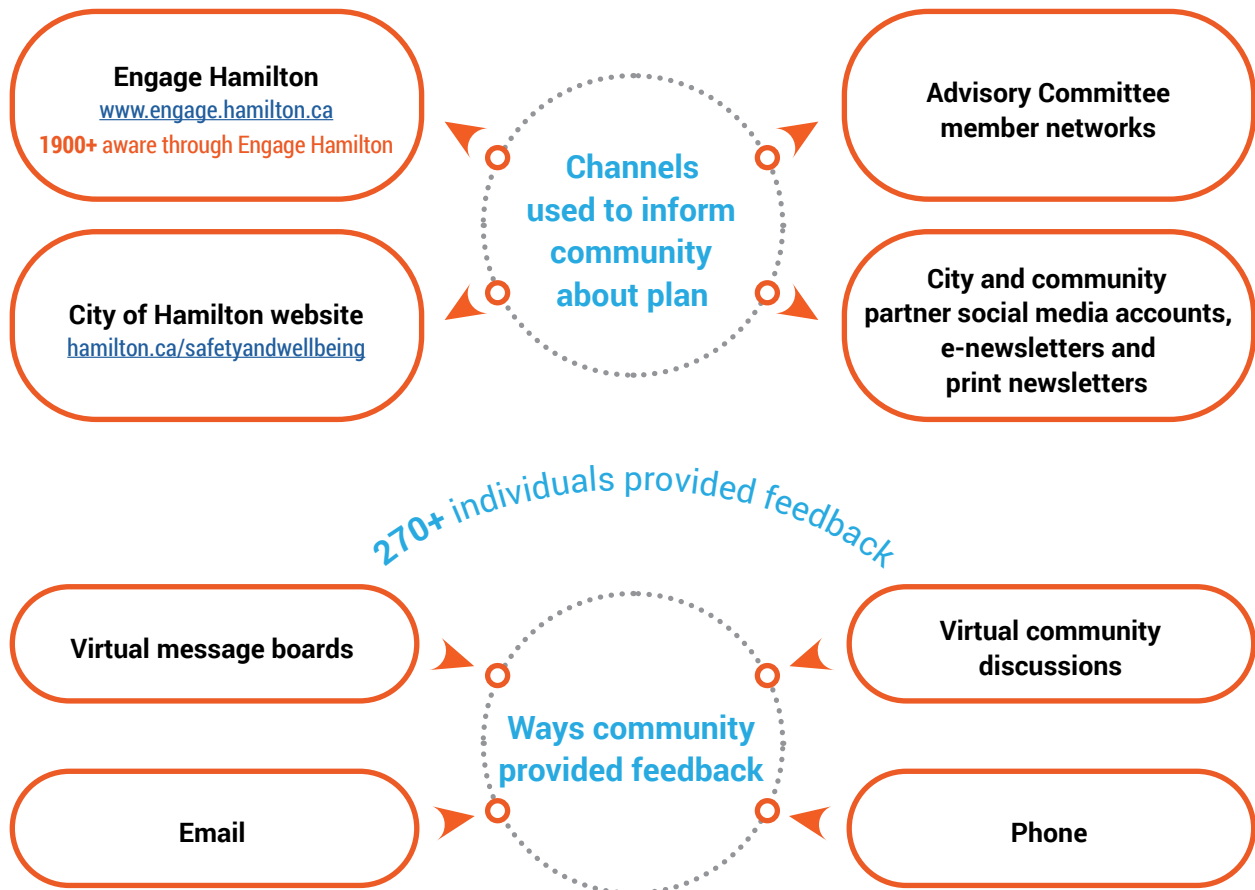
Community safety and well-being cannot be addressed in isolation by any one institution, organization, sector, or individual; it requires collective action. Collective community wisdom is needed to better understand individual safety and well-being risks, and to come up with creative solutions and ideas to tackle complex issues facing Hamilton.

Engagement on Hamilton's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan had two goals.



WHAT WE DID

As part of a community engagement approach to inform development of the plan, several methods for sharing information and gathering feedback have and will continue to be used.



WHAT WE HEARD

Community engagement efforts validated the local priorities identified by the Advisory Committee. Many respondents echoed their desires for safer communities through action related to hate incidents, violence, mental health and stigma, substance use, housing and homelessness and access to income and highlighted the complexity of these issues in Hamilton. We also heard through engagement that the definition of safety and well-being is unique to an individual or community and what could make one person feel safe may not evoke the same feelings of safety for others.

Themes that emerged from the engagements were also respondents' desires for a community where:

- Everyone feels welcome and included;
- Everyone is treated equitably regardless of their skin colour, lived experience, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression;
- People feel connected to their community with strong relationships between service providers, local policy, local government and residents;
- People's basic needs are met in a manner that upholds their dignity;
- People are able to access services where they live;
- Everyone can and feels empowered to fully participate in all aspects of the community such as education, employment, recreation and civic engagement; and
- Everyone takes responsibility to create a safe community for themselves and others.

All feedback was considered and used to inform the way forward for the plan including the identification and adoption of guiding principles and opportunities for action throughout each of the local priority areas.



SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Hamilton has a unique relationship and commitment to Indigenous Peoples. Hamilton's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan upholds this unique relationship and commitment through its recognition of the social inequities Indigenous Peoples face in Hamilton being rooted in colonialism. The historical and ongoing impacts of colonialism are the results of intentional policies that sought to dispossess, dis-empower and displace Indigenous Peoples.

Hamilton's relationship and commitment to addressing the social inequities Indigenous Peoples face is demonstrated in Hamilton's Urban Indigenous Strategy and furthered by this plan. The safety and well-being of the Indigenous community is distinct and upheld throughout this plan through the identification of Indigenous specific goals and foci. The Indigenous-specific goals and foci have been identified by local Indigenous leadership. This plan commits to continuing to support Indigenous self-determination by advocating and supporting autonomy as well as investment in the Indigenous community of Hamilton.

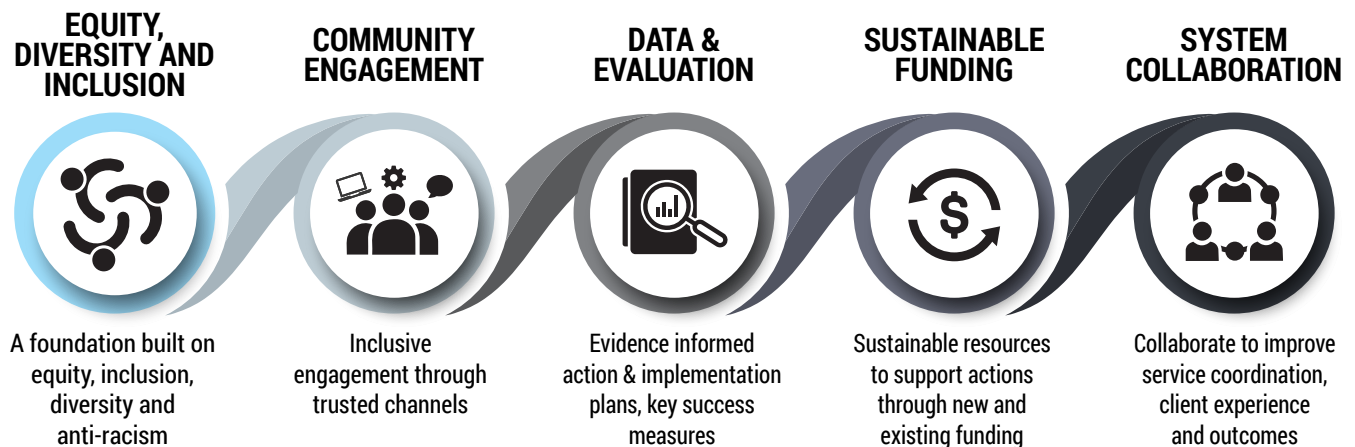


THE WAY FORWARD

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

When listening to the Hamilton community, it was clear that the approaches that are used to make decisions for action are just as important as the actions themselves. This feedback informed the development of guiding principles for Hamilton's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.

Moving forward, these guiding principles will be brought to life by considering and applying the opportunities for action across all future work on Hamilton's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.





EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION:

- Review existing equity, anti-racism, anti-oppression and decolonization frameworks and adopt framework for decision making for Hamilton's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan
- Invite individuals with lived experience to participate in Hamilton's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan's governance model; promote inclusion of more than one Indigenous representative
- Coordinate shared training for leadership and staff in partner organizations on diverse and marginalized populations
- Consider place-based actions to provide communities with services where they are located
- Revise criteria in funder organizations to ensure all applications for funding related to local priorities consider equity, diversity and inclusion
- Recognize and uphold the unique inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples through the distinction and protection of Indigenous-specific equity initiatives



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION:

- Offer a variety of channels and formats for engagement that are relatable and culturally sensitive to those being engaged
- Seek both existing and new voices from communities to ensure everyone has an opportunity to participate if desired
- Identify and use trusted sources to lead engagement efforts to create a safe space for conversation
- Provide all feedback collected through engagement processes, raw and synthesized, back to decision makers; ensure any synthesis of information is completed using culturally appropriate supports
- Improve transparency of when and how feedback from community engagement will be used through reports back to community that are publicly posted on the City of Hamilton website
- Coordinate community engagement efforts across organizations where possible; share engagement plans, approaches and outcomes with partners to reduce engagement fatigue
- Explore development of post-secondary learning opportunities in alignment with local priorities to connect students and community members



DATA AND EVALUATION

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION:

- Learn through pilots within each of the local priority areas and measure success to support future scalability
- Post public progress and outcomes of actions within Hamilton's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan on the City of Hamilton's website
- Connect to existing research structures in post-secondary institutions and other organizations
- Explore feasibility of an evaluation unit supported by post-secondary institutions to research community safety and well-being questions put forward by decision makers
- Review and implement best practices in collection of demographic information from individuals who participate in community engagement
- Ensure data initiatives are developed in collaboration with Indigenous partners
- Identify opportunities to coordinate data collection efforts across organizations
- Explore better approaches to sharing information including privacy and consent
- Learn from and work with other cities that have been successful in achieving improved community safety and well-being outcomes
- Promote Indigenous data principles in all data activities conducted in collaboration with community partners such that the appropriate Indigenous organization/group lead how data from Indigenous community members is collected, held, analyzed and distributed.



SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION:

- Investigate ways to reduce competition for funding between service providers and make sustainable funding avenues easier to find
- Consider, where possible, realignment of funding opportunities for service providers with local priorities in Hamilton's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan
- Facilitate discussions on re-alignment of existing resources within partner organizations to support local priorities in Hamilton's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan
- Collaborate on grant writing, proposals and other funding opportunities
- Advocate collectively to all levels of government for funding to support sustainability and scale of initiatives with successful outcomes

- Explore private sector partnership to support funding for community safety and well-being work
- Recognize the historic withholding of resources and disinvestment from Indigenous communities by ensuring funding opportunities gained through this plan specifically seek to address funding and resource inequities in the Indigenous community of Hamilton



SYSTEM COLLABORATION

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION:

- Commit to regular updates through partners to their leadership and staff on Hamilton's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan
- Engage community, health and social service providers to formally commit to alignment with Hamilton's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan
- Create inventory of work in community and conduct analysis of what is already being done and where gaps exist
- Develop credible resource information to improve and support informed referrals
- Explore locations where service providers can cohabitate, offer services, learn about and build respect for one another's work





LOCAL PRIORITIES

Achieving a community that is safe and well is a journey that starts with identifying local priority risks and examining current strategies through a holistic lens.

The Hamilton Community Safety and Well-Being Plan Advisory Committee used a structured approach for priority setting by considering multiple sources of evidence to determine local priorities including:

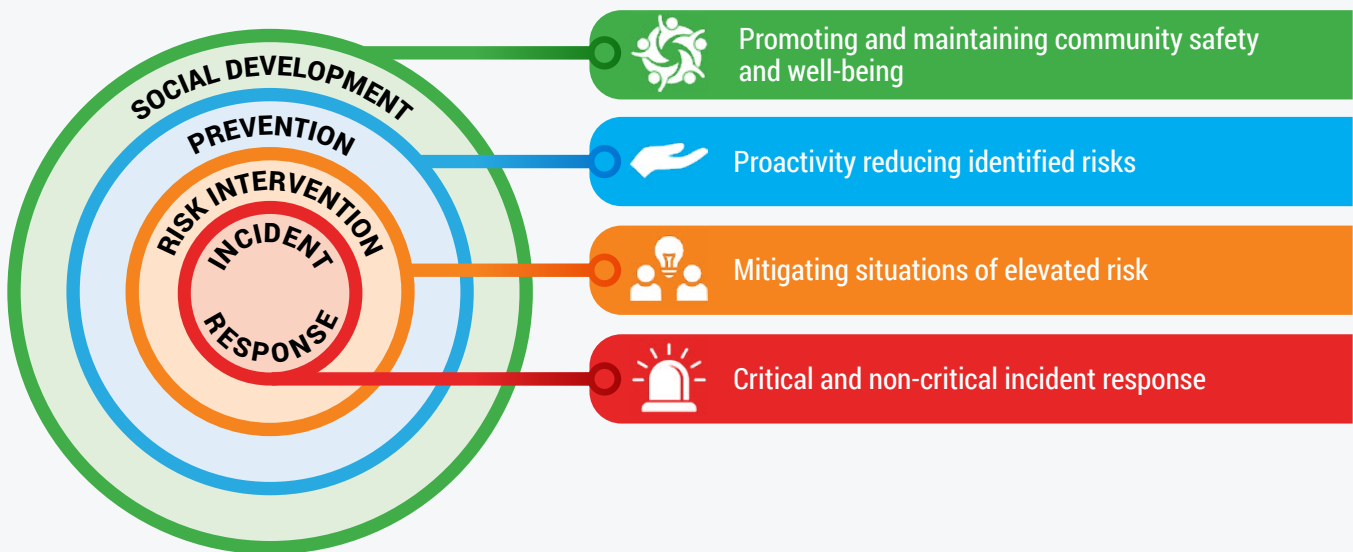


Hamilton's Priorities



OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Community Safety and Well-Being Plans support safe and healthy communities through a community-based approach to address root causes of complex social issues. Planning seeks to achieve a proactive, balanced and collaborative approach to community safety and well-being across four key areas: **social development**, **prevention**, **risk intervention**, and **incident response**.³⁴



Within each of Hamilton's local priority areas, you will see community highlights and opportunities for action across all four areas that together create a balanced and collaborative approach to improved safety and well-being. The community highlights in this plan are not exhaustive of all of the work happening in the community to improve safety and well-being within each of the priority areas.

Each of the local priority areas do not exist in a silo. Many of the challenges and possible solutions in one priority area may have impacts on the people, communities and partners in another priority area. Strong connections will need to be in place between the partners and work happening across all local priority areas to acknowledge and find opportunities in these places of interconnection.

HATE INCIDENTS

● LONG TERM GOAL	Reduce individual and organizational incidents of Islamophobia, anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, transphobia, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination.
● CURRENT FOCUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase public awareness and education on hate. • Address individual and organizational bias of Islamophobia, anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, transphobia, homophobia and other forms of discrimination.

WHY IS THIS A CONCERN IN HAMILTON?



80

hate/bias events were reported to Hamilton Police Services²

8

fell within the parameters of a hate crime²

20%

of virtual town hall respondents said hate crimes were the **policing issue that they are most concerned about**³



Police reported hate-related incidents are **increasing**. In 2019, Hamilton had the **highest incident rate** among all metropolitan areas in Canada¹.



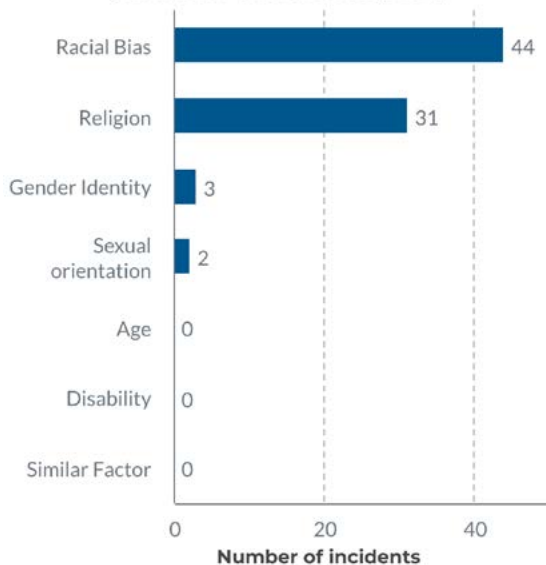
WHO IS IMPACTED MORE IN HAMILTON?

In 2020²

- The highest numbers of reported hate incidents were directly related to racial bias
- Black and Jewish communities were the most targeted group for police reported hate/bias related events

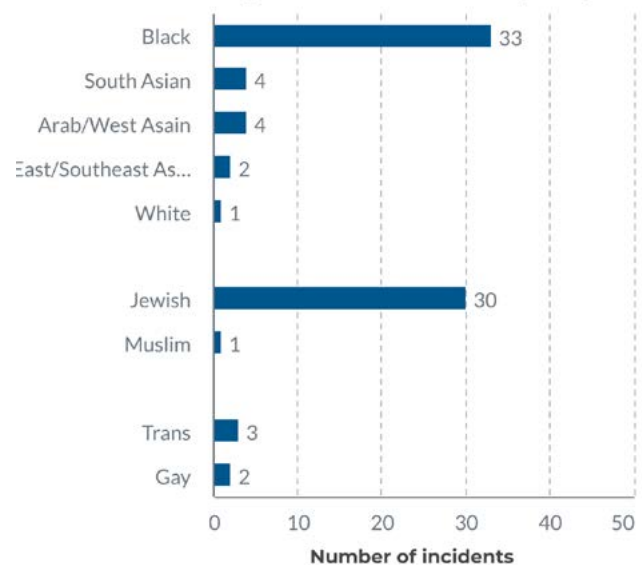
What is the motivation for hate/ bias events?

The total police reported hate/ bias incident breakdown by category (Hamilton Police Services, 2020)



Who is impacted by hate/ bias?

The total police reported hate/ bias incident breakdown by race, religion, gender identity, and sexual orientation (Hamilton Police Services, 2020)



Our Health Counts

According to [Our Health Counts](#)⁴, Hamilton's First Nations Community reported:

35%

being a victim of an ethnically or racially motivated **verbal attack**

14%

of verbal attacks happened within the **past 12 months**

15%

being a victim of an ethnically or racially motivated **physical attack**

5%

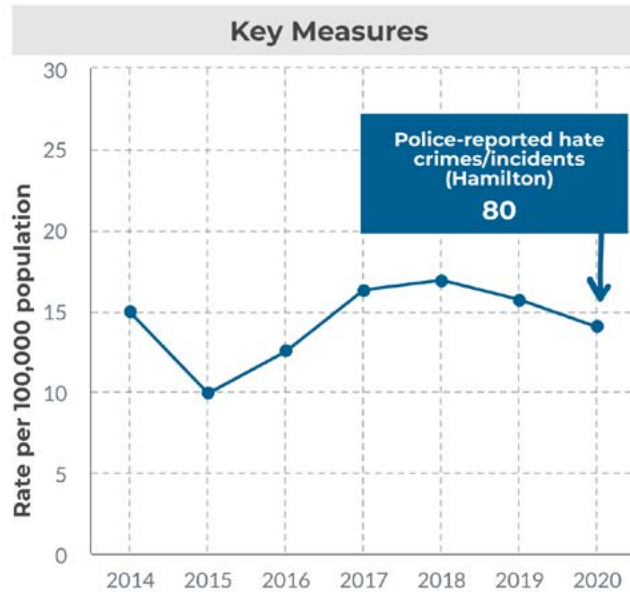
of physical attacks happened within the **past 12 months**

21%

believed that their overall health and well-being was affected by racism

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Long-term success will show a decrease in police-reported hate crimes/incidents in Hamilton¹.



COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS



Creating a clearer picture of hate in Hamilton through expansion of hate-related data collection tools

Reporting hate crimes and incidents is an important step in stopping the cycle of hatred and preventing others from being victimized. It is recognized that some community members may not be comfortable attending a police station or reporting directly to a police officer.

In 2019, [a new online reporting tool](#) was created to allow citizens to report incidents to Hamilton Police Services without having to attend a station. Hate crimes and hate incidents are still likely under-reported in Hamilton.

Collaboration is happening involving the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion with support from other organizations in the community to create an online platform for all Hamiltonians to report hate crimes and incidents of hate. This additional tool will look to fill the gap in reporting left by those who may not be comfortable reporting to police, as well as capture incidents that may not have resulted in an assault or damage to someone's property.



City of Hamilton's Hate Prevention & Mitigation Initiative

Community engagement has been taking place around hate and results of engagement have been published through the [City of Hamilton's Hate Prevention & Mitigation Initiative Stakeholder Engagement Summary Report](#).

Top recommendations for actions to address hate included: need for proactive leadership, listening to the community, public education, creating safe and inclusive spaces, community programming, regulations and enforcement.

Opportunity exists for partners to collaborate, align and support implementation of future recommendations from the Hate Prevention & Mitigation Initiative.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION



- Explore alternative locations and formats to report on hate crimes and incidents of hate.



- Expand public and service provider education on hate crime and incidents of hate reporting.
- Create a community-wide public education campaign on denouncing hate and addressing its root causes.
- Address Call 57 from the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#) by collaborating to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
- Determine creative ways to build empathy and hold spaces for dialogue on hate considering community engagement art and storytelling projects.
- Encourage organizational equity audits.



- Support of landmarks review through City of Hamilton Urban Indigenous Strategy.
- Collaborate, align and support work of revamped Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre.
- Collaborate between partners to address recommendations in the [Just Recovery Hamilton Policy Paper](#) under the themes of Tackling Systemic Racism and Supporting 2SLGBTQ+ Communities.
- Support education on the “everyday” acts of racism that diminish the safety and well-being of Indigenous, Black and other racialized communities.

VIOLENCE

LONG TERM GOAL	Reduce violent crimes in Hamilton.
CURRENT FOCUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of gender-based violence and development of safety resources for women, including Indigenous women, and 2SLGBTQ+ communities. • Increase awareness and ability to identify victims of human trafficking in Hamilton. • Support initiatives that aim to reduce violence in youth.

WHY IS THIS A CONCERN IN HAMILTON?



82%

adults in Hamilton acknowledge that family violence exists in the community⁵

43%

believe it has increased in the past 5 years⁵

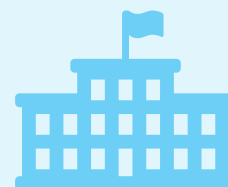
High school students in Hamilton report⁷:

19%

being **bullied at school**

10%

don't feel safe at school



17%

are worried that someone will harm, threaten, or take something from them at school

8%

engaging in antisocial behaviour (stealing, vandalism, carrying a weapon, fighting)

Hamilton's violent crime rate and rate of assault injuries is **higher** compared to Ontario⁶.



Short-term trends during COVID-19 have shown Hamilton to be experiencing **increases in reports of trespassing, threats, domestic violence and person in crisis** which may have the potential to become long-lasting.



Virtual town hall respondents said that the policing issue that they are most concerned about is³



17.7%

violent crimes

4.4%

domestic violence

What are the types of violent crimes?

Number of violent crimes by type, City of Hamilton 2014 & 2018

Type of incident	2014	2018	Trend
Assault	3102	3007	Stable
Uttering Threats	683	707	Stable
Sexual Assault	457	670	↑
Robbery	391	496	Stable
Harassment	237	242	Stable

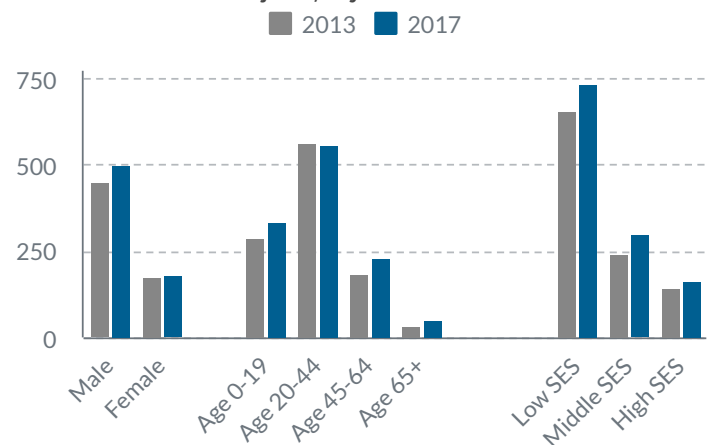
Type of incident	2014	2018	Trend
Other	79	156	↑
Abduction/ Kidnapping	26	43	↑
Firearms	11	32	↑
Homicide/ Attempted	14	12	Stable

WHO IS IMPACTED MORE IN HAMILTON?

The rate of emergency department visits for assault injuries were highest among⁸:

- Males
- Adults age 20-44 years
- Individuals from areas with low socioeconomic status

Rate (per 100,000 population) of emergency department visits for assault injuries, City of Hamilton 2013 & 2017



Our Health Counts

According to [Our Health Counts](#)⁴, Hamilton's First Nations Community reported:

95%

violence related to crime and criminal behaviour

60%

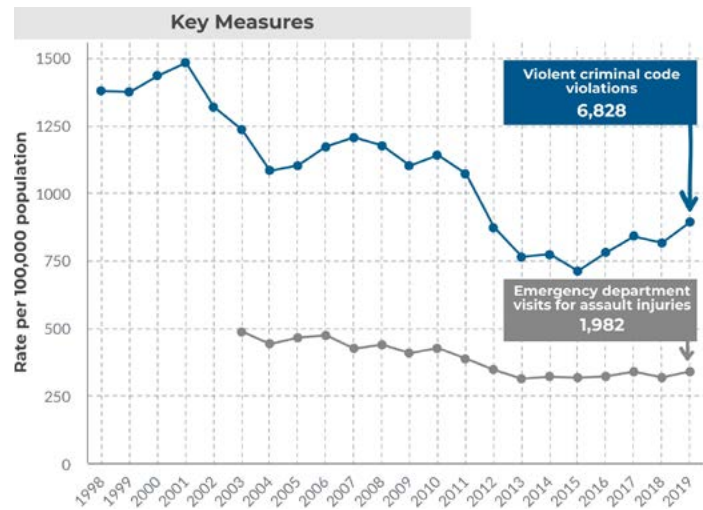
family violence occurring in the community

According to the [National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#)⁹, no one knows an exact number of **missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls** and 2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada. Thousands of women's deaths or disappearances have likely gone unrecorded over the decades.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Long-term success will show a decrease in key measures including:

- Violent criminal code violations¹⁰
- Emergency department visits for assault injuries⁶



COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS



Training on gang violence and human trafficking

Banyan Community Services is working in collaboration with police who have experience in adult gang and sex trafficking practices to implement a pilot to educate community service provider staff in application to youth.

Education will ultimately help to assess and identify victims of trafficking from the ages of 13-20 years old.

Opportunity to explore expansion of training to more service providers across broader community.



Be More Than A Bystander, preventative gender-based violence and sexual violence training

Through Interval House of Hamilton and the MentorAction program, Be More Than a Bystander is a preventative gender-based violence and sexual violence training program that raises awareness and delivers workshops and school presentations focusing on gender-based violence and learning safe tools to intervene.

As part of the program, trained professional athletes provide mentorship and awareness to sport-involved youth and students, challenging harmful gender norms and dismantling the toxic beliefs that perpetuate gender-based violence and sexual violence. The program is offered in collaboration with the Hamilton Tiger Cats, FORGE FC, Hamilton Bulldogs, McMaster University and SportHamilton.



Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Safe Schools Bullying Prevention & Intervention Review Panel

Final report and recommendations based on extensive community consultation on how Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board can better address and prevent bullying.

[Building Healthy Relationships and an Inclusive, Caring Learning Environment](#) begins the call to action.

Opportunity for Community Safety and Well-Being Plan to support implementation of recommendations within final report where appropriate.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION



- Expand existing programs to educate and build capacity in health and community service providers on questions to ask to identify abuse in women who don't disclose.



- Expand existing programs to deliver collaborative trauma and violence informed care training for service providers.
- Explore expansion of successful service models to support individuals following transition from institutions to community; improved transition from youth to adult corrections should also be explored.
- Work with housing partners to explore how to reduce targeting of individuals in social housing against violence and fraud.



- Explore feasibility to further reduce co-ed rooms in hospitals in Hamilton.
- Explore feasibility to develop app with safety resources for women in Hamilton.
- Explore expansion of education initiatives to prevent sexualized violence and human trafficking through consent-based programs developed by Mohawk College's Task Force on Sexual Violence.
- Create a community-wide public education campaign that focuses on a message of zero tolerance for domestic violence.
- Collaborate with Indigenous community partners to identify appropriate cultural safety training for service providers.



- Identify ways in which the 231 Calls for Justice from [Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#) can be embedded into the City of Hamilton's Urban Indigenous Strategy. Support continued exhibit by local Indigenous youth, Honouring our Sisters.
- Support ongoing collaboration between Hamilton Police Services and service providers to review femicide protocols.
- Collaborate to address recommendations in the [Just Recovery Hamilton Policy Paper](#) under the themes of Investing in Women and Disability Justice.
- Partner with Safe at Home Hamilton pilot, aiming to keep women fleeing violence safe in their homes.
- Review and consider recommendations from Woman Abuse Working Group's environmental scan of current work in community aimed at keeping women safe and data provided through [Snapshot 2020](#).
- Review and consider recommendations from Hamilton Public Health Services' review of impact of trauma on community and community violence strategies.
- Share learning between school boards and post-secondary institutions to continue and build on bullying prevention through transition of students from secondary to post-secondary institutions.
- Explore expansion and integration of Be More Than a Bystander program, preventative gender-based violence and sexual violence training into secondary and post secondary institutions.

MENTAL HEALTH AND STIGMA

LONG TERM GOAL	Reduce mental health hospitalizations and stigma surrounding mental illness.
CURRENT FOCUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase public awareness and education on positive mental health and well-being and mental illness. • Improve system coordination and collaboration. • Support initiatives that aim to identify risk and provide support for youth mental health.

WHY IS THIS A CONCERN IN HAMILTON?

Key measures have been **increasing** significantly and are higher than the province.

- Intentional self-harm, particularly among female youth¹¹
- Emergency department visits for psychotic episodes due to psychoactive substance use¹²



3RD largest burden on our city's health is **mental health**¹³

1 IN 4 WOMEN AND 1 IN 5 MEN

living in Hamilton say most days in life are quite a bit or extremely stressful¹⁴

17%

of population (age 12+) in Hamilton report being diagnosed with a mood/anxiety disorder¹⁵

1 IN 5

new mothers have mental health concerns¹⁴

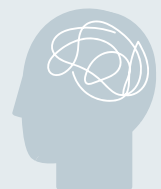


46%

of Canadians thought people use the term mental illness as an excuse for bad behaviour¹⁶

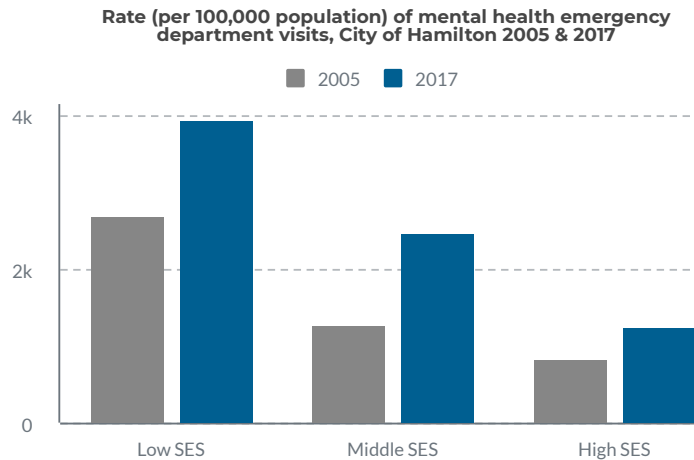
27%

said they would be fearful of being around someone who suffers from serious mental illness¹⁶



WHO IS IMPACTED MORE IN HAMILTON?

The rate of mental health emergency department visits were highest among individuals from areas with low socio-economic status¹⁷



Emergency department visits for self-harm, anxiety, and mood disorders are **high among local youth** (<20 years old), **particularly females**, and the **rates are rising**¹⁹

Highschool students in Hamilton reported⁷:

- **29%** that their mental health is only fair or poor
- **39%** that wanted to talk to someone about a mental health or emotional problem but they did not know where to turn.
- **13%** that they seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months
- **13%** engaged in self-harming behaviours such as cutting or burning themselves in the past 12 months
- **37%** elevated stress levels



28%

of millennial workers rate their mental health as poor or fair¹⁸

- Those with lower incomes and precarious work reported having poorer mental health¹⁸



Our Health Counts

According to [Our Health Counts](#)⁴, Hamilton's First Nations Community reported:



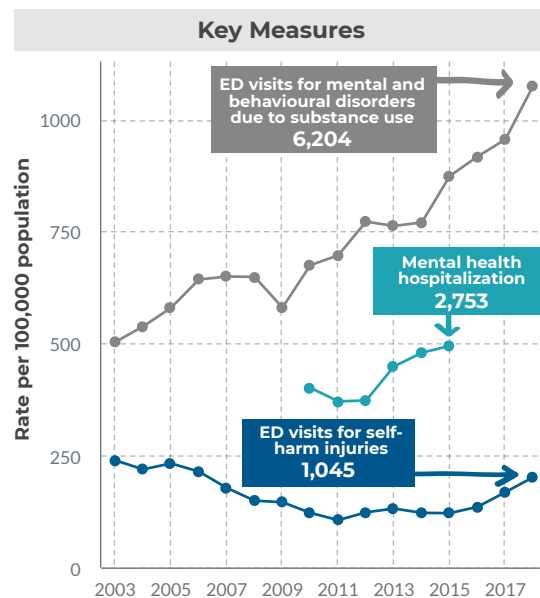
42%

of First Nations adults living in Hamilton said they've been diagnosed with a psychological and/or mental health disorder⁴

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Long-term success will show a decrease in key measures including:

- Emergency department visits for mental and behavioural disorders due to substance use²⁰
- Mental health hospitalizations²¹
- Emergency department visits for self-harm injuries¹¹



COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS



Emotion Coaching for Parents and Caregivers

The pandemic has increased stress for children and youth - and this has challenged the caregivers who support them. In response, the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board and the Hamilton Family Health Team have partnered to offer virtual Emotion Coaching sessions for parents and caregivers. Emotion Coaching is a communication strategy that can calm the brain in as little as 60 seconds and help improve relationships.



Infant and Early Years Mental Health System Support Committee Common Assessment Tool Pilot

The development of the Tools for Life resource provides information and tools to assist children with self-regulation. The tool and training have been provided to child care and early years operators and Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION



- Review, and if necessary make adjustments to, Hamilton Police Services' crisis response models including COAST, Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Team and Social Navigator.



- Create partnerships to deliver information on available mental health services to individuals in a location where they are comfortable without stigma.



- Improve resiliency and coping mechanisms in youth to avoid reliance on self-medication or the use of drugs to cope with mental health issues.

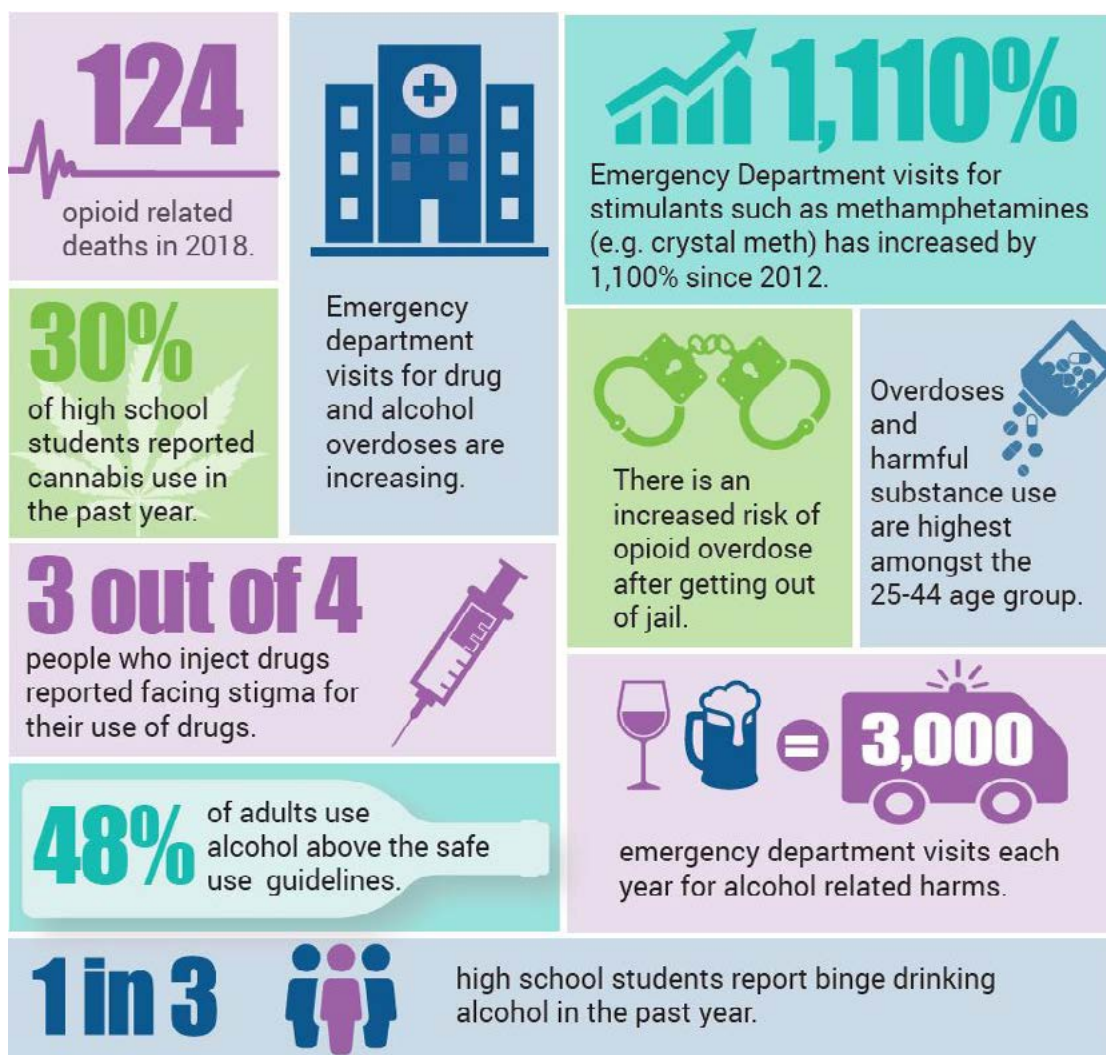


- Support priorities of Hamilton Health Team related to mental health and stigma.
- Create inventory of mental health tables to see who is active and scope of work.
- Create stronger link between child and adult mental health strategies in Hamilton.
- Reduce stigma associated with accessing mental health services.
- Expand stigma campaign by Hamilton Drug Strategy to address stigma related to mental illness.
- Support development of an Indigenous Health Strategy through City of Hamilton – Public Health Services, engaging with Indigenous communities to address health inequities.
- Coordinate data collection tools and cycles to create better understanding of youth well-being (e.g. Middle-Year Development Instrument).
- Explore infant mental health programming through research and evaluation supported by City of Hamilton – Public Health Services.

SUBSTANCE USE

● LONG TERM GOAL	Contribute to the work of the Hamilton Drug Strategy so that all residents of Hamilton are free of harm due to substance use and are able to enjoy the best quality of life.
● CURRENT FOCUS	Taking action to address harms of substance use within the four pillars of prevention, harm reduction, social justice/justice and treatment. Learn more: www.hamilton.ca/drugstrategy

WHY IS THIS A CONCERN IN HAMILTON?



22

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

The Hamilton Drug Strategy is in place to foster dynamic community collaboration and action to shift the way we approach substance use disorders. The Hamilton Drug Strategy partners have researched, conducted community consultations and built a collaborative network to engage with the community and collectively develop a comprehensive plan to reduce the impacts of substance use in Hamilton. Survey and focus group results from the public and key community partner input provided foundational priorities for the strategy.

Membership of the drug strategy continues to grow with over 125 community stakeholders including:

- Community members with lived experience
- Addictions treatment services
- Hospitals
- Harm reduction services
- Public Health Services
- City of Hamilton Housing Services Division
- Hamilton Health Team
- Corrections and justice sector
- Community, mental health, and social services
- Acute and primary care
- Indigenous community
- Hamilton Police Services
- Hamilton Paramedic Services

Hamilton's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan will look to the leadership of the Hamilton Drug Strategy to drive outcomes within the local priority risk area of substance use.

More information on the work of the drug strategy and it's impact on community safety and well-being can be found at: www.hamilton.ca/drugstrategy.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

● LONG TERM GOAL	Reduce the number of individuals on the wait list for housing and requiring support from the shelter system as a result of an appropriate and permanent housing solution.
● CURRENT FOCUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve system coordination and collaboration within housing providers and with other social service providers, public health, researchers, housing advocates and community organizations. • Increase financial investment into housing system.

WHY IS THIS A CONCERN IN HAMILTON?



5,558

households waiting for social housing who were not currently in receipt of Rent-Geared-to Income assistance²³

2 YEARS AND 4 MONTHS

average wait for a Rent-Geared-to-Income unit.²³

This is across all categories of applicants and all unit sizes on the Access to Housing Waitlist.

16%

of all tenant households in Hamilton live in subsidized housing²⁴

45%

of all tenant households spend **30% or more** of their income on shelter costs²⁴

Social housing stock is **aging** and there is a **considerable and costly repair** backlog



Emergency shelter occupancy has remained consistently high serving fewer unique individuals but with **longer stays**²⁵

Approximately **4%** of people on the By Name Priority List of people experiencing homelessness require integrated supports beyond those typically available in the housing system to address acute health needs²⁵



WHO IS IMPACTED MORE IN HAMILTON?

A Point in Time Count found²⁶:



65%

of people identified as experiencing homelessness spent the night at an emergency shelter or violence against women shelter

22%

of populations experiencing homelessness reported having Aboriginal Ancestry

Our Health Counts

According to [Our Health Counts](#)⁴, Hamilton's First Nations Community reported:

74%

of First Nations people in Hamilton indicated they live in "crowded conditions"⁴

Only **3%** of the general Canadian population reported the same

63%

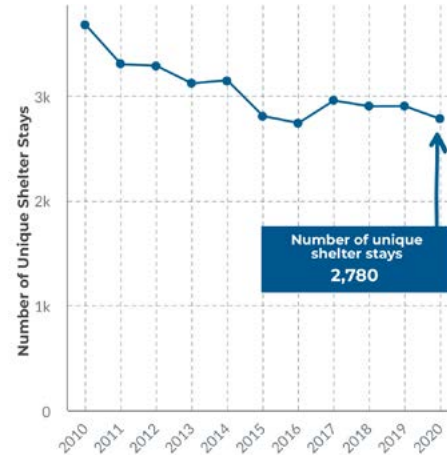
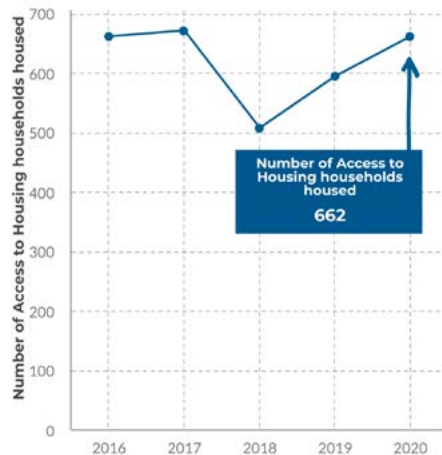
of First Nations people in Hamilton gave up "important things" (i.e. buying groceries) in order to pay shelter related expenses ⁴

Indigenous specific housing units administered by an Indigenous organization account for **less than 5%** of stock in Hamilton³⁴

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Long-term success will show a change in key measures including:

- An increase in the number of Access to Housing households housed²⁷
- A decrease in the number of unique shelter stays²⁸



COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS



Indigenous Housing Services at De dwa da dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre

Work to meet the housing needs of urban community members who self-identify as having Indigenous ancestry and who are experiencing homelessness or who have previously experienced homelessness.

Case management provided to residents of Odrohekta Men's Residence and Koo gaa da win Manitou Elders Residence owned by Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services.

<https://aboriginalhealthcentre.com/services/indigenous-housing-services/>



Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership work on housing and homelessness

[Revisioning Coordinated Access: Fostering Indigenous Best Practices Towards a Wholistic Systems Approach to Homelessness](#) published by The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton.

Review and consider how recommendations can be further supported and advanced by the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan's partners.



Hamilton's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan: [Coming Together to End Homelessness, Hamilton's Systems Planning Framework](#)



A collective effort amongst City of Hamilton staff, community partners, Indigenous partners, people with living/lived experience of homelessness, leading experts, researchers, and funders.

Review and consider how recommendations can be further supported and advanced by the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan's partners.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue investment in shelter spaces geared toward addressing the unique needs of women, Indigenous women, transgender people, and non-binary people who are experiencing homelessness.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create greater connection between City of Hamilton's Home Management Program and housing providers to offer support and training to individuals, families and groups to prevent eviction, maintain housing and budgeting. Explore better ways to facilitate the provision of appropriate supports to keep people housed such as health, mental health and addictions, social and income supports using connections between housing and other health and social service providers. Increase education opportunities for those who live in and around social housing units on quality standards and tenant rights.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue work by the City of Hamilton as the Service System Manager to invest in and secure funding for new affordable housing development, improving the quality of existing housing and increasing housing affordability. Continue to invest in Indigenous-specific housing solutions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support priorities of the Hamilton Health Team related to housing and homelessness. Advance the equitable distribution of housing and homelessness resources for Indigenous communities to be led by the Indigenous community. Collaborate between service providers, community partners, advocates and partners in the housing system to understand each other's organizational mandates and scope of work in supporting outcomes related to housing and homelessness. Improve coordination of housing provider and shelter system tables in community led by the municipality as Service System Manager. Expand coordinated connection from housing tables to broader health and social service provider tables in community. Create a strong connection between Ontario Works and housing partners with Ontario Works' new provincial mandate of life stabilization. Explore expansion of successful service models to support individuals in maintaining housing following transition from institutions to community; improved access to enhanced supports to compliment housing such as nursing, addiction and social work services. Review and consider recommendations in the Just Recovery Hamilton Policy Paper under the themes of Housing as a Human Right.

ACCESS TO INCOME

 LONG TERM GOAL	Reduce the number of individuals living in low income households in Hamilton.
 CURRENT FOCUS	Increase information and access to financial supports for people living in Hamilton.

WHY IS THIS A CONCERN IN HAMILTON?



Low income measures are fairly stable and even show signs of decreasing in Hamilton. However, Hamilton remains higher than provincial and national rates.

- Canada adopted a new measure, the '**Market Basket Measure**' (MBM), as its official poverty line in 2018.
- In Ontario, the MBM poverty rate was **11.6%** in 2018²⁹.

11,020

average monthly Ontario Works caseload (individuals or families)³⁰

21,418

average monthly Ontario Works beneficiaries³⁰

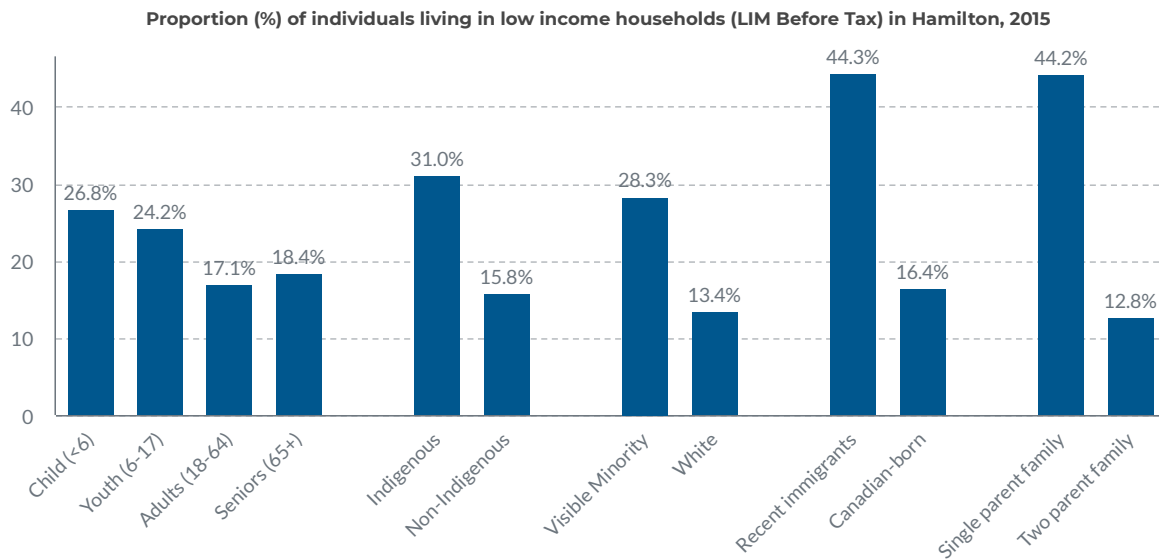


\$202/week for a family to eat healthy (two adults, two children)³¹

- 1 in 7** households can't afford this³¹

WHO IS IMPACTED MORE IN HAMILTON?

- Children and youth are the age group with the highest prevalence of low income.³²
- Indigenous, visible minorities, recent immigrants, and single parents are more likely to live in low income households.³²



Our Health Counts

According to [Our Health Counts](#)⁴, Hamilton's First Nations Community reported:



78.2%

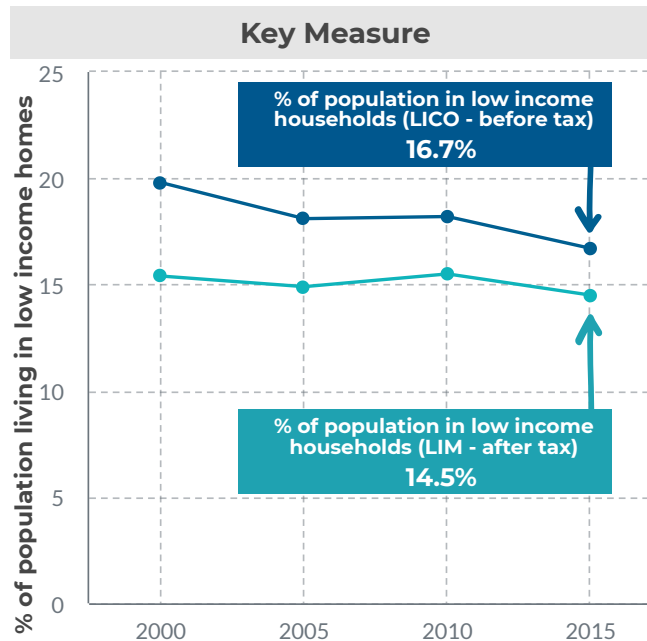
of the First Nations persons living in Hamilton earn less than \$20,000 per year⁴

70%

of the First Nations population in Hamilton lives in the lowest income quartile neighbourhoods compared to **25%** of the general Hamilton population⁴

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Long-term success will show a decrease in the population in low income households, before and after tax³².



City of Hamilton's Xperience Annex

In Hamilton, there is a wide variety of high-quality education and employment services aimed at helping Hamilton's youth achieve their full potential. With so many choices, this journey can sometimes feel like a maze.

By connecting and collaborating with education, health care and employment providers, the [Xperience Annex](#) supports youth ages 18-29 in achieving their goals. The youth navigator understands the challenges youth face and helps them prepare them for their future by creating pathways to community services and employment.



Mohawk College's Challenge 2025 initiative

The Challenge 2025 initiative is building demand-driven workforce development in Hamilton. This strategy will bridge the gap between employers who need workers with people who want to work by identifying and delivering the education and supports participants need to access and retain meaningful employment, reduce poverty, and enhance opportunity.

This vision will be achieved through the shared leadership of employers, employment services, community service providers, educational institutions, and government.

Challenge 2025 will prioritize mapping and understanding the existing system and opportunities within it. The work will then focus on leadership opportunities for people with lived experience in designing and executing strategy; embedding equity and Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression into strategies and structures; and engaging community partners in connecting and leveraging existing initiatives to achieve shared population impact goals.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION



- Delivery of more free tax clinics across the city to ensure access to entitled benefits, including continued partnership to provide free tax clinics for Ontario Works' clients.
- Create partnerships to deliver information on income and employment-related support services and subsidies that are available to individuals in a location where they are comfortable without stigma.
- Improve navigation support for individuals accessing financial support services.
- Create strong connections to free education opportunities through Mohawk College's City School or McMaster Discovery Program.



- Collaborate with Living Wage Hamilton partners to understand how living wage efforts can be further supported and advanced by the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.



- Collaborate with (Re)envision the HSR Strategy to support safe, accessible and affordable transportation to better connect people to employment across Hamilton.
- Collaborate to address recommendations in the [Mayor's Task Force on Economic Recovery](#).
- Collaborate to address recommendations in the [Just Recovery Hamilton Policy Paper](#) under the themes of Investing in Women and Investing in decent jobs, decent wages and our local economy.
- Explore equity issues related to access to technology equipment and services.
- Engage Indigenous and Black community partners to review hiring practices to explore equitable access to employment opportunities.
- Connect to Hamilton Regional Indian Centre to explore partnerships related to employment and training programs, such as Grand River Employment and Training and Apatiswin.

MOVING TO ACTION

This plan is only the beginning of collaboration across the community to improve outcomes in Hamilton related to safety and well-being. Hamilton's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan through input from the Advisory Committee and community engagement, identifies opportunities for action within each of the local priority areas.

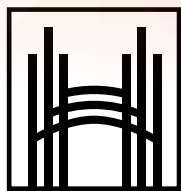
To move this plan into action, work must continue to further investigate the feasibility of these opportunities and develop implementation plans. This will be achieved through:

- A call to action to partners to bring together a sustainable governance model to support Hamilton's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan. The plan will be governed by a Steering Committee with support from Action Tables formed within each of the local priority areas.
- Action Tables made up of partner organizations working together to develop detailed implementation plans and establishing immediate and intermediate outcome measures. Partner organizations will take the lead on different strategies throughout implementation. Action Tables will provide strategic advice and guidance to the Steering Committee throughout implementation.
- Local priority areas and actions that are responsive and flexible to emerging needs in Hamilton. As such, Hamilton's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan will remain an iterative community plan that will be reviewed annually.

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Hamilton