

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Toronto **Environmental Scan**

2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



NORTH

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto commissioned the Centre for Organizational Effectiveness to produce environmental scan reports for each of the regions of the Archdiocese of Toronto to assist in the strategic plan development of Catholic Charities. Anchored by [Catholic Social Teachings](#), which provides the shared understanding of how faith engages with the world, these documents provide a current overview of the people 'in the Archdiocese of Toronto.

The Social Determinants of Health review include:

- Low Income and Food Insecurity
- Education and Employment
- Housing and Homelessness
- Health, Mental Health, and Addiction
- Newcomers and Immigration
- Community and Belonging: Civic Engagement, Recreation, Racism, Crime & Violence
- Age: Children and Youth, and Seniors
- Environment

We invite member agencies, parishes and partners to review to review the information through an open heart, inviting the Holy Spirit to enter into the journey of discerning how your gifts, and your resources can continue to support the people of Toronto in living life abundantly (Jn. 10:10).

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS: DATA HIGHLIGHTS

North Region encompasses York Region, Simcoe County and Mulmur (Dufferin County). Where available, Statistics Canada census data for these were combined to provide as full a picture as possible of the population in the area. Canadian Community Health Survey data and Ontario Marginalization Index data is available for Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit and for York Regional Health Unit.

he social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. These determinants are key factors influencing health outcomes and health disparities among populations. They include various social, economic, environmental and cultural factors that can either promote or hinder individuals' health and well-being. [i]

i. World Health Organization, "Closing the gap in a generation"



Indicates that the stat for the region is higher than Ontario




Indicates that the stat for the region is the same as Ontario



Indicates that the stat for the region is lower than Ontario

SDOH Area	North Region Highlights (York Region, Simcoe County, Mulmur).	Compared to Ontario
Low Income (based on After-Tax Low Income Cut Off – After-Tax LICO)	<p>4.3% live with low income in 2020; 4.4% of children and youth age 0 to 17 live with low income.</p> <p>3.3% of adults age 65 and older live with low income.</p> <p>16% of families fall in the bottom 20% of income compared to families across Canada</p>	<p>▼</p> <p>▲</p> <p>▼</p>
Food Insecurity	<p>16% of York Region households and 16% of individuals were food insecure in 2022.</p> <p>17% of Simcoe-Muskoka households and 23% of individuals were food insecure in 2022.</p>	<p>▶</p> <p>▲</p>
Employment and Education	<p>64% of the population age 15 and older was working or looking for work in 2021 (participation rate)</p> <p>The unemployment rate was 12%.</p> <p>8% of the population age 25 to 64 has not obtained a high school certificate, diploma or degree.</p>	<p>▶</p> <p>▼</p>

SDOH Area	North Region Highlights	Compared to Ontario
Housing and Homelessness	<p>19% of dwelling are rented.</p> <p>45% of tenants live in unaffordable housing</p> <p>27% of tenants live in core housing need – their housing may be unaffordable, overcrowded and/or in need of major repair and they cannot afford to move.</p>	  
Health	<p>65% of York Region residents age 12 and older report having very good or excellent health.</p> <p>60% of Simcoe-Muskoka residents report having very good or excellent health</p>	 
Mental Health and Addiction	<p>66% of York Region residents age 12 and older report having very good or excellent mental health.</p> <p>63% of Simcoe-Muskoka residents report having very good or excellent mental health.</p> <p>13% of York Region residents age 12 and older and 20% of Simcoe-Muskoka residents report heavy drinking at least once a month.</p>	 
Newcomers and Immigration	<p>38% is immigrant or non-permanent resident.</p> <p>43% identify as a visible minority</p>	
Belonging	<p>70% of York Region residents age 12 and older</p> <p>73% of Simcoe-Muskoka residents have a strong sense of belonging to their local community.</p>	
Age	<p>22% of the population are under age 20 in 2021. This is projected to decrease to 20% by 2034.</p> <p>18% are age 65+. This is projected to increase to 23% by 2034.</p>	 

SUMMARY OF AREAS WITH HIGHEST MARGINALIZATION

The following table summarizes analysis of the Ontario Marginalization (ON-Marg) Index maps produced by Public Health Ontario. These maps are based on Statistics Canada 2021 data. The ON-Marg shows differences in marginalization within a region. ON-Marg applies to areas, not individual people. The maps in this report show patterns of marginalization at the Dissemination Area (DA) level. A DA is a small, relatively stable geographic unit composed of one or more adjacent blocks with an average population of 400 to 700 people. The maps can be used to help identify areas that may need more resources or supports.

Simcoe County has developed a 2021 Census online Mapping Tool which may be used to complement the information in this report (gisportal.simcoe.ca/arcgis/apps/sites/#/county-of-simcoe-data-portal/pages/2021-census-tool). York Region has mapping tools which show where community resources can be found (<https://ww4.yorkmaps.ca/>).

In Simcoe County, areas with highest marginalization include parts of Orillia, Barrie, Bradford West Gwillimbury, New Tecumseth, Collingwood, Wasaga Beach, Midland, Penetanguishene and Ramara.

In York Region, areas with highest marginalization can be found throughout the region particularly Richmond Hill, Markham, Vaughan and Newmarket.

Marginalization Dimension

Material Resources – this relates closely to poverty and refers to the inability of individuals and communities to access and attain basic material needs relating to food, housing, clothing and education.

Highest Marginalization

Simcoe:

- Much of Orillia
- Throughout Barrie
- Parts of Midland, Wasaga Beach, Collingwood, Penetanguishene, Midland, Ramara

York:

- Much of Armadale and Milliken
- Parts of Newmarket and Richmond Hill
- Small areas in Woodbridge and Vaughan

Marginalization Dimension

Racialized and Newcomer Populations – this relates to area-level concentrations of people who are recent immigrants and/or visible minority populations. These areas may experience high levels of racialization and xenophobia.

Age and Labour Force – this measure relates to the impacts of disability and dependence. It refers to area-level concentrations of people without income from employment including children, older adults, adults whose work is not compensated and/or those unable to work due to disability. It may also be connected to the economic vitality of the community and the ways that infrastructure and resources are allocated.

Highest Marginalization

Simcoe County has 5 areas that have high concentrations of newcomers and racialized populations. They can be found in:

- Bradford, Barrie, Alliston.

York Region has many areas with high concentrations of newcomers and racialized populations. They can be found in:

- Southern part of York Region
- Aurora
- Newmarket
- Stouffville

In **Simcoe**, areas with high concentrations of people without income from employment include:

- Along the coast of Georgian Bay
- Parts of Alliston, New Tecumseth, Bradford West Gwillimbury, Ramara
- Parts of Barrie and Orillia
- Coldwater, Elmvale, Stayner, Creemore

In **York**, areas of highest marginalization can be scattered throughout the following communities:

- Markham, Richmond Hill, Woodbridge, Vaughan
- Aurora, Newmarket, Whitchurch-Stouffville
- King City

Marginalization Dimension

Households and Dwellings – this measure relates to family and neighbourhood stability and cohesiveness. Stable neighbourhoods promote cohesive communities which provide a positive, socially supportive environment that promotes resiliency, mental health and wellbeing.



Highest Marginalization

In **Simcoe**, areas where there may be less family and neighbourhood stability and cohesiveness include:

- Areas in Collingwood, Midland, Penetanguishene
- Parts of Orillia, Barrie, Ramara
- Stayner, Coldwater, Borden, Bradford

In **York**, areas of highest marginalization are scattered throughout the following communities:

- Vaughan
- Richmond Hill
- Newmarket
- Aurora
- Woodbridge



ACTIONABLE IDEAS BY SDOH

There are many parish social ministries with a pastoral lens across the Toronto region and Catholic Charities funded organizations that are already providing services within each SDOH. Following are some examples of social actions for consideration as well as examples of work being done. Where partnerships are possible, they are encouraged in order to have greater collective impact. The list of agencies supported by Catholic Charities is found following this table.

SDOH	Short Term Doable Action (1-2 years) Options	Long Term Action (3-5 years) Options
<p>Low Income & Food Insecurity</p>	<p>Volunteer within the St. Vincent de Paul program in your parish</p> <p>Within the network of food programs, determine the gaps and develop a food program for marginalized populations</p> <p>Consider being a living wage employer. Paying staff at least \$26.00/hr. (Toronto), \$26.00/hr (Peel Region), \$21.30/hr (Waterloo-Dufferin-Guelph-Wellington), \$26.00/hr (York Region), \$23.05/hr (Simcoe County), \$21.65/hr (Durham)</p> <p>Tap into local food networks, to volunteer in places that address food insecurity</p> <p>Develop a community garden and work with the local network for its distribution</p> <p>Connect with local Catholic Charities funded agencies (see the list below)</p> <p>Coordinate outreach speakers to learn about the work on local agencies</p> <p>Partner with local agencies to run parish-based wellness groups for seniors</p> <p>Coordinate a parish effort to fundraise for meal programs, clothing drives, furniture drives, coats for kids, cribs for kids, and Christmas and easter gifts</p>	<p>Support poverty reduction strategies - such as advocating for policies that address income inequality, improve social safety nets, and promote economic opportunities for all residents. For example, the Toronto Food Policy Council, Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy</p> <p>Develop a knowledge base about the work of local agencies and make referrals to meal programs, emergency shelter, mental health (211), counselling, groups, supports offered in other languages</p>

Short Term Doable Action (1-2 years) Options

Education & Employment

Work with your local Catholic elementary school to:

- Grow community gardens and provide some produce to local food insecurity programs
- Provide a free-tutoring program for students with parishioners/volunteers providing the expertise
- Determine the digital needs of students and create ways to address them (to close the digital gap)
- Provide opportunities for youth and newcomers to gain experience at your workplace

Provide a parish-based binder/bulletin board with job opportunities to encourage parishioners to hire parishioners

As employers, consider ways to provide quality employment

Work with post-secondary schools such as St. Micheal's College to support students living in poverty

Find out what free government employment agencies are in your area and develop a connection to them so that referrals to the agency can be easier

Offer space for education programs such as: parent classes, afterschool programs, and employment clinics

Connect with local Catholic Charities funded agencies (see the list below)

Long Term Action (3-5 years) Options

Continue to advocate for strong, inclusive Catholic education

Work with employment agencies to improve pathways between your organization and employment services

Partner with organization like Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto to advocate against labour exploitation



SDOH

Short Term Doable Action (1-2 years) Options

Long Term Action (3-5 years) Options

Housing & Homelessness

Link with an organization that supports people experiencing homelessness, and learn ways to support their ministry and refer people to them

Consider whether you can have a tenant (such as a post-secondary student) in your home to alleviate the housing challenges

Volunteer with an organization that supports people experiencing homelessness such as the Felix Centre and Good Shepherd Ministries

Find ways to support young people that may be living alone and whose housing may be at-risk

Refer French speakers to Centre d'Accueil Heritage for supports

Connect with local Catholic Charities funded agencies (see the list below)

Form connections with transitional housing services

Participate and/or coordinate educational opportunities for the community such as Symposium on Homelessness

Build a partnership to innovative solutions such as supporting wrap around care for transition housing

Increase your presence at planning tables focused on addressing homelessness and building supportive and affordable housing



SDOH

Short Term Doable Action (1-2 years) Options

Long Term Action (3-5 years) Options

Health, Mental Health & Addiction

Start or continue to promote meditation and centering prayer

Start or continue a health/walking programs in your parish to promote health & well-being

Start or continue to support Alcoholics Anonymous, Substance Abuse Anonymous programs or other related substance use support groups

Connect with local Catholic Charities funded agencies (see the list below)

Volunteers visiting agency clients and /or help with activities and programming

Connect with organizations such as St. Elizabeth Health to learn how to support their work providing end of life care for vulnerable populations

Use parish spaces to offer wellness programs such as exercise classes

Promote activities organized by parishioners, for example, walks/hikes, bike rides, pickle ball

Consider focusing resources to support the health, mental health, and addiction needs of people (e.g., having counsellors, social workers, parish nurses, training staff on Mental Health First Aid)



SDOH

Short Term Doable Action (1-2 years) Options

Long Term Action (3-5 years) Options

Newcomers & Immigration

Work closely with Office of Refugees Archdiocese of Toronto and other cross cultural service agencies to determine how you/parish can support their work, for example through Refugee Committee work

Host conversation circles to increase English language proficiency

Partner with agencies such as RCJ Refugee Centre and Becoming Neighbours to host volunteer/ internship mentoring opportunities of newcomers

Connect with local Catholic Charities funded agencies (see the list below)

Support for connecting individuals served by Catholic Charities funded agencies to various newcomer communities

Continue/develop a plan to sponsor refugees as a parish

Develop staff skills to better serve newcomers and immigrants

Review hiring practices to ensure inclusive hiring practices are used

Community & Belonging

Continue with your volunteer engagement and develop new strategies to reach and involve younger parishioners

Find ways to engage youth and seniors toward community belonging and decreasing isolation, for example hosting seniors' and other wellness group on behalf of Catholic Charities funded agencies

Organize potluck dinners with speakers to encourage groups (women, seniors, parents, youth) to come out and meet each other

Work with organization such as L'Arche Day break to support inclusivity for persons with disabilities

Consider the Truth & Reconciliation Commission and ways in which you can incorporate some recommendations in your life

Educate your team and community about the issues of human trafficking

Connect with local Catholic Charities funded agencies (see the list below)

Create policies regarding equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-discrimination

Consider ways your organization/parish can be involved in the work of anti-human trafficking

Develop a plan toward Truth & Reconciliation

SDOH

Short Term Doable Action (1-2 years) Options

Long Term Action (3-5 years) Options

Children & Youth

Consider after school programs for children

Enhance your youth ministry programming and connect with the Office of Catholic Youth

Connect with Covenant House to find best ways to support their ministry

Develop an understanding of the issues facing young parents and ways to support them

Fundraise for programs such as Angel foundations for learning

Connect with local Catholic Charities funded agencies such as Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto (see full list below)

Offer use of space for camps, programs, and events hosted by Catholic Charities funded agencies

Promote multigeneration socialization for example "Learn to Crochet" evenings

Youth evening that connects with schools to make blankets for the homeless

Consider a plan to develop daycare programs at the parish

Consider ways to hire a coordinator of youth ministry

Consider ways to serve children and youth in your organization



SDOH	Short Term Doable Action (1-2 years) Options	Long Term Action (3-5 years) Options
Seniors	<p>Social programs for seniors such as knitting clubs, prayer groups, brunches with young adults</p> <p>At-home visiting programs for seniors</p> <p>Connect with local Catholic Charities funded agencies such as Mary Centre, and Silent Voice (see full list below)</p> <p>Partner with local agencies to run parish-based wellness groups for seniors</p> <p>Refer French speakers to Centre d'Accueil Heritage for supports.</p> <p>1-1 or small group supports for seniors with disabilities</p> <p>Plan weekend away religious pilgrimages for seniors in your community</p>	<p>Develop a plan to build long term care homes</p> <p>Work with others toward joint advocacy to improve seniors care and services</p> <p>Consider ways to serve seniors in your organization</p>
Environment	<p>Create green space for your community such as shared garden spaces for young parent families</p> <p>Consider ways to decrease plastic use</p> <p>Develop carpool programs / Take public transit to church</p> <p>Connect with local Catholic Charities funded agencies (see the list below)</p> <p>Make commitments in your parish such as using fairtrade coffee, non-disposable dishes, less paper products, etc.</p>	<p>Develop an environmental sustainability plan to decrease your environmental foot print</p> <p>Partner with organization like Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto to advocate against climate change and promote environmental justice</p>

CATHOLIC CHARITIES FUNDED AGENCIES

Organization	Website	Phone number
Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto	https://torontoccas.org/	416-395-1500
Catholic Community Services of York Region	https://ccsyr.org/	905-770-7040
Catholic Crosscultural Services	https://www.cathcrosscultural.org/	416-644-0816
Centre d'Accueil Heritage	https://www.caheritage.org/	416-365-3350
CFS Counselling & Wellness	https://cfssc.ca/	705-726-2503
CFS Durham County	https://www.cfsdurham.com/	905-725-3513 (Oshawa Office)
CFS Peel-Dufferin	https://cfspd.com/	905-450-1608 ext. 112
CFS Toronto	https://www.cfstoronto.com/	416-921-1163 (Central Toronto Office)
Covenant House	https://covenanthousetoronto.ca/	416-598-4898
Houses of Providence - Unity Health	https://unityhealth.to/clinics-services/cardinal-ambrozic-houses-of-providence-long-term-care/	416-285-3742
Journey Home Hospice – Saint Elizabeth Health Care	https://journeyhomehospice.ca/	647-348-4490
Mary Centre	https://www.marycentre.com/	416-630-5533 (Toronto/ York Region Office)
Rosalie Hall	https://www.rosaliehall.com/	416-438-6880
Rose of Sharon	https://roseofsharon.com/	905-853-5514
Society of Sharing	https://societyofsharing.org/	416-413-0380
Silent Voice	https://silentvoice.ca/	416-463-1104
St. Bernadette's Family Resource Centre	http://www.stbernadettesfrc.org/	416-654-9810
St. Michael's Homes	https://www.stmichaelshomes.org/	416-926-8267
Vita Centre	https://vitacentre.org/	905-502-7933