

PROJECT WELL-BEING

Quality of Life on
Prince Edward Island



What is well-being?



Message from Laurie Brinklow

CHAIR, INSTITUTE OF ISLAND STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

We know that people living on Prince Edward Island (PEI) share a legacy of coming together during hard times and building a stronger foundation for a vibrant future. As we emerge from the past two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, we believe that same legacy holds the key to our collective recovery and growth.

PEI can measure economic growth using Gross Domestic Product (GDP), but that measurement/metric doesn't capture how well we are really doing in our lives. We need other ways to determine if and how our island communities are thriving and how people feel about living and working here.

Over the past decade, complementary indicators have emerged nationally such as the University of Waterloo's Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) that help broaden our understanding and assessment of societal well-being and extend into areas such as community vitality, health, democratic engagement, the natural environment, leisure and culture, education or learning, standard of living, and overall personal well-being.

Well-being begins with the belief that our cornerstone value is the principle of "shared destiny": that our society is often best shaped through collective action; that there is a limit to how much can be achieved by individuals acting alone; that the sum of a good society and what it can achieve is greater than the remarkably diverse parts which constitute it.

We hope that people living on Prince Edward Island will take time to review and discuss this report as this is an opportunity to better understand the current and future well-being of our Island and to help foster engaged and vibrant communities.



How was this report created?

In 2021, the Institute of Island Studies at UPEI embarked on a four-year project to better understand and assess the well-being and quality of life of people living on PEI. **Specifically, we wanted to understand the complementary components of well-being and explore how they inspire civic engagement and community vitality.** This report summarizes the activities completed during the first year of the project and outlines what people living on PEI shared regarding what they felt is important for their well-being and quality of life.

The research team gathered input from people living on PEI regarding the complementary components of well-being that were important to them, and which inspired civic engagement and community vitality. **We used the domains and indicators as developed and presented by the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) to guide our research so that we could ascertain the overall direction of change of a given domain and compare it to Canadian averages.** We note that the CIW did not propose a single overall index of well-being. Instead, researchers developed eight domains of well-being and then chose a set of indicators within each domain.

Using the CIW domain and indicator framework, three overlapping methods were used to gather data to explore and determine if and how our communities are thriving and how people feel about living and working on Prince Edward Island.

A well-being survey: Over 800 Islanders 18 years or older completed an on-line survey in the fall of 2021 that asked about their personal well-being and offered them the opportunity to share thoughts on how island communities could be better places to live, work, and play. Most of the questions that made up this survey were closed-ended; in other words, they required participants to choose from among a limited number of

responses provided in advance. To give people an opportunity to go into more depth in their responses, several open-ended questions were also included in this survey.

While the report cannot include all comments, we have summarized the commentary as cross-cutting themes and included representative quotations within the respective domain.

Research on secondary indicators of well-being: Using the eight domains of wellbeing as outlined by the CIW, the research team explored the indicators within each domain to compare PEI to the overall Canadian average. Where possible, we also aimed to determine if and how these indicators for PEI may have changed over time.

Measures of many of these indicators were obtained from data tables published by Statistics Canada and its Public Use Microdata Files (PUMFs) which allow public access to data from various Statistics Canada surveys. In this report, we present data from published data tables as well as the most recent relevant surveys for which a PUMF is available. Data from the General Social Survey (GSS) and the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) were of particular relevance to this analysis.

Focus groups: Sixty-three people participated in six focus groups held virtually in light of public health restrictions in the fall of 2021 and early in 2022. **The purpose of these sessions was to explore concepts of well-being, verify survey findings, and delve deeper into specific domains and indicators.** Session participants were asked a series of questions grouped by the eight CIW domains of well-being and related to the issues that were identified both in the survey and in the secondary indicators as affecting the well-being of Island residents.

What does the 2021 report present?

About the contents

The findings from the research are **organized by the relevant domain of well-being**, eight of which are defined by the Canadian Index of Wellbeing with a ninth domain entitled "Islandness" added by the researchers in response to survey and focus group comments.

In addition, the **relevant indicators within each domain are further explored**. Anonymous quotations from the focus groups are included within each domain section to highlight particular themes, survey data findings, and secondary indicators. Data derived from complementary technical reports are discussed where appropriate and relevant.

Limitations

While the number of responses to the surveys enabled analysis of well-being domains and relevant indicators, we note that since any PEI resident 18 years of age or older could self-select to participate in the survey, one should be cautious about generalizing these results to the population as a whole.

We recognize that there is sampling bias since the people who care about a particular topic are those who responded to the survey. Thus, people who felt high levels of well-being and those who had concerns, took time to complete the survey and provide qualitative commentary.

However, we feel that the sample size and qualitative data gathered are sufficient to draw out the major themes and lived experiences relating to indicators of well-being in the province. Further, we submit that the data provides a rich portrayal of well-being challenges and opportunities while also revealing specific ideas for policy and practice.

What happens in 2023-2024?

The Institute of Island Studies will continue to engage with people living on PEI in 2023 and 2024 to explore well-being and quality of life. We plan to utilize surveys, focus groups and secondary research to further explore the respective domains and indicators.

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How can I get in touch with the Institute of Island Studies?

We would love to hear from you about this report and learn more about your ideas on how we can move forward. If you would like to find out more about the well-being project, you can reach us at

brinklow@upei.ca

(902)894-2881

A PDF version of this report is available at

islandstudies.com

Community Vitality

Community vitality includes attributes found in most of the well-being indicators including health, education, leisure, personal time, and democratic engagement. It is often expressed as a good and caring community where everyone feels safe and inclusive relationships among the residents are fostered. People often frame community vitality under a broad lens of "it's a good place to live" – a value-laden phrase that is shaped by individual or collective perspectives.

In a community that sparkles with vitality, people feel trusted, engaged, and embraced. Members of the community will often state that others look out for them and will help them in a time of need. There is a strong sense of belonging to the community and a feeling of being included in discussions regarding current activities and future plans.

In such communities, people come together to navigate challenges, adapt to new realities, and thrive in a world that is often changing. They identify with the community and feel that their voices are heard, their ideas incorporated, and their lived experiences respected. As a result, there is an overall sense of individual and collective well-being.

2021 survey and overall comparison to Canada

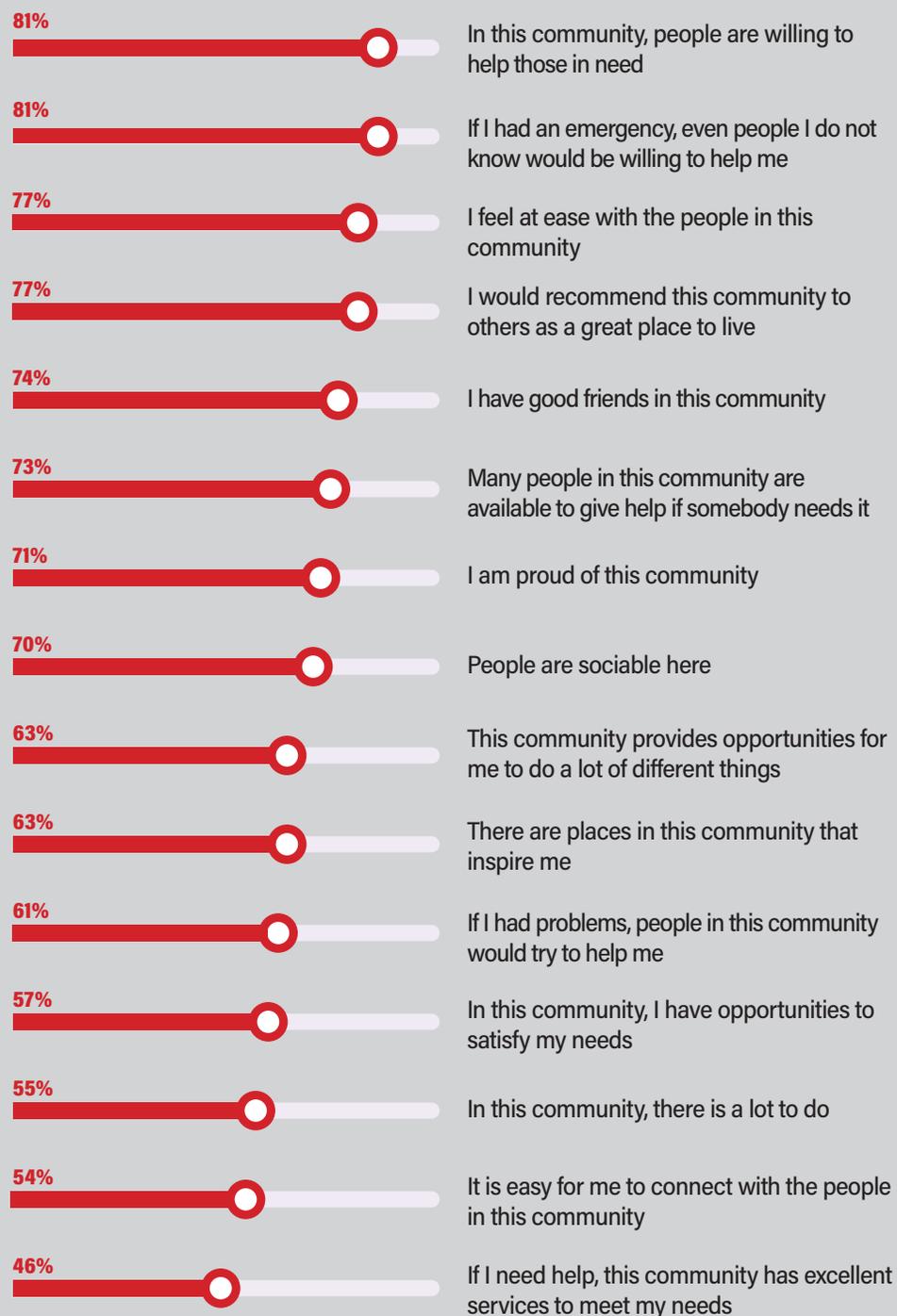
In the comparison data and in the 2021 survey, PEI shows higher levels of well-being than Canada on all eight measures that make up the domain of community vitality as constructed in the Canadian Index of Well-being. Higher levels of well-being are shown in:

- **having a strong sense of belonging to one's community**
- **undertaking formal volunteering with groups or organizations**
- **having five or more close friends**
- **undertaking informal volunteering - providing unpaid help for others**
- **feeling very safe walking after dark**
- **having a low crime severity index**
- **reporting low levels of discrimination based on one's ethno-cultural characteristics.**

These findings are encouraging; however, the open-ended responses from the 2021 survey and comments shared in the focus group sessions show that there are other dimensions to consider and work to be done regarding the community vitality domain on PEI.

2021 survey snapshot

People who agree with or feel very strongly about these characteristics of their community as a place to live.



INDICATOR 1

Social engagement

What you told us:

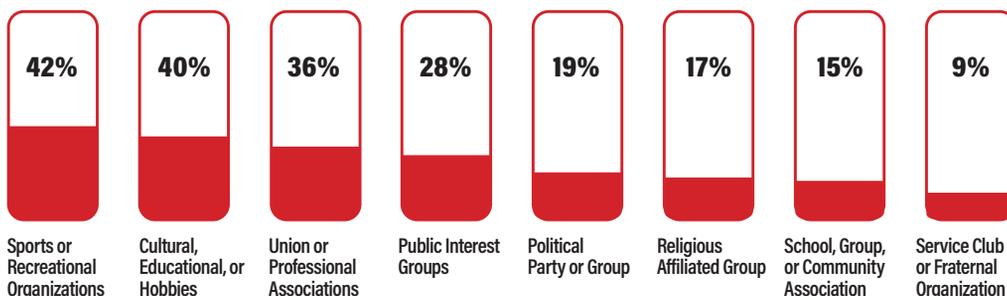


A sense of belonging to a community is an important aspect of community vitality. Many of those surveyed indicated a somewhat or very **strong sense of belonging to their community.**



More than half of the participants indicated that they **volunteered with a non-profit in 2021.**

Where you volunteer:



Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Community Health Survey. Table 45-10-0039-01.

How we compare:

Individuals 12 yrs and older reporting a **very strong sense of belonging to community.**



Loving the Island but living as an outsider

While the survey data and Statistics Canada findings show high levels of a sense of belonging and volunteering, the focus groups and open-ended questions provide a more nuanced portrayal. **Many of the comments shared by participants in the 2021 survey and during the focus group sessions revealed sentiments of loving the Island but feeling like an outsider within the Island community.** People expressed frustration with trying to meet others, being included in community conversations, trying to fit in, feeling unaccepted, and viewing the term "Islander" as reserved for those with a PEI birthplace.

My neighbourhood is full of friendly people. But because I travel outside the community for work, and because I'm not very outgoing, I don't know my neighbours very well. We have conversations over the fences, but that's about it.

I find people are less open to meeting someone new – someone who's from away. They might say hello but never form a real connection unless they know you are born on the Island. It's hard to be included here... I feel very lonely.

INDICATOR 2

Social support

What you told us:

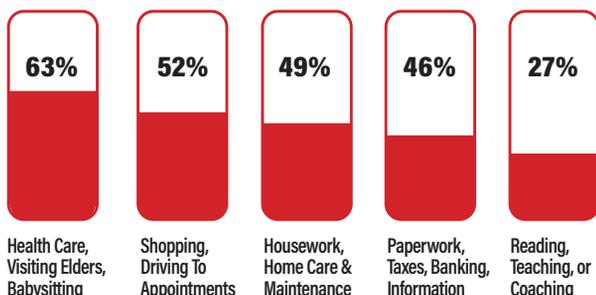


A majority of the survey participants indicated **having meaningful relationships with others including relatives, close friends, and neighbours.** These relationships may be a significant

factor in people's experience of a higher sense of well-being and being connected.

As a further indication of social support, we asked how people provided **unpaid help** to others.

How you help others:



How we compare:

The data shows that **54% of those from PEI and 51% of those from Canada report having five or more close friends.**

However, when this question was changed to include the number of **relatives and close friends**, the percentage of survey participants who report five or more people to whom they feel close was **81% for PEI and 71% for Canada.**

Individuals 12 yrs and older reporting **unpaid help for others.**



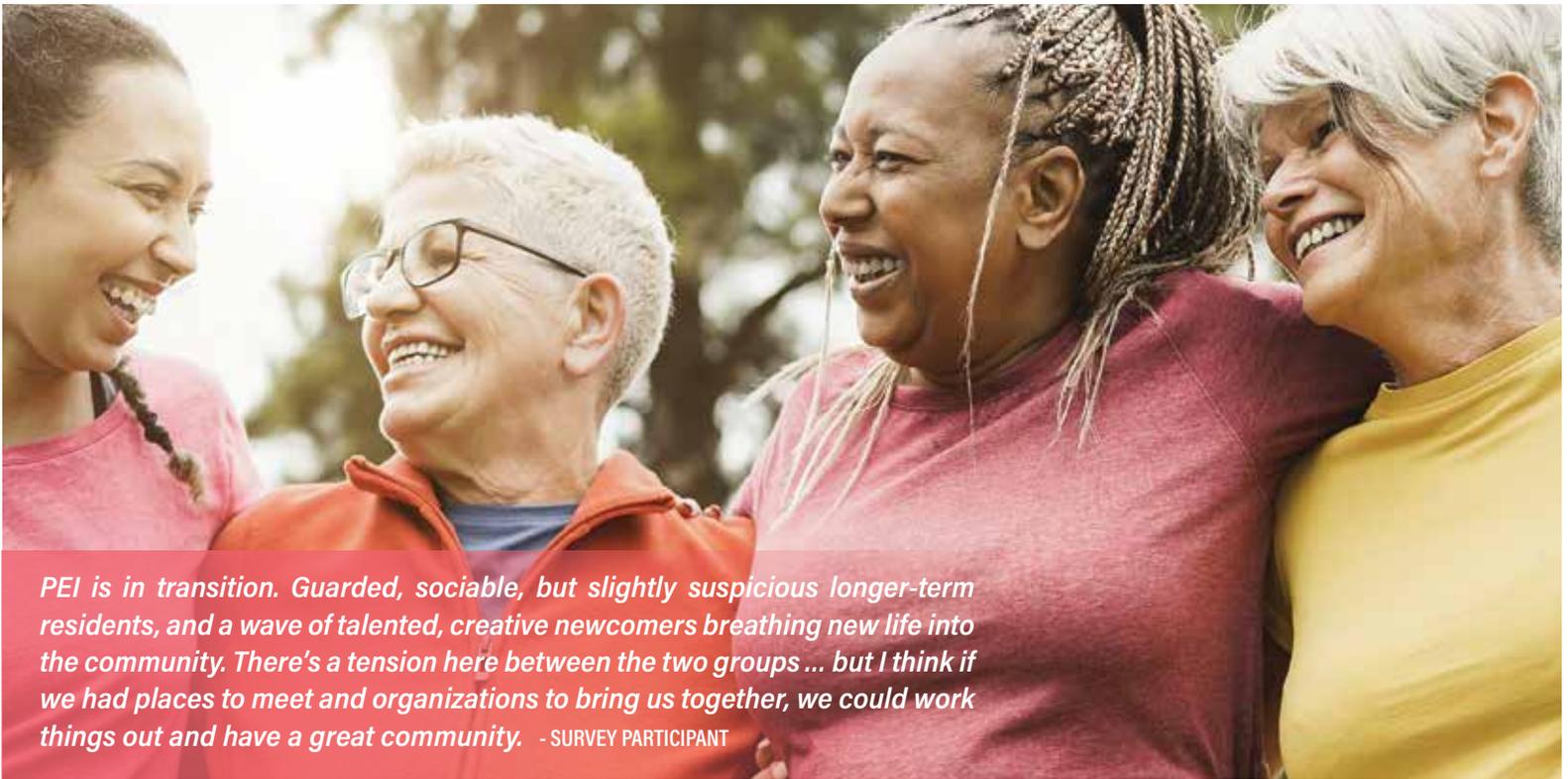
Source: Statistics Canada. General Social Survey. Table 45-10-0039-01.

Seeking places to connect and share

The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting restrictions were mentioned by many as keeping them from being connected to their community. **There is a clear desire to meet others, share ideas, learn, and feel connected.** The lack of spaces to meet and the somewhat guarded nature of long-term "Islanders" was often mentioned as a roadblock to forming meaningful relationships.

I love my community and PEI, but people have nowhere to go to meet their neighbors anymore ... it can be really lonely in a small community. Pre-COVID-19, we were a very active community with a live theatre, a booming seniors centre, a rink, a major festival, etc. We are determined that these events will happen again once COVID-19 is over.

My community is rural-based, and it has changed dramatically over the years from where neighbours would randomly drop in for a visit to not knowing who your neighbour is or how they're doing. We don't have places to meet and the COVID-19 pandemic has not helped communities become closer.



PEI is in transition. Guarded, sociable, but slightly suspicious longer-term residents, and a wave of talented, creative newcomers breathing new life into the community. There's a tension here between the two groups ... but I think if we had places to meet and organizations to bring us together, we could work things out and have a great community. - SURVEY PARTICIPANT

INDICATOR 3

Community safety

What you told us:



In general, people feel safe in PEI communities. When asked “How safe do you feel walking in your neighbourhood at night?”, most participants indicated feeling safe to very safe.



When asked how uncomfortable or out of place they felt in their neighbourhood because of ethnicity, culture, race, skin colour, or sexual orientation, more than 93% of participants indicated rarely or never feeling uncomfortable.*

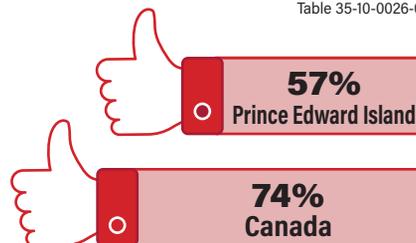
***At first glance, it appears that a low percentage of people feel uncomfortable because of ethnicity, culture, race, skin colour, or sexual orientation.**

However, when we compare these results to the open-ended responses and the focus group comments, the data shows a higher level of discomfort.

How we compare:

Crime severity index for 2020 includes information on the prevalence of crimes, weighted by the seriousness of the crime.

Source: Statistics Canada. Uniform Crime Reporting Survey data on crimes reported to police. Table 35-10-0026-01.



Based upon information on both the percentage of the population who feel safe and the more formal crime severity index, we found that more of the PEI population than in Canada as a whole report that they **feel “very” safe walking alone after dark – 54% of those in PEI versus 45% in Canada.** This finding is similar to our 2021 survey in which noted **52% of respondents reported feeling “very safe” and 85% indicated feeling “safe.”**

Feeling safe but needing friendship

Consistent with the Statistics Canada data, almost all the survey participants and focus group participants spoke of generally feeling safe on PEI. There is some unease with the rise in drug trafficking and resulting increase in thefts but, overall, most people feel safe in their communities. **However, once again, the lack of connection to others and the feeling that many people on PEI “keep to themselves” was stated as an unfortunate caveat to feeling safe.** Perhaps, this sentiment is the result of a COVID-19 shadow hanging over everyone in 2021 and, if so, there is a desire to find ways to connect in the future.

My favourite thing about our neighbourhood is listening to all the kids play together outside. They run from house to house, backyard to backyard. It's very safe here. Also, we're close to my elderly mother-in-law, and I love being able to walk to her house for frequent visits. We are lucky to have connections, but I know others probably are not so fortunate to have family nearby.

Last year in winter my car got stuck on the road, people stopped and helped me to get my car out ... I like it here and feel safe, but I still haven't made any friends.

INDICATOR 4

Social values & norms

What you told us:

There are several measures of social norms and values that are also relevant to a measure of well-being. One measure is the percentage of individuals who report experiencing discrimination based on ethno-cultural characteristics: clearly the higher this percentage, the lower the sense of well-being.

Survey participants were asked to note how often they felt discriminated against because of their ethnicity, culture, race, skin colour, or sexual orientation.*

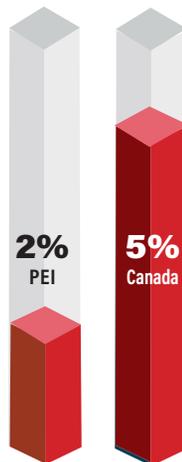


***Once again, it appears that a high percentage of people do not experience discrimination on PEI.**

However, when we compare these results to the comments from the focus groups and shared in the open-ended questions, the data show a somewhat different picture of discrimination on Prince Edward Island.



How we compare:



Individuals 15 yrs and older experiencing discrimination in the past five years based on ethno-cultural characteristics in 2014.

Source: Statistics Canada. General Social Survey, Cycle 28. Tabulated from the Public Use Microdata File.

We note that this data is from 2014 and we wondered how people might feel about discrimination in 2021. **The well-being survey results and data from the focus groups provide for a more current perspective on this indicator.**

Another measure of social norms and values relates to trust. Based on data from the 2013 General Social Survey (GSS), the documents show **a higher percentage of people in PEI feel that most people can be trusted: 63% versus 54% in Canada.** This trust finding is consistent with our 2021 survey results which showed a higher percentage of people feeling connected to their community, able to reach out for help, and having more close friends than the national average.

Overall, I feel safe on PEI. Just wish I could connect with people, but maybe [the reason is that] I don't look like the typical Islander.

- SURVEY PARTICIPANT

Dealing with discrimination and Islander "othering"

The statistical data suggests that PEI is less discriminatory and more trusting than the Canadian average; however, the lived experience of some survey participants reveals that **casual discrimination is evident in the daily life of people living on the Island.** These comments and focus group discussions — especially from individuals who identified within a marginalized group — focused on "the commonplace" and "disturbing" nature of Island discrimination and the feeling that people on PEI did not want to acknowledge its presence. **Even the term "Islander" could be seen as "othering" as it may carry exclusionary meaning to denote people who were born on PEI and have a particular heritage.** That said, several participants and focus group participants spoke highly of "Islanders" and of initiatives to help people understand discriminatory attitudes, practices, and policies; however, they felt these activities needed more support from a broader array of organizations.

PEI is a great place to live with a strong sense of community, helping, and pride in living here ... but I'm not sure if I am always accepted.

Casual racism, homophobia, transphobia, and misogyny are more commonplace than people think but it's hard to speak out against it ... I don't know if Islanders want to confront it.

If my car breaks down or my dog runs away, people would be very willing to help. But if I had a mental health issue, I would not feel comfortable if people knew about it. I'm not sure I could trust folks with that information.

Rural communities in PEI are quick to bring a meal if someone has cancer or something, but it is hard to break into the social cliques in the country. People will say hi at the grocery store, but they don't often invite you into their inner circle of friends ... especially if you look different than they do.

Health

This domain focuses on the health of a population and aims to measure health status, lifestyle and behaviours, personal well-being, mental and physical health, and health care system services and policies.

There are many factors which impact the health of a population including social determinants, health disparities, system accessibility, policies, and practices. **A healthy community has wraparound physical and mental health supports and services, a responsive health care system, and public policies that emphasize wellness and prevention.**

In a healthy community, there is an emphasis on the provision of good health care that belongs to and is accessible by everyone. There is a recognition that determinants such as housing, income, education, and access to public spaces impact health; and there is a stated acknowledgment that disparities based upon race, ethnicity, language, income, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and other factors must be addressed.

2021 survey and overall comparison to Canada

There are several indicators of the "health" of the population used in the CIW from which we were able to obtain relevant information for PEI and for Canada as a whole.

They include:

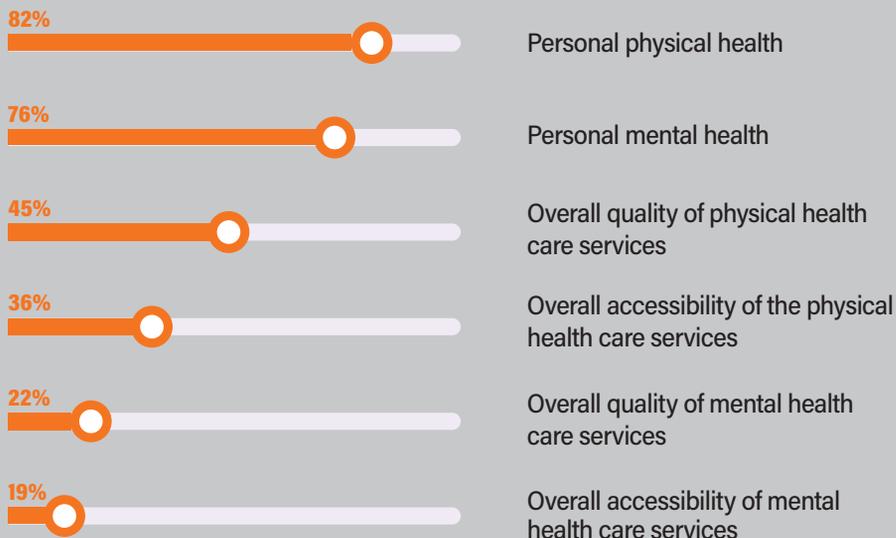
- **Life expectancy at birth**
- **Percentage reporting their overall health as very good or excellent**
- **Percentage reporting their mental health as very good or excellent**
- **Percentage who were immunized against influenza**
- **Percentage with a regular health care provider**
- **Percentage diagnosed with diabetes**
- **Percentage reporting physical limitations that affect their activities**
- **Percentage who are occasional or daily smokers.**

A higher percentage of the population reporting the first five indicators and a lower percentage reporting the remaining three signify higher well-being.

So, what do these measures tell us about the well-being of those in PEI, relative to others in Canada, with respect to health?

2021 survey snapshot

The percentage of people who rated the following health indicators as good to excellent:



Two of the measures show a clear pattern of *higher* levels of health well-being in PEI:

- **Mental health is very good or excellent**
- **The percentage who reported getting immunized against influenza.**

Lower levels of well-being are evident in:

- **More individuals reporting limitations which restrict daily activities**
- **More individuals being diagnosed with diabetes**
- **More individuals being occasional or daily smokers (at least since 2016)**
- **In recent years, fewer people reporting having a regular health care provider.**

No consistent PEI-Canada differences are evident in:

- **The percentage reporting overall health as very good or excellent**
- **Life expectancy at birth; any difference shows a very slightly reduced life expectancy in PEI.**

This community does not provide opportunities and has no facilities for its members to stay healthy, exercise, etc.

- SURVEY PARTICIPANT

INDICATOR 1

Personal well-being

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

What you told us:

Personal health attributes, physical and mental, are critical to any overall measure of well-being and can be assessed at both the individual and societal level. **Factors such as relationships with family and friends, a sense of community, and being connected to services are important components in having an overall feeling of personal well-being.**



When asked about overall physical health, most **survey participants rated their health as good to excellent.**

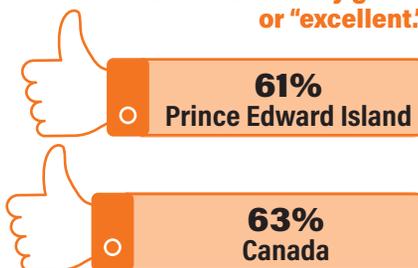


When asked about overall mental health, **a majority of survey participants rated their mental health as good to excellent.**

The lack of doctors here—both family doctors and specialists—is a real major problem and stressor for us. We spend a lot of time driving to Halifax for services we require. This takes time and money with no reimbursement. - SURVEY PARTICIPANT

How we compare:

The majority of the population in PEI and Canada in 2020 say their **overall health is “very good” or “excellent.”**



Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Community Health Survey, Table 13-10-0096-01.

In 2019, there was a drop in the percentage of the population 12 and older in PEI and Canada who said their mental health was “very good” or “excellent.” In other years, including 2020, the percentage giving these reports in PEI is similar to those in all of Canada.

Struggling with mental and physical health

We note that there is an overall trend of fewer people reporting very good or excellent mental health from 2015 to 2020. Further, there is a notable difference between our 2021 survey numbers and the 2020 Statistics Canada data which reveals a **significant drop in people on PEI reporting feeling very good or excellent about their physical and mental health.**

For physical health, the PEI percentage from the 2021 survey data was 45% compared to 61% in 2020. For mental health, the PEI percentage from 2021 survey data was 42% compared to 66% in 2020.

Perhaps the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 resulted in people feeling less confident in their overall physical and mental health. Also, the lack of access to medical services was mentioned by many as exacerbating existing mental and physical health conditions.

I feel unable to access basic health care here, let alone anything proactive or preventative for my mental health. I am worried that my overall health is getting worse, but I have nowhere to go for help.

Lack of doctors, lack of specialists, and a restrictive list of meds that are covered provincially make me concerned that despite loving my community, I may need to move away.

INDICATOR 2

Functional health

What you told us:

Functional measures of health help determine how well people can carry out the necessary tasks of daily life with few limitations for health reasons.

We asked several questions relating to how much people agreed or disagreed with the following statements about their own health during the past week:



I was able to perform all my daily living activities (agree to strongly agree)



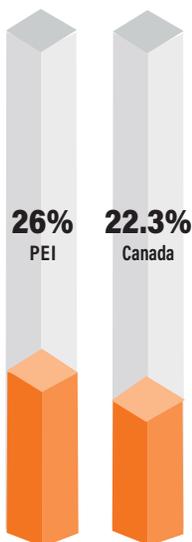
Physical pain prevented me from doing what I needed to do (agree to strongly agree)



I could not get going (agree to strongly agree)

How we compare:

The data provides some evidence that more people in PEI than elsewhere in Canada report **disabilities that restrict their daily activities.**



Percentage of the population 15 yrs. and older who **one or more disabilities.**

Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Survey on Disabilities, 2017.

Managing chronic pain

The survey findings suggest that while many people are able to carry out their daily tasks with relative ease, **there are a significant number of people on PEI for whom physical pain and the ability to function are daily challenges.**

Even in some pain, you get your chores done. It just takes a little longer ... but I wish people were more understanding.

I deal with multiple chronic illnesses and while my conditions are currently fairly well managed, it has taken many years of fighting with the health care system to get to that point. And I was only able to do so because I have a favourable situation—lots of time off work, a good salary, a supportive family and friends, the money and flexibility to travel to other places for care. Not everyone is so fortunate.

I try to keep going despite daily physical pain, but some days, I feel it's hard to get my body moving.

INDICATOR 3

Lifestyle & behaviour

What you told us:

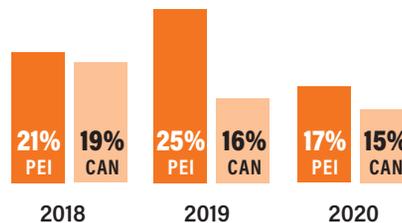
Lifestyle and behaviour clearly affect health and are indicators of well-being. The ability to enjoy good dietary practices, engage in regular physical activity, and refrain from smoking are factors that impact health.

We asked several questions relating to how much people agreed or disagreed with the following statements about their own lifestyle and behaviour during the past week:

-  **I regularly ate healthy meals** (agree to strongly agree)
-  **I got good quality exercise** (agree to strongly agree)
-  **I had a lot of energy** (agree to strongly agree)

How we compare:

Another health measure that provides an indication of well-being, or more precisely, a lack of well-being, is the prevalence of smoking in the population. Based on Statistics Canada data from 2018 to 2020, **PEI consistently has a larger percentage of people who smoke than the rest of Canada.**



Percentage of the population 18-34 yrs. who are daily or occasional smokers.

Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Community Health Survey. Table 13-10-0096-02.

Having enough to eat and being able to exercise

The survey findings suggest that while many people eat healthily, there is a concerning number—**approximately 20%—who are not able to enjoy healthy meals.** Further, there are a significant number of people on PEI—**40%—who do not get good-quality exercise.**

It is hard to walk anywhere. There are no sidewalks. Everyone drives—especially in the winter.

I just can't afford to eat and pay my rent, so I skip meals each week.

My rural community provides opportunities for me to promote my own wellness (as an able-bodied person) through outdoor walks/beach/skis/etc. but provides zero formal health care services. If you are healthy, you can live here, but, if not, you have to move.

INDICATOR 4

Public health

What you told us:

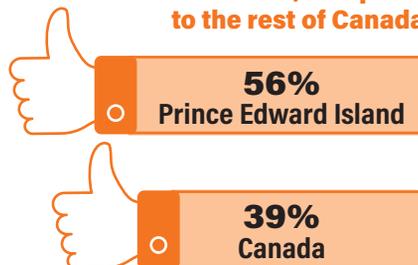
Public health systems are essential for the regulation and promotion of health within a community. Immunization rates are a key metric of a public health system's ability to prevent disease and vaccinations are top of mind for many people these days.

-  **Our 2021 survey did not ask specific questions relating to vaccination status; however, as of March 2022, PEI did report that most of the population had two doses of a COVID vaccine.**



How we compare:

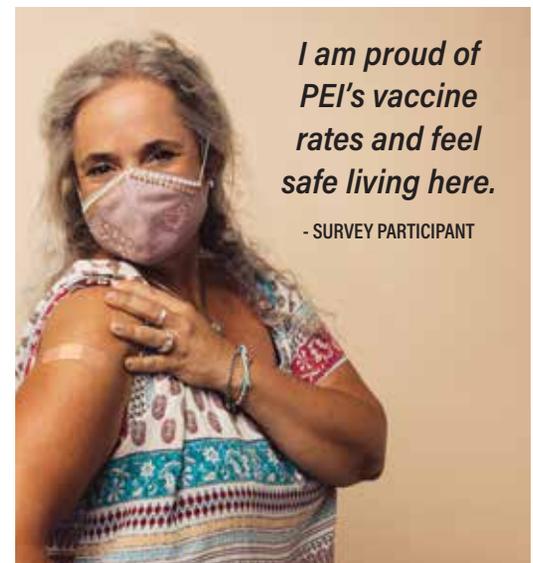
There is a clear pattern of a higher percentage of those in PEI than in Canada as a whole reported being vaccinated. In 2020, the last year for which we have data, **more of those 12 and older in PEI reported receiving the influenza immunization, compared to the rest of Canada.**



Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Community Health Survey. Table 13-10-0096-02.

The COVID pandemic also demonstrated that a higher percentage of people in PEI than in Canada as a whole received the COVID vaccination.

As of March 2022, 94% of Island residents were fully vaccinated, compared to 84% of Canadians.



I am proud of PEI's vaccine rates and feel safe living here.

- SURVEY PARTICIPANT

Promoting vaccines helps us all

I know some people haven't liked being locked down and dealing with vaccine mandates, but I think we're in a better place—health-wise—because of vaccinations.

My local pharmacy is always great about asking me if I have the flu shot.

This is a great place to grow old and enjoy life if you can maintain your health.

- SURVEY PARTICIPANT



INDICATOR 5

Health care

What you told us:

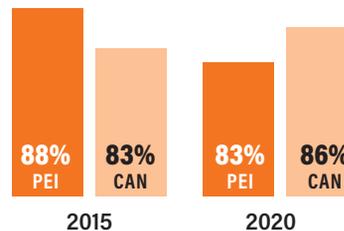
Access to health care is an important component of well-being, one that receives significant media and government attention. Canadians and people living on PEI place significant value on an accessible, publicly funded, and publicly administered health care system.

-  Stated that the overall **accessibility of the physical health care systems** in the community was good to excellent
-  Stated that the **overall accessibility of the mental health care systems** in the community was good to excellent
-  Stated that the **overall quality of the physical health care services** in the community was good to excellent
-  Stated that the **quality of mental health services** was good to excellent

How we compare:

Statistics Canada data show that access to a regular health care provider has been fairly consistent in Canada as a whole, with access being more varied in PEI.

Given the small size of the population in PEI and the corresponding small number of health care providers, a small change in the absolute numbers of health care providers would have a major impact on these percentages. For instance, in 2022, approximately 86% of people have access to a regular health care provider.



Percentage of the population 12 yrs. and older with a **regular health care provider**.

Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Community Health Survey. Table 13-10-0096-02.

Accessing an overstretched health system

The survey numbers are sobering and indicate an **overall dissatisfaction with the quality of physical and mental health services on PEI and a feeling that the accessibility of these services is inadequate.**

Trying to use a walk-in clinic service on any given day is next to impossible. I often end up waiting at the hospital's emergency/out-patients because everything else in the area is closed.

It can be very difficult for newcomers to access adequate health and mental health services here. It takes multiple years to find an on-island family doctor. Very frustrating.

Tens of thousands of people on the wait list for a family doctor is shameful but I understand it's difficult to attract doctors here.

It would be great to see some services in health hubs around the province instead of all centralized.

INDICATOR 6

Life expectancy

How we compare:

Over the past several decades, Canadians have made consistent gains in life expectancy and have one of the longest life expectancies of any nation in the world.

-  **On average, there is very little difference between the life expectancy rates on PEI and Canada with both averaging close to 82 years.**

Wanting to age in place

There needs to be more access to walk-in clinics in my community. There is only one walk-in clinic for a large community and that clinic is not up to the standards of our medical system. I'm not sure I can stay here as I get older.

We need doctors! So many Islanders without a doctor. This causes incredible stress for many. My mom has been trying to figure out how to have a prescription filled since her doctor retired. She calls to get into the walk-in clinic, but they are already full. She is 73 years old and should not have to worry about where she will get her health care needs taken care of. She is stressed; therefore I am also stressed.

I love my community, but my partner has been waiting for 6 years to get a family doctor. He is 69 years old and needs someone to see him regularly.

Democratic Engagement & Governance

In communities that have a high degree of democratic engagement, citizens actively take part in the democratic process to express their views and aim to foster good governance using political institutions, organizations, and activities.

In these societies, local, provincial, and federal governments build strong relationships rooted in trust and shared responsibility. There are opportunities for citizens to participate in decision-making and there is an overriding concern for democratic values that foster inclusiveness, transparency, and trust. **People feel their votes count and their voice is important. They express confidence and respect for the political process and feel that their political leaders listen to their concerns and are open to meeting with them.**

2021 survey and overall comparison to Canada

There are several indicators for democratic engagement and governance used in the CIW from which we were able to obtain relevant information for PEI and for Canada as a whole:

- **Ratio of voters to eligible voters**
- **Percentage who volunteer for an advocacy, law, or political group**
- **Percentage of Members of Parliament who are women**
- **Percentage with confidence in the federal parliament.**

Based on the results from the democratic and engagement indicators, PEI has *higher* levels of well-being in terms of:

- **Being likely to vote**
- **Being likely to volunteer for a law, advocacy, or political group.**

The other two measures for which we have data seem to indicate *lower* well-being in PEI, specifically:

- **Having confidence in the federal parliament**
- **Having a large percentage of female MPs. The small number of federal ridings in PEI limits this comparison. For two of the nine years reported, the one female in PEI brought the percentage of representation in PEI to 25% female, a match for the Canadian figure.**



2021 survey snapshot

We asked people to indicate if they participated in the following civic participation activities:



INDICATOR 1

Civic participation

What you told us:

Civic participation, including participation in democratic elections, is another component of well-being. Voter turnout, involvement in local affairs, and interest in governance are indicators of the vibrancy of civic participation.

As noted in the domain snapshot, survey participants seem to actively express their voice on local issues and are interested in taking part in local events.

We also asked participants to indicate their level of interest in municipal, provincial, and federal politics.

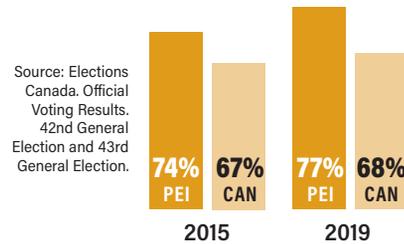
-  **55%** Municipal politics (some interest to a great deal of interest)
-  **80%** Provincial politics (some interest to a great deal of interest)
-  **75%** Federal politics (some interest to a great deal of interest)

Clearly, there is a great deal of interest in federal and provincial politics and less for municipal activities, although a majority of respondents are interested in local affairs.

How we compare:

When we measure the number of people who vote as a percentage of eligible voters, **PEI rates higher than in Canada as a whole.**

The percentage of people who vote out of the total number of eligible voters, PEI and Canada.



Percentage who volunteer for a law, advocacy, or political group, PEI and Canada in 2018

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, Cycle 33. Tabulated from the Public Use Microdata File.

Wanting to participate in decision-making but not sure how

People want to be more engaged in local and provincial decision-making but are unsure of how to get involved. The impact of COVID-19 gathering limits has also left many people feeling left out of local affairs and they are seeking to reconnect.

I wouldn't know how to start participating but I would like to be more involved.

Government needs to provide more opportunities for citizens to be able to comment on public policy initiatives prior to implementation.

We are a very small municipality. The Council is very approachable. A monthly information magazine is distributed to all residents.

I think COVID and gathering limits have impacted the general public with attending local meetings. We will have to learn how to come together again.

INDICATOR 2

Leadership

What you told us:

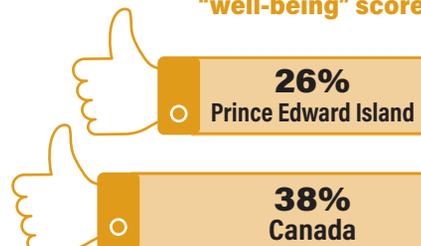
Political leadership has considerable influence on well-being since political leaders can either stifle engagement and leave people feeling that their voice is of no value, or they can create a culture that promotes active involvement in the democratic process. Ensuring that a diversity of perspectives is heard and that citizens feel respected are indicators that identify the effectiveness of political leadership, as well as the support citizens have for their leaders.

 **52%** We asked survey participants to assess the effectiveness of the current programs and services provided by their local government. Of those who responded, **52% indicated that the programs made them feel better to much better off.** Given the breadth of government programs and services, 52% is a good response since not all programs are universal and many target particular groups.

How we compare:

One measure of "leadership" included in the CIW is the percentage of women in federal parliament. PEI has not, in recent years, elected a female to the federal parliament. The last elected was Gail Shea, 2008-2015, so there is limited information for a comparison.

Comparison data gives some information on the percentage of those in PEI, compared to the whole of Canada, who say they have "quite a lot" or a "great deal" of confidence in the federal parliament. **If high levels of confidence mean higher well-being, PEI shows a lower "well-being" score.**



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey 2013, Cycle 27. Tabulated from the Public Use Microdata File.

Needing more communication from leaders

Unlike the Statistics Canada data which showed low confidence in leadership, many survey respondents spoke well of their municipal and provincial officials but felt that **leaders were not always clear in keeping them up to date.** Further, there was a widespread sentiment regarding the challenge of finding people to be involved in municipal councils and **suggestions for wider-scale municipalization as a way to ensure more viable and democratic local government.**

It would be nice to see more community members running for municipal positions. Our community is searching for Municipal Councillors but cannot get them, so we have the same stale perspectives year after year.

Rural volunteer councils face difficulties—few people want to run for office, tax income is very little, and there is limited capacity to run programs or consult with ratepayers. Wider-scale municipalization would result in more viable and democratic local government, including land use management, but this is not supported by the province.

Natural Environment

Quite often, the natural environment is discussed within the context of sustainability and climate change. However, environmental conditions are equally important for the well-being of a community and its population. Environmental resources not only support our economy, but they also provide the outdoor solace spaces we need, the ingredients for our medicines, the drinking water we require, and, in many instances, the core components of religious or spiritual beliefs.

For many people, the natural environment is a crucial component of their well-being and they will speak passionately about the need for its assets to be protected and enjoyed. For this report we are not focused on sustainability per se, but rather, on related indicators that are important to people such as clean air and water, access to wilderness, energy production, and the natural resources that support the provincial economy.

2021 survey and overall comparison to Canada

There are three CIW indicators of the “environment” for which we were able to locate data for comparison of PEI with all of Canada. These are:

- Levels of primary energy production
- Levels of residential energy consumption
- Acres of farmland per resident.

It is not clear whether more or less energy production is an indicator of “well-being.” PEI has:

- Lower levels of energy production
- Higher levels of residential energy consumption
- More farmland per resident than in Canada as a whole but given the vast areas of Canada that could not be farmed, it is not clear how to interpret this result.



2021 survey snapshot

We asked survey participants how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statements about the natural environment in their area. The percentages noted represent those responses that checked agree, strongly agree, or very strongly agree.



INDICATOR 1

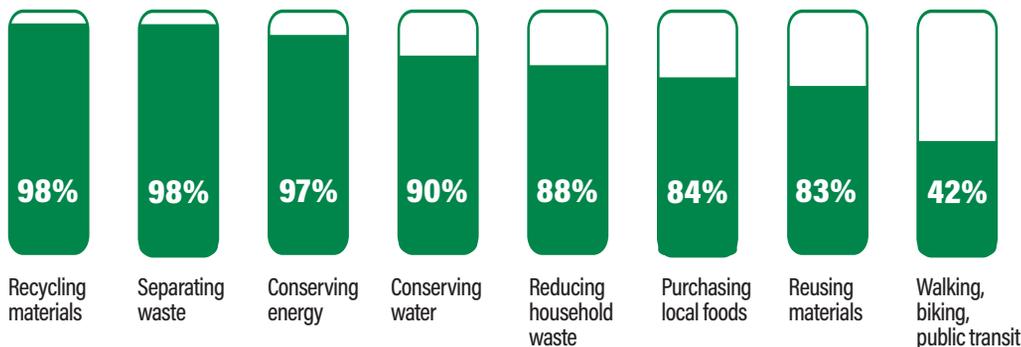
Energy

What you told us:

This indicator looks at the availability of energy sources and the manner in which they are used and produced. The CIW research indicates that compared to many other countries, Canadians use considerable amounts of energy to travel from place to place, to transport goods, to heat homes and workplaces, and to power communities and industries.

The survey responses indicate that many Islanders strive to recycle materials, conserve water, reduce waste, and reuse items when possible. Where people struggle regarding energy use relates to the prevalence of using a car for transportation rather than other forms of transit. During the focus groups and in the open-ended responses, many people noted that an automobile is necessary on PEI because of limited or non-existent public transportation and the lack of services in rural communities.

How you conserve energy:

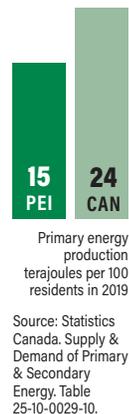


Percentages represent those who indicated that they do so regularly, quite often, or all of the time.

How we compare:

There are two relevant measures here: energy production and energy use.

The fact that energy production per 100 residents is higher for Canada as a whole is likely because many other provinces produce energy to export to other countries (hydro-electricity, petroleum products, coal, etc.), while PEI does not have these extensive exports. It is worthwhile noting that the jobs in the export energy sector are higher-paying jobs, and this higher salary will have an effect on economic well-being. The impact of energy production on overall well-being in PEI and Canada merits more discussion, especially as the Island invests in clean technologies.



Source: Statistics Canada, Supply & Demand of Primary & Secondary Energy, Table 25-10-0029-10.



Residential energy consumption (gigajoules per household in 2015)

The second measure we have of the contribution of energy to well-being is residential energy use. We could only find data on household energy use for two years: 2013 and 2015. In both years, PEI households had higher levels of energy consumption than was true for Canada as a whole.

Source: Statistics Canada, Households and the Environment Survey, Table 25-10-0060-01.

Wanting more active transportation routes and green energy incentives

Survey participants spoke of their concern for the natural environment, their need for active transportation routes especially in rural communities, their hope for more incentives to encourage electric vehicle usage, and their desire for an island-wide public transportation system.

We need more green incentives to help people improve the energy efficiency of their homes, especially older homes.

More bike infrastructure and better sidewalk clearing in the winter would help more people walk and bike to work and school and reduce car use.

As I live in a rural community, driving to the city is necessary for certain activities. Having a public transit and or a connection of cycling routes would be very helpful.

INDICATOR 2

Biotic resources

What you told us:

Biotic resources refer to the number and distribution of species that make up all living things on the planet from animals to humans. Examples include forests, animals, birds, fish, and marine organisms. Biotic indicators refer to population levels of specific species, as well as the sustainability of land and marine ecosystems.

In our survey, we noted that **95.3% of people feel strongly that they have a personal responsibility to protect the biotic resources of the natural environment. However, their participation in events organized by local groups to protect the environment is not as significant (21%).** While this low level of participation could have been impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, many survey participants noted they had limited awareness of local/provincial organizations and activities.

How we compare:

Only one of the two measures of Biotic Resources provides accessible information at the provincial level, and that measure is total farmland. Data below is from 2016.



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture, Table 32-10-0153-01.



Historically, the Census of Agriculture shows an ongoing decline in farmland acres in PEI and an ongoing population increase. Thus, there has been an ongoing decline in farmland acres per resident.

Worrying about loss of green space and pesticide use

Many survey respondents expressed concern over pesticide use and what they perceive as development projects that are reducing green space.

Absolutely love the natural environment, would like it better if there were no pesticides during farming season. The air and water would be better.

In my experience, the natural environment in our community is extremely important until it's wanted to be exploited by business interests.

I live in a rural area beside a commercial farming operation. I am concerned about the pesticides used affecting my well water and air quality.

Leisure and Culture

This domain explores how people engage with the arts, culture, and recreation. Leisure and cultural activities help shape our lives and can improve our well-being by contributing to better physical and mental health. The benefits from such activities continue throughout our lives and provide opportunities for us to relax, socialize, and learn.

The range of activities and opportunities we pursue and enjoy benefit our overall satisfaction and quality of life.

These activities are defined, measured, and understood by a range of social and cultural indicators including physical activity, perception, expenditures, and accessibility.

2021 survey and overall comparison to Canada

We are able to compare information on three of the indicators that the CIW proposes as measures of wellbeing in terms of leisure and culture.

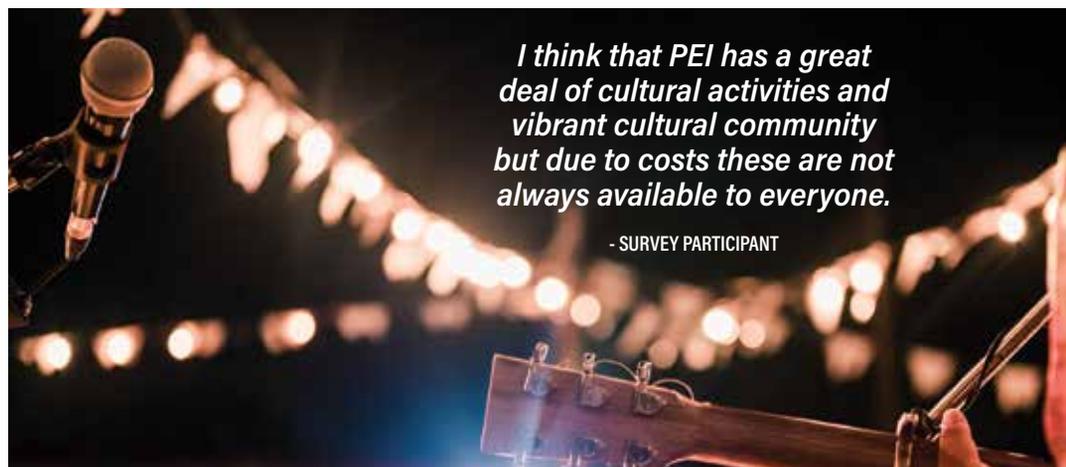
- **Percentage who report vigorous physical activity**
- **Average household expenditure on recreation and leisure**
- **Percentage of household income spent on recreation and culture**

Not available were measures of:

- **Average percentage of time spent on social leisure activities**
- **Average percentage of time spent on arts and culture activities**
- **Average numbers of hours volunteering for culture and recreation organizations**
- **Average nights away on vacation trips to destinations 80 km or more from home.**

For the other three measures we have, the overall pattern seems to be less participation in leisure and culture activities in PEI than elsewhere in Canada; that is lower well-being in terms of:

- **Participation in vigorous physical activity (except in 2020)**
- **Average spending on recreation and culture which could be accounted for by the easy and free access to parks and trails**
- **Percentage of household income spent on recreation and culture (although the pattern varies, and the differences are small for this last measure).**



I think that PEI has a great deal of cultural activities and vibrant cultural community but due to costs these are not always available to everyone.

- SURVEY PARTICIPANT

2021 survey snapshot

We asked survey participants how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statements about their leisure experiences and access to services. The percentages noted represent the share of participants who agree, strongly agree, or very strongly agree.



INDICATOR 1

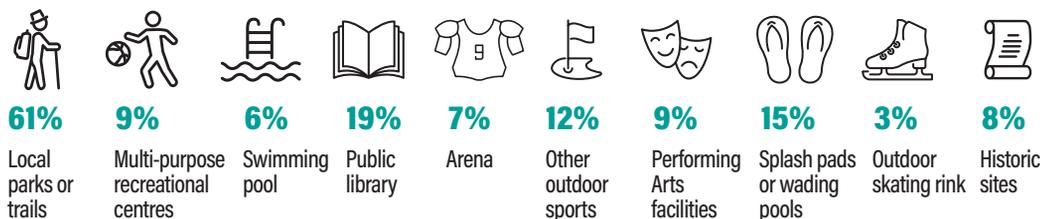
Social and cultural participation

What you told us:

There are a number of well-being measures that indicate active participation in social or cultural events. Participation in leisure, recreation, physical activity, arts, and cultural activities contributes to better physical and mental health, and creates opportunities for socializing, relaxation, and learning new things.

We asked participants to tell us how often they visited the following recreational or cultural sites during the past year. We note that the COVID-19 pandemic may impact responses.

Where you went for fun:



It is not surprising that parks and trails were cited as the most visited sites in 2020. The restrictions on indoor activities and gatherings undoubtedly limited access to many of the other locations. As pandemic restrictions are lifted, it will be interesting to see if the numbers rise in the use of indoor culture and leisure facilities.

Navigating COVID-19 restrictions

Many survey participants commented on how COVID-19 had altered their participation in social and cultural gatherings and their access to physical fitness activities. Most indoor spaces had restrictions and, even when open, people noted that they did not feel comfortable in these settings despite stating that they missed the social companionship of others.

One bright spot was the availability of parks and trails on PEI during the pandemic and how that outdoor access was crucial to mental and physical health.

Most activities that I usually am involved in have been cancelled this year because of COVID. But the outdoors was a godsend! Parks and walking trails are very healthy places to improve physical and mental well-being.

I typically would participate in many more cultural and recreational activities/events. COVID-19 has definitely impacted my participation in these events.

I certainly participated in a lot more events prior to COVID. I have found it hard to get re-engaged.

- SURVEY PARTICIPANT

How we compare:

Moderate exercise is defined as an activity that causes a person to breathe harder and sweat at least a little. The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines (CPAG) defines physically active as having at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more.

From 2015 to 2018, a lower percentage of those in PEI than in Canada as a whole report this level of physical activity—generally 4% lower than the rest of Canada. There is no information available at the Canada level for 2019. **However, in 2020, more of those in PEI than in Canada overall report engaging in moderate or vigorous physical activity in the last week (see below).**

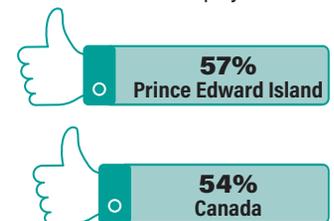
This 2020 finding is interesting as it is the first year in which PEI's level of moderate physical activity was higher than the rest of Canada. Perhaps this increase can be linked to more people using outdoor trails and parks.

Despite this 2020 increase, there remain 43% of the Island population who may not be meeting the necessary physical activity levels to remain healthy according to the CPAG; namely, participating in at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more.

However, this statistic may overlook the percentage of people on PEI who work in physically demanding jobs (e.g., fishery, farming, construction) and who are meeting or exceeding the CPAG target but may not exercise outside of their employment.

Individuals 18 yrs & over, percentage who, in an average week, participate in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 150 minutes.

Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Community Health Survey, Table 13-10-0096-02



Perceptions and experience

What you told us:

This indicator reveals perceptions people have regarding their leisure experiences and the meaning it holds for them in relation to quality of life. **The responses also indicate why people participate, what needs are being met through participation, and how leisure and culture participation benefits them.**

Using a scale from Very Strongly Disagree to Very Strongly Agree, we asked survey participants how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statements about their leisure experiences. The percentages noted represent the share of participants who checked agree, strongly agree, or very strongly agree.

- 93% My leisure activities help me relax
- 92% My leisure activities help me relieve my stress
- 91% My leisure activities contribute to my emotional well-being
- 85% My leisure activities help me stay healthy
- 70% My leisure activities help me to learn about myself
- 68% I participate in leisure activities that develop my physical fitness
- 67% My leisure activities provide me with opportunities for social interaction with others
- 66% I participate in leisure activities that restore me physically
- 55% My leisure activities provide opportunities to try new things
- 53% My leisure activities are most enjoyable when I can connect with others
- 52% My leisure activities have helped me to develop closer relationships with others

How we compare:

Some of the leisure and culture measures that were highlighted in the CIW are not available for PEI, due to provincial sample sizes in the relevant survey and the fact that the relevant activity is reported by a very small percentage of the population. In those cases, the number of individuals reporting the activity is too low to warrant publication.

This situation applies to the measure of average percentage of time spent socializing. This measure looks at time in the last day spent socializing, involvement in religious and organizational activities, including voluntary work for an organization, religious activities, voting, jury duty, coaching, or administering sports. **The only data we have are for the 2015 Statistics Canada, General Social Survey which show that those in the Atlantic region spend 5% of their time on these activities, compared to 4% in Canada as a whole.**

Another measure for which this constraint exists is the percentage of time spent in active leisure activities. For this indicator, "active leisure" includes drawing, painting, crafting, playing an instrument, dancing, collecting, knitting, photography, board and card games, walking, pleasure driving, birdwatching, writing such as letters, cards, books, poems, general computer use, video games, Internet, and art or music production. **Again, there are only data for 2015 for the Atlantic region versus Canada and the numbers are similar to the previous indicator—5% of those in the Atlantic region and 4% of those in all of Canada report these activities.**

Linking leisure and culture with overall health

Most survey respondents spoke of the crucial importance that leisure and cultural activities have on their mental and physical well-being and their overall health. **Many noted that leisure activities should be treated as part of the health system.**

Leisure activities allow me time to decompress and refocus.

These activities are critical to my well-being. As a province, we should have rebates or tax incentives for leisure activities on a sliding scale for income.

Leisure activities should be treated as a health service.

If our community focused on teaching the importance of inclusive physical, leisure, and recreational activities, I'm convinced our health systems would be less overloaded.

- SURVEY PARTICIPANT



INDICATOR 3

Opportunities

What you told us:

Access to recreation facilities, open spaces and parks, and other arts, culture, and recreation sites is an important component of leisure and culture opportunities.

Using a scale from Very Strongly Disagree to Very Strongly Agree, we asked survey participants how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statements about access to the following facilities. The percentages noted represent those responses that checked agree, strongly agree, or very strongly agree.

Local parks and recreational/cultural facilities seem to be accessible and welcoming. However, the survey responses suggest that childcare services are limited and that recreational and cultural programs are not always offered during convenient times.

- 81% There is a local park nearby that is easy for me to get to from my home
- 75% The recreational and cultural facilities are easy for me to get to
- 66% The recreational and cultural facilities are very welcoming to me
- 51% There are places nearby where I can take classes for my own interest
- 35% Recreational and cultural programs are offered at times convenient to me
- 7% Childcare is available at the recreational facilities if I need to use it

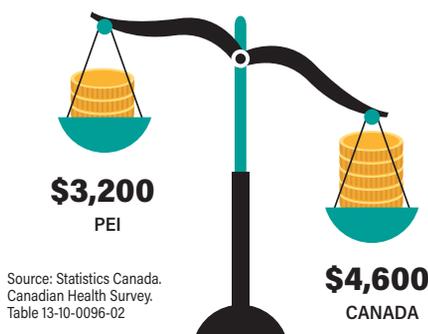


How we compare:

Another indication of involvement in recreation and culture is average expenditures per household on cultural and recreation activities. Expenditures on cultural and recreation activities include fees to use recreational facilities, attend sporting events, movies, and performing arts events, and participate in group tours. **From 2013 to 2019, households on PEI spent less each year than the Canadian average on such activities.**

Given the fact that household incomes are lower in PEI, it is perhaps not surprising that household expenditures on these items tend to be lower than for the Canadian average.

Average household expenditure on culture and recreation in 2019:



Perhaps a better indicator of financial investment in culture and recreation is the percentage of household spending on recreation and culture. Here we see that there is little difference between the spending patterns in PEI and Canada as a whole.

In 2019, the Canadian average is 5% and the PEI average is 4.2%.



Being broke because I can't afford housing and food for my family—this prevents me from partaking in many leisure and rec activities which I enjoy that are available in my community.

- SURVEY PARTICIPANT

Improving accessibility

People want access to recreation facilities, open spaces and parks, and other arts, culture, and recreation sites as they are important components of their well-being. **However, for many survey respondents, the cost of leisure and cultural activities prevents them from taking part.** Further, several people felt that a provincial, arm's length organization focused on arts and culture would improve accessibility.

Cost keeps me from participating in many activities that I enjoy or are learning opportunities (typically in the arts). There needs to be more low-cost/free family-friendly activities available.

This survey is slanted to the privileged. Poor people do not have access to paid leisure activities and there are very few free leisure activities in PEI compared to other provinces.

Education and Learning

Education is a key component of thriving communities as it leads to the growth and development of the populace and shapes society into a better world. Education is a lifelong process and plays an important role in pre-school arrangements such as childcare and early childhood education and continues to high school, college, university, apprenticeship, and professional training. **People who participate in lifelong learning and attain higher levels of education are often more employable and likely to earn more.**

In essence, education is a critical resource and a predictor of our health, democratic participation, and our ability to function and adapt in society. Given its lifelong importance, the education and learning domain includes measures of educational achievement such as overall academic achievement, attainment, and participation, along with basic educational knowledge and skills indicators.

2021 survey and overall comparison to Canada

We present six measures of educational well-being as indicated by:

- **Ratio of students to educators in public schools**
- **Average expenditure per student in public and private schools**
- **Percentage of the population participating in education-related activities**
- **Average undergraduate tuition fees**
- **Percentage of the population with a high school diploma or equivalent**
- **Percentage of the population with a university degree.**

Considering the available measures, we see that PEI has a slightly higher level of well-being for:

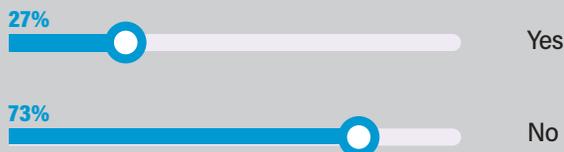
- **The ratio of student to educators in public schools, and, until recently,**
- **Lower undergraduate tuition fees.**

However, the other measures of educational well-being suggest lower levels of well-being for PEI:

- **Average expenditure per student in public and private schools**
- **Percentage of the population participating in education-related activities.**

2021 survey snapshot

We asked survey participants, "During the past year, have you taken any courses?"



- **Percentage of the population with a high school diploma or equivalent**
- **Percentage of the population with a university degree.**

That is, financial investments in education seem more limited in PEI than elsewhere, and the educational levels on the Island are lower than elsewhere in Canada.

Learning opportunities for professional and skill development are non-existent. I would like to see more emphasis on the skilled trades.

- SURVEY PARTICIPANT



We have a Community School program every winter. It is hugely popular, and people sign up in droves to learn or enjoy new activities.

- SURVEY PARTICIPANT

Participation in learning and formal education

What you told us:

This indicator assesses the participation of survey participants in lifelong learning. **Participation in learning is important to well-being because it prepares people for civic engagement, workforce opportunities, and cultural and leisure activities.** This increased participation ensures better health, financial, and overall well-being outcomes.

Using a scale from Very Strongly Disagree to Very Strongly Agree, we asked survey participants how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statements about opportunities for taking formal education courses or courses for interest. The percentages noted represent the share of participants who checked agree, strongly agree, or very strongly agree.

- 75%** I would like to take courses, but they are offered at inconvenient times
- 66%** I would like to take courses, but they are too expensive
- 61%** I feel comfortable taking courses online
- 60%** There are plenty of opportunities to take formal education courses
- 60%** There are plenty of opportunities to take courses of interest
- 57%** There are places nearby where I can take courses out of interest
- 59%** There are schools nearby where I can upgrade my educational qualifications
- 50%** There are many opportunities for me to get to know people from different cultures

While people feel there are opportunities to take formal education and courses of interest, they indicate that cost and inconvenient timing are barriers to participation. **Interestingly, many people seem comfortable taking courses online and this factor may help mitigate current and future accessibility.** Further, it is worthwhile noting that 50% of respondents indicated that getting to know people from another culture is a benefit of taking formal courses or course for interest.

As noted previously, we also asked if people had taken a course during the past year. As noted previously, we also found that only **27% of participants had taken a course during the past year.** One wonders if the low participation rate is the result of cost and inconvenient timing of courses.

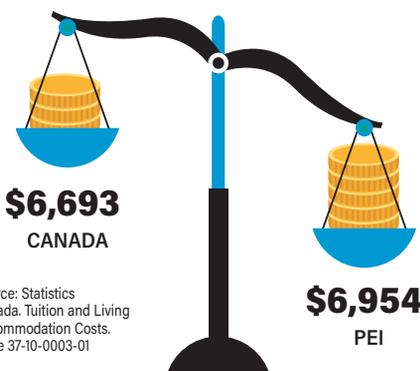
Of the 27% of people who had taken a course:

- **46%** had taken 1 course
- **42%** had taken 2-5 courses
- **12%** had taken more than 5 courses

How we compare:

Tuition fees are important in the decision about whether and where to pursue post-secondary education. From 2013 until 2018, undergraduate tuition fees in PEI were consistently lower than for Canada as a whole (albeit the differences were small). In the last three years for which we have data (2018 to 2020), average tuition rates in Canada decreased somewhat, while those in PEI increased.

Average annual undergraduate tuition fees in 2020:



Source: Statistics Canada. Tuition and Living Accommodation Costs. Table 37-10-0003-01

Another measure of education and learning is the ratio of students to educators in public elementary and high schools. Here we see that the numbers for PEI and Canada as a whole are very similar. This low ratio helps ensure that basic educational knowledge and skills, such as literacy, numeracy, and science skills, can develop during the first years of schooling.

Ratio of students to educators in public schools in 2019 is approximately 13 students per educator in Canada and slightly lower (12.5) for PEI.

Source: Statistics Canada. Tables 37-10-0007-01 and 37-10-0153-01.

Seeking affordable lifelong learning opportunities

Many survey and focus group participants spoke of seeking learning opportunities that would help enrich their lives, explore interests, and bolster their careers. **There is a recognition that being able to engage in learning throughout one's life will lead to better health, financial, and overall well-being outcomes.** The move to online learning (for adults) during the pandemic was seen as improving access. However, most people feel that there are still too few affordable and accessible opportunities to engage in learning as an adult on PEI.

Access to education is very cost-prohibitive. I enjoyed post-secondary education but am in extreme debt as a result. Coming from generational poverty, student loans were the only viable option I had to get an education. I would love nothing more than to continue taking courses for interest and professional development purposes, but I can't afford to.

During this crazy COVID-19 period, I participated in a good number of free workshops for learning and for pleasure. Doing so from the comfort of my own home and seeing participants in their cozy places eased any nervousness I might have had and made for a wonderful discussion on fostering a personal connection to nature. I hope we'll continue to offer online courses with time to meet in person built into the delivery.

I would like to improve my education, but I don't have time. Making money and taking care of family.

There are some wonderful arts-based opportunities, but accessibility, like transportation, can be an issue. Also, there seems to be a lot of courses offered during work hours. It seems only those who are privileged have the time during the day to take these courses.

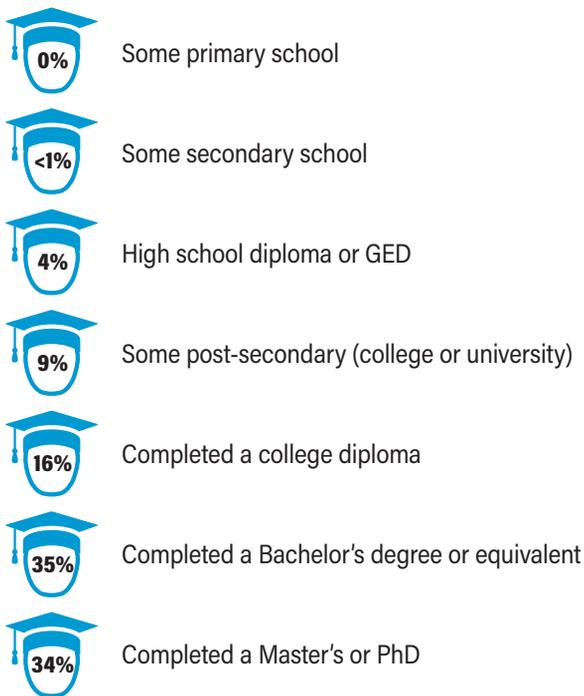
INDICATOR 2

Basic educational knowledge and skills

What you told us:

Basic educational knowledge and skills, such as literacy, numeracy, and science skills, typically develop during the first years of school and can continue to expand throughout the life course. **These skills are important to well-being as they are needed to function effectively in everyday life.**

When asked to describe the highest level of education completed, 542 of the more than 800 survey participants responded as follows:



We note that many of the survey respondents—85%—indicated that they had completed post-secondary education. This is a much higher average than the educational attainment of the overall PEI population—discussed in the next section.

However, we also must consider that over 250 survey participants did not indicate their level of education and, thus, we do not know if their levels of education would change the percentage distribution. They may not have responded because they ignored the question or perhaps did not see themselves represented in the choices (e.g., no mention of trade certification, apprenticeship, or adult learning/professional development).

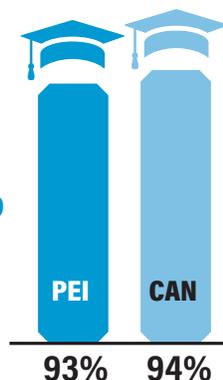
Finally, when asked to comment on the educational opportunities in their community, slightly more than half of respondents (51.2%) indicated that they would rate their satisfaction level with access to education and learning as satisfactory to extremely satisfied.

How we compare:

The percentage of those aged 25 to 54 who have a high school diploma or equivalent has been increasing steadily since 2013. Nonetheless, the consistent pattern (from 2013 to 2019) is that a slightly lower percentage of those in PEI report this level of education. By 2020, the difference is insignificant.

Percentage of the population 25-54 years of age with a high school diploma or equivalent in 2020

Source: Statistics Canada. Labour Force Survey. Table 14-10-01 18-01.

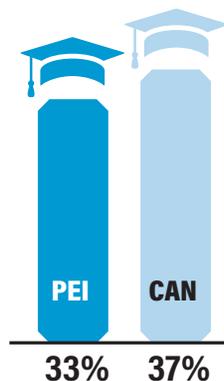


We also note that for both PEI and Canada as a whole the percentage of individuals aged 25 to 54 with a university degree has been increasing since 2013. **That said, the percentages are consistently lower in PEI than elsewhere in Canada.** For instance, in 2020, 33% of the population reported having a university degree while the overall Canadian average is 37%.

We note that these measures do not reflect all post-secondary choices (e.g., technical certification, apprenticeship) and the relevancy of education to the labour market—indicators which may be useful to pursue in future surveys.

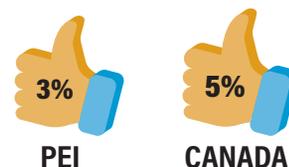
Percentage of the population 25-54 years of age with a university degree in 2020

Source: Statistics Canada. Labour Force Survey. Table 14-10-01 18-01.



Pursuing education across the life span is another marker of educational knowledge and skills. Since most adults aged 25-54 years of age are in the labour force, perhaps it is not surprising that only a very modest percentage of them are engaged in education-related activities. This finding is somewhat lower than our 2021 survey that showed 27% of people on PEI taking a course; however, our measure reflects courses taken for interest as well as formal educational courses.

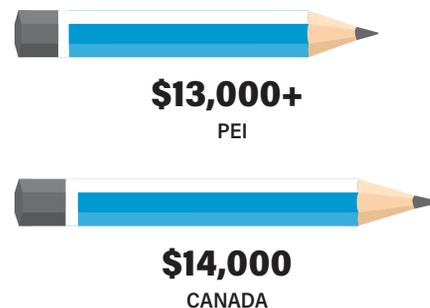
Percentage of the population 25-54 yrs. of age participating in education-related activities (studying or learning) in 2015



Source: Statistics Canada. General Social Survey. Table 45-10-0014-01.

Another measure of support for basic educational skills is the amount spent per student on P-12 education. While PEI may have slightly fewer students per educator, the province also has shown lower public expenditures per student since 2013 than elsewhere in Canada.

Average expenditure per school student (public plus private), in 2018-19



Source: Statistics Canada. Tables 37-10-0109-01 37-0066-01.

I find there are few in-depth professional development learning opportunities on PEI.

- SURVEY PARTICIPANT



Investing in lifelong learning

In both the open-ended responses and the focus groups, participants expressed a desire to see investment in lifelong learning, and many were prepared to share their expertise in offering courses. Further, several people felt that a renewed focus on community schools, apprenticeship training, and Seniors College would improve accessibility.

More diversified learning opportunities at Community Schools would be nice and an expanded menu of courses through Seniors College. We have a Community School program every winter. It is hugely popular, and people sign up in droves to learn or enjoy new activities.

So many of us have expertise to share and would gladly share it for free if we knew who would respect our knowledge in PEI.

Not enough special interest courses for retirees such as wood working, mechanics, etc. These courses would help retired people develop interests they could pursue at home as hobbies that would be interesting and keep them busy. Just because we are retired doesn't mean we don't want to learn!

Learning opportunities for professional and skill development are non-existent. I would like to see more emphasis on the skilled trades.



Work and Finances

This domain examines the level and distribution of income and wealth by monitoring income fluctuations, labour market data, food security, and affordable housing. Work and finances should reflect our capacity to ensure that economic growth yields stable income streams and living conditions for all members of a community.

We know that economic growth does not automatically translate into better living standards and improved well-being for everyone. For instance, higher average incomes could result in increased social inequality or greater economic insecurity as not all community members benefit from such increases. Further, the distribution of wealth can be constrained, making the gap between those who have much and those who have little considerably wider. This gap may mean that an increasing number of people cannot afford necessities such as housing and food.

In contrast, and as many studies have shown, increasing the quality of employment, reducing poverty, providing affordable housing, and ensuring food security can raise the well-being for all community members.

2021 survey and overall comparison to Canada

The dimension which the CIW labelled “living standards” deals with issues relating to work and finances. The indicators used were as follows:

- After-tax income of economic families
- The GINI coefficient of inequality (a statistical measure used to calculate inequality within a nation and/or region)
- Percentage of persons below the Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO) measure
- Percentage of persons below the Low-Income Measure (LIM).

We added the following:

- Percentage of persons below the threshold of the Market Basket Measure (Canada’s official poverty line measure). Those considered to be “low income” by this measure have incomes below the standard cost of food, clothing, shelter, and transportation where they live.
- Percentage of persons residing in households that are moderately or severely food insecure
- Unemployment rate
- Employment rate
- Percentage of the workforce in long-term unemployment.

2021 survey snapshot

People who reported having the following feelings about their finances at least once in 2021.



The data sets from several of these indicators suggest that people living in PEI have lower levels of economic well-being:

- After-tax income—lower than the rest of Canada
- The employment rate—somewhat lower than the rest of Canada since 2015
- The unemployment rate—consistently higher than for Canada as a whole
- The percentage of its population who are food insecure—slightly higher than the rest of Canada.

One indicator is very *similar* in PEI and elsewhere in Canada:

- The percentage of long-term unemployment—the slight difference that exists tends to suggest more long-term unemployment in PEI.

When we consider the two measures of *income inequality*, we get a mixed picture.

- The GINI coefficient is consistently lower in PEI than in Canada as a whole, indicating less income disparity, or higher well-being in the province

- The Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO) measure also suggests less poverty in PEI.

However, there is *more* poverty/low income (less well-being) in PEI using:

- The Low-Income Measure (LIM), as this threshold indicates that in most of the years from 2013 to 2019, the incidence of low income in PEI is higher than in Canada as a whole.

Finally, PEI and the rest of Canada are very similar if one considers:

- The Market Basket Measure, Canada’s official poverty line, with some indication that a slightly higher percentage of those in PEI are living in a low-income household.

So, whether or not PEI has higher or lower well-being in terms of income significantly depends on which measure of low income that is considered. However, it is clear that work and finances are challenges for many people living on PEI.

Income and wealth

What you told us:

This indicator examines how wealth and income are distributed and considers measures of inequality, poverty, and food security. **Income disparities most often have negative impacts on the well-being of those with lower income but can also extend to people at all income levels who may be affected by related issues (e.g., labour shortages, employment volatility, housing prices, civic unrest, increased crime).**

When we asked people to rate how they felt about their main job, using a scale ranging from Very Strongly Disagree to Very Strongly Agree, their responses noting Agree, Strongly Agree or Very Strongly Agree were as follows.

- 78%** My current job adequately reflects my education and training
- 60%** Considering all my efforts and achievements, my opportunities at work are adequate
- 58%** Considering all my efforts and achievements, my salary/income is adequate
- 45%** I have little hope for promotion at my job
- 25%** I have experienced or I expect to experience an undesirable change in my work situation
- 22%** My job security is poor

While many respondents feel that their current employment reflects their education and experience, their perception of salary and opportunities for job promotion are not as robust. Further, it is worth noting that a quarter of survey participants have either experienced or expect to experience an undesirable change in their employment and almost the same number feel their job security is poor.

In addition, and as noted in the survey summary of this domain, there are a significant number of people who in 2021 did not have sufficient income to purchase necessities and pay bills on time, and who faced food security challenges.

Regarding food security, when we asked people to rate how they felt about their local shopping experiences, respondents noting Agree, Strongly Agree, or Very Strongly Agree were as follows:

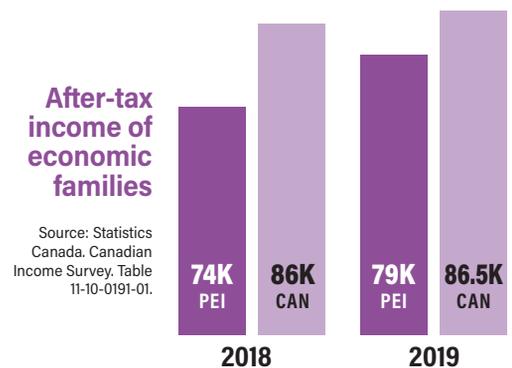
- 57%** I can buy everything I need locally
- 30%** I can buy everything I want locally

The impacts of these perceptions and realities—insufficient salary/income, limited opportunities for promotion, undesirable job change, and overall job security—on economic well-being and finances are undoubtedly significant. Sentiments shared in the focus groups and open-ended questions are revealing in this regard.

How we compare:

A key part of well-being is economic well-being. There are numerous ways to measure both income and wealth, and it is useful to consider the implications of using different measures.

One relevant indicator is median income. While median incomes in Canada and PEI are gradually rising, the clear pattern is that median incomes are lower in PEI than elsewhere in Canada.



A widely used measure of income *inequality* is the GINI coefficient which is a statistical measure used to calculate inequality within a country and region. The greater the GINI coefficient, the higher the degree of inequality.

The GINI coefficient is consistently lower in PEI than in Canada as a whole, indicating less income disparity, or higher well-being in the province.

Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Income Survey. Table 11-10-0134-01.

Another measure of the economic well-being of a population is the percentage of that population that has a low income. Specifically, it is the percentage of the population living below a designated threshold of low income, but it is important to consider and understand different possible indicators of the underlying idea. There are several measures/indicators of poverty or low income that are relevant to this analysis.

One indicator is the percentage of the population below the “Low-Income Cut-Off” (LICO). This measure is based on the cost of food, clothing, and shelter, adjusted for household size and degree of urbanization.

That is, in more rural regions (like PEI), which tend to have a lower cost of housing, the threshold for the LICO is lower. This means, if poverty is defined as living below the LICO, that a smaller proportion of the population in those rural areas (like PEI) will be considered as living in “poverty.”

From the data analyzed, the pattern we see from 2013 to 2019 is that the threshold for the LICO is lower in PEI compared to the rest of Canada which seems to suggest a lower poverty level on PEI.

In 2019, PEI showed slightly more than 4% of the population below LICO compared to approximately 6% in the rest of Canada.

Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Income Survey. Table 11-10-0135-01.

A second measure is the “Low-Income Measure” (LIM), which is primarily used to allow for comparisons across different countries. The threshold for this measure is 50% of the national median income, adjusted for household size.

Interestingly, we see that using this measure, in most of the years from 2013 to 2019, the incidence of low income in PEI is higher than in Canada as a whole, which is in contrast to the pattern seen in the LICO. For instance, in 2019, 14.4% of people on PEI were below the LIM compared to 12.1% nationally.

Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Income Survey. Table 11-10-0135-01.

A third measure, and perhaps the most appropriate to consider, is the official Canadian poverty line threshold, which considers the “Market Basket Value” (MBM) in the area. Those considered to be “low income” by this measure have incomes below the standard cost of food, clothing, shelter, and transportation, where they live.

Using this measure, we see that the percentage of those considered “low income” is slightly higher in PEI than Canada as a whole.



Percentage of those below the threshold of the Market Basket Measure in 2019

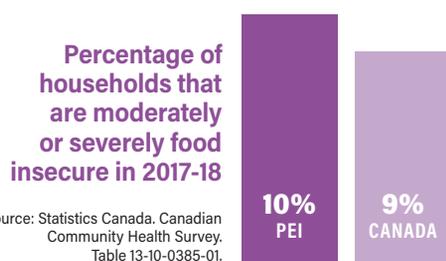
Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Income Survey. Table 11-10-0135-01.

What we see from these three indicators is that, historically, PEI has had lower incidences of poverty as measured by the Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO). However, when the indicators Low-Income Measure (LIM) and the Market Basket Measure (MBM) are examined, PEI shows a slightly higher poverty rate than the rest of Canada.

Finally, another issue related to economic well-being is food security. What percentage of households in different areas of the country are more food insecure?

We were able to find limited information on this measure—for PEI in 2015 and for both Canada and PEI in 2017.

The one point of comparison in 2017 suggests that in terms of food insecurity, the percentage reporting this finding in 2017 is slightly higher in PEI than in Canada overall.



Striving for economic security

People want work that enables them to secure stable living conditions while also providing sufficient finances to meet their basic needs—both presently and in the future. While many respondents feel that their current employment reflects their education and experience, their salaries and opportunities for job promotion are limited. For some, this limitation creates an uncertainty regarding the long-term viability of working and living on PEI.

Our lease expires in June, and we are afraid we are going to be homeless. We'll not find something this nice at an affordable price again and frankly can't afford to pay much more.

I wish I didn't have to drive to work, but I can't afford to live where my work is, due to low vacancy rate and high rents.

The last two jobs I've had, although full-time, were not permanent. Banks will not loan money to persons who are not permanent workers. This makes it impossible to secure loans for housing, cars, etc., even with an excellent credit score and savings in the bank.

INDICATOR 2

Employment satisfaction & security

What you told us:

Perceptions regarding work-life balance can impact how people feel about their employment both in terms of job satisfaction and security.

Using a scale from Very Strongly Disagree to Very Strongly Agree, we asked survey participants how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statements about their work in general. The percentages noted represent the share of participants who checked Agree, Strongly Agree, or Very Strongly Agree.

- 69%** My personal life gives me energy for my job
- 63%** I am in a better mood at work because of my personal life
- 53%** I am happy with the amount of time for non-work activities
- 48%** I am in a better mood generally because of my work
- 44%** I neglect personal needs because of work
- 43%** I put my personal life on hold for work
- 42%** I struggle to juggle work and non-work activities
- 34%** My personal life suffers because of work
- 27%** My job makes a personal life difficult
- 14%** My personal life drains me of energy for work
- 14%** I am too tired to be effective at work

Work-life balance appears to be a challenge for more than 40% of survey respondents with many reporting that they put their personal lives on hold and/or neglect personal needs because of work.

This finding is significant for a number of reasons including that 69% noted that their personal life gives them energy for their jobs and 63% felt that their personal life

contributes to having a better mood at work. Given the importance of personal life on work effectiveness, employers may want to ensure that work tasks do not keep employees from their personal lives. An increased emphasis on work-life balance could help improve workplace performance and ensure better well-being outcomes.

It is also important to note that many people may be working but not in a paid position. That is, they may be volunteering, involved in an internship, shadowing at a job, retired, or providing care for a family member. When asked "Do you currently work for pay?," 63% indicated yes and 37% indicated no. **This finding reveals that of those surveyed, more than one-third consider that they are working but are not receiving an income.**

Further, when we followed up by asking, "How many different paid jobs (full or part-time) do you currently hold?," the responses indicated that:

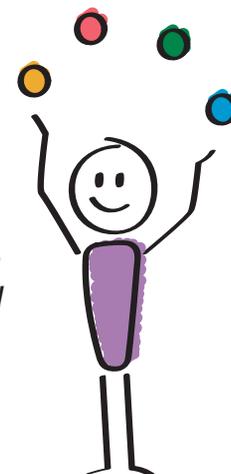
- 77% have one job**
- 18% two jobs**
- 3% have three jobs**
- 1% have 4 or more jobs**
- 1% indicated not applicable**

While the majority of respondents have one job, there are many—22%—who are working more than one job. The focus groups and open-ended questions reveal that for this group, two or more jobs are required to ensure some semblance of employment security.

Further, given that many people are working for no income, one wonders how this impacts their economic security.

[As someone] self-employed in the food industry, COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on my normal life and work balance.

- SURVEY PARTICIPANT



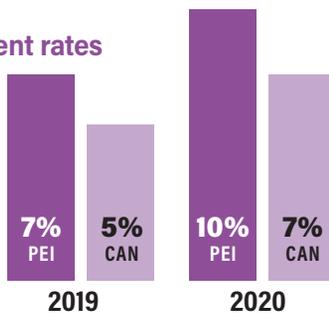
How we compare:

A commonly used indicator for employment security is the unemployment rate. The unemployment rate calculates the number of those unemployed, relative to all those in the labour force—that is those employed plus those unemployed. It does not include those in the working-age population who, for various reasons, are not looking for work. **Further, the calculation is based on an average over the course of the year. So, areas (such as PEI and other Atlantic provinces) with high seasonal variation in unemployment will show higher rates in this average figure.**

Given high seasonal unemployment in PEI, it is not surprising that the annual rates for this province are consistently higher than for Canada as a whole.

Unemployment rates

Source: Statistics Canada. Labour Force Survey. Table 14-10-0327-01.



A somewhat different picture emerges if we consider the *employment rate*, which is based not on the rate *in the labour force* who are employed (as is done for the unemployment rate), but rather the rate of employment for the whole working age population.

In the period from 2016 to 2019, the employment rates for PEI are slightly lower than in Canada overall by about 2 percentage points; however, in 2020, the rates are virtually identical.

Source: Statistics Canada. Labour Force Survey. Table 14-10-0327-01.

Another issue in terms of economic well-being as it relates to employment measures is the extent of *long-term* unemployment. Note: As is true for unemployment rates, this measure is calculated relative to those in the labour force, not the working-age population as a whole.

The data from 2013 to 2020 shows that the extent of long-term unemployment is essentially the same in PEI and the rest of Canada.

This finding indicates that despite a prevailing narrative of chronic long-term unemployment on PEI, the Island does not have any greater issue with this challenge than in the rest of Canada.

Source: Statistics Canada. Labour Force Survey. Table 14-10-0357-01.

Striving to afford a work-life balance

Being able to afford a work-life balance is a challenge, with many survey participants and focus group members reporting that they put their personal lives on hold and/or neglect personal needs because of work. Combined with the temporary and contractual nature of many positions, people find it difficult to maintain a sense of well-being in their work and with their finances.

Salaries are exceedingly low on PEI and employers have not given adequate support to employees around the pandemic. There is an expectation that we can complete more work than we did before while most workers I talk to are experiencing really high levels of burn-out. That paired with lack of mental health supports is really troubling.

I think there needs to be more permanent higher-paying work opportunities that have work-life balance. I have lots of friends who have job security but no work-life balance.

I am an entrepreneur which is why I have poor job security. However, this has allowed me more flexibility and opportunity than the traditional job sector, so I have more personal time and a better balance. My previous jobs were damaging to my mental health (lack of respect from management, bullying in the workplace, lack of flexibility, demanding hours) so I left the jobs to try and create a better opportunity for myself.

Nearly all work opportunities are temporary contracts. It doesn't feel as though I have a future in my community and province despite wanting to stay because of the gross disconnect between cost of living (mainly rent) and what jobs actually pay.



Allocation of Personal Time

How we spend and experience our time is an important part of daily life. Indicators such as our work arrangements, family responsibilities, time with friends, and personal activities help measure our levels of time pressure, time use, control of time, and how time affects our well-being.

An overriding concern with this domain is the quest for balance; namely, determining how our activities and responsibilities support or are detrimental to our quality of life. Time is finite and if we feel we have limited control over the pace of our lives and that we are challenged to get everything done each day, our well-being can suffer.

2021 survey and overall comparison to Canada

The indicators we explored for “time use” are the following:

- Percentage working 50 or more hours a week
- Percentage in the labour force working part-time, involuntarily
- Percentage of the labour force with regular weekday work hours
- Percentage of the labour force with flexible work hours
- Average daily time with friends
- Percentage of 15-to-64-year-olds reporting high levels of time pressure
- Percentage of individuals who report 7 or more hours of good-quality essential sleep.

Some measures show *higher* levels of well-being for PEI. These include:

- Fewer people working more than 50 hours
- More time with friends
- Less time pressure
- Getting 7 to 9 hours of what is usually a good-quality sleep.

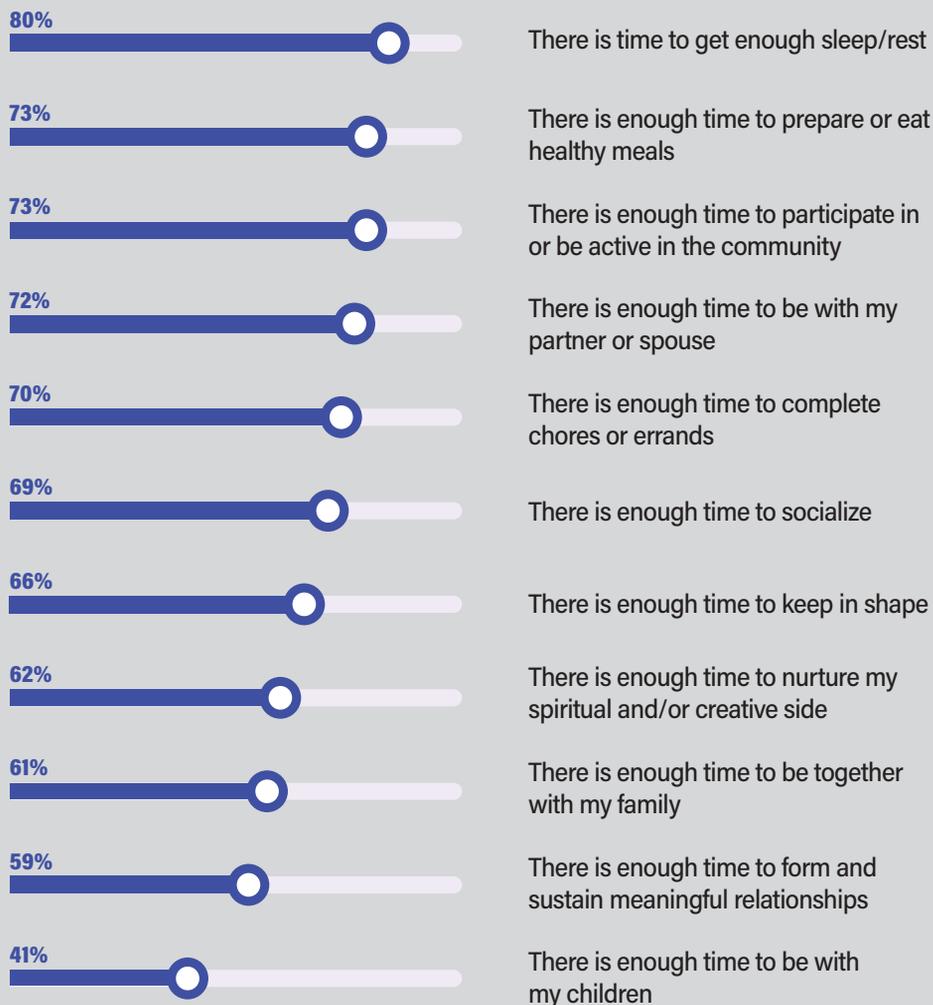
For other indicators of time use, PEI is very similar to all of Canada. That is, levels of well-being are essentially the same in PEI and Canada for:

- Working part-time (less than 30 hours a week); however, not by choice
- Working during regular daytime hours
- Working with flexible work hours.



2021 survey snapshot

We asked survey participants, “Could you let us know the degree to which you feel you have an adequate amount of time to carry out the following activities in your life?” The percentages represent those who indicated Enough to Always Enough.



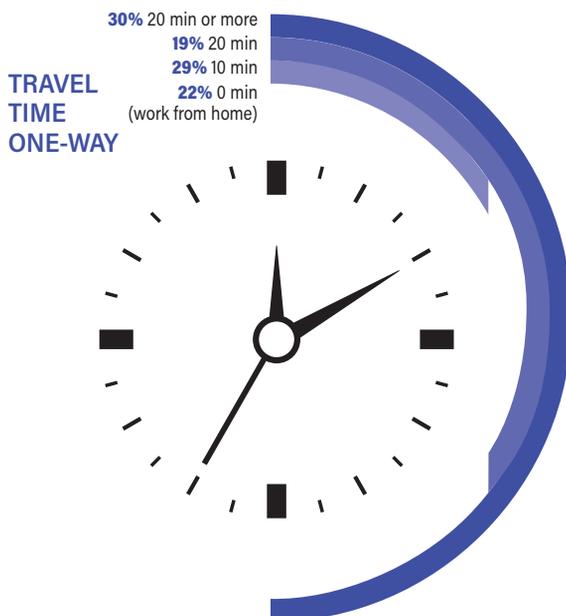
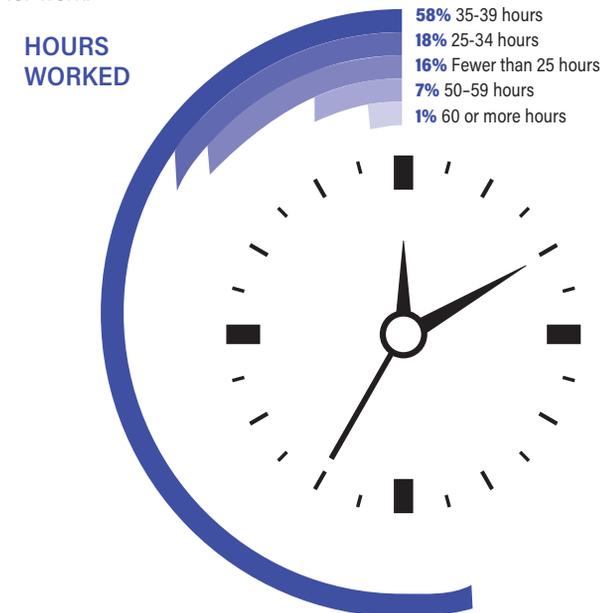
INDICATOR 1

Time use: work

What you told us:

We know that working long hours is associated with increased health risks. **Physically demanding jobs can increase fatigue and related injury rates. Further, both mentally and physically demanding jobs can result in long hours away from home resulting in difficulties preserving personal relationships, sustaining mental health, and supporting the social and emotional well-being of families.** Thus, a good indicator of well-being is having lower percentages of people working long hours.

We asked people how many hours they worked each week at their primary job and how many minutes per week they had to travel for work.



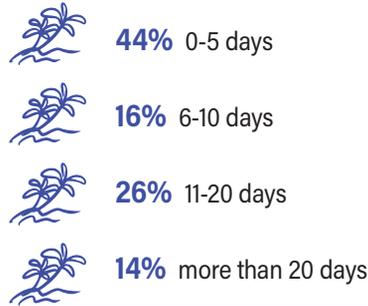
While these numbers are somewhat consistent with other areas of Canada, we note in the comparative data section in this domain that **PEI consistently shows a higher percentage of people working more than 50 hours a week when compared to the rest of Canada.**

Also, a 40min+ return travel time seems high for a small island; although the nature of secondary road travel could be a factor. More likely is the housing reality expressed by many participants; namely, the need to live in a rural area in order to find affordable housing and yet have to travel to one of the urban areas for work. **This point was cited by many as a challenging and costly (transportation) aspect of work-life balance on PEI.**

It will be interesting to see if the 22% of people who worked from home in 2021 are able to do so once COVID restrictions are lifted, and, if not, how might such changes impact their sentiments regarding work-life balance.

We also asked survey participants,

How many vacation days did you take in the past year?



These numbers are consistent with other areas of Canada but, once again, our qualitative comments indicate that many people in contract, temporary, and part-time jobs are unable to take paid vacation because that is not a benefit of their employment. They are entitled to vacation pay in lieu of time off, but one wonders if this allowance is sufficient for work-life balance and economic stability.

How we compare:

The percentage of the population in PEI and in Canada overall who report working 50 or more hours a week indicates that, consistently, a larger percentage of those in PEI than elsewhere in Canada report working to this extent.

Another perspective on work time is the percentage of the labour force in PEI and in Canada who say they are working part-time but would prefer full-time work. While there is some variation over the years, **the percentage who say they are involuntarily working part-time is very similar in PEI as in Canada as a whole**—approximately 4% since 2016.

Source: Statistics Canada. Labour Force Survey. Table 14-10-0029-01.

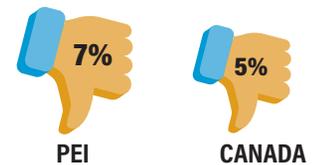
We also note that the percentage of the labour force with a regular daytime schedule indicates that slightly over two-thirds of those in the labour force in PEI and in Canada as a whole have a “regular daytime schedule or shift”—68% for PEI and 67% for all of Canada in 2015.

Source: Statistics Canada. Labour Force Survey. Table 14-10-0029-01.

Another component of work scheduling is having “flexible” work hours. The differences here are not significant—42% of in PEI and 44% of those in Canada said in 2015 that they have flexible work hours.

Source: Statistics Canada. General Social Survey, Cycle 29. Tabulated from the Public Use Microdata File.

Percentage working 50+ hours a week in 2020



Source: Statistics Canada. Labour Force Survey. Table 14-10-0031-01.

We do not have comparative data for these last two indicators for 2021 and wonder how the COVID-19 pandemic may have changed perceptions of flexibility and regular schedules. Future surveys could explore these indicators and examine how people living on PEI experienced flexibility during the pandemic and if this experience influences understandings of desired future work contexts (e.g., a requirement for more work flexibility including working from home and more consistent daytime schedules).

Wanting more quality time to connect

A significant number of survey respondents noted that they desired more personal time and less time at work. **People commented on being so busy with their jobs and/or a business that they had little time to meet others in their community. Several spoke of wanting to be more impactful on a local level but not being able to do so because of long hours at work and/or feeling like they could not take time off. Others noted hobbies and learning activities they wanted to undertake but found that they were so tired at the end of the day they could not engage in such endeavours.**

There are very few chances to ever meet neighbours in our community or neighbouring communities. We do not have any community groups in our area that are active after working hours.

I have invested a lot of energy in my business at the expense of other things. I don't feel a strong sense of belonging to my community, but I know that's because I haven't engaged enough. I haven't put in the work yet. That notwithstanding, I love living on the Island.

I think every single day about all of the things that I could do that would be more meaningful and impactful for myself and my community if I wasn't a slave to my job.

COVID has zapped energy, put more stresses and demands on working parents, and leaves many of us (myself included) focused on the day-to-day (hard to plan). I feel like I'm just kicking the dirt, that maybe I missed the bus to the destination I was supposed to find.

I have only seasonal work so when it's available, I take it and work non-stop. People think I have an easy life—work occasionally and then time off. But it's hard on my family being busy during those times and then not having enough money during the rest of the year and having no health benefits.

INDICATOR 2

Personal time

What you told us:

So, how do people spend their personal time? How much time is spent on activities that could contribute to their well-being?

Using a scale ranging from Not Enough to Always Enough, survey participants responded to the question: **Could you let us know the degree to which you feel you have an adequate amount of time to carry out the following activities in your life?** The percentages represent those who indicated Enough to Always Enough.

(SEE SURVEY SNAPSHOT ON PAGE 28)

These results suggest that many people feel they have sufficient time to sleep, prepare healthy meals, participate in the community, be with their spouse, socialize, and complete chores and errands. However, their time is more limited when it comes to sustaining meaningful relationships and, most concerning, being with their children—the measure with the lowest score and the biggest impact.

Having limited time to build relationships with children may create contexts where the well-being of families is at risk. People need time to be role models, teach, and help children learn.



We spend so much time traveling to and from jobs, a lot of our free time is spent doing chores and trying to spend quality time with our family and each other.

- SURVEY PARTICIPANT

I spend so much time and energy at work, and I don't even think that I have it so bad, but I know in my heart things could be so much better—I could be better.

- SURVEY PARTICIPANT

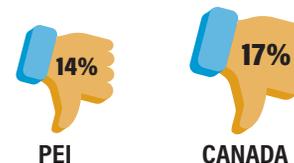
How we compare:

People on PEI spend slightly more time socializing with friends than the rest of Canada. According to the 2015 General Social Survey, **those in PEI spend over an hour and a quarter per day (76.7 minutes) with friends, compared to the average of 71.5 minutes for all of Canada.**

Source: Statistics Canada. General Social Survey. Tabulated from the Public Use Microdata File.

Time pressure also has an impact on well-being and there is some limited information from Statistics Canada (2015) on the time pressure that individuals experience. **While the levels are similar for PEI and for Canada overall, the difference shows less time pressure in PEI.**

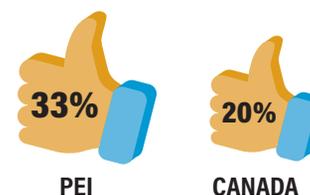
Percentage of 15-to-64-year-olds reporting high levels of time pressure in 2015



Source: Statistics Canada. General Social Survey. Tabulated from the Public Use Microdata File.

Finally, we have some information on measures of good-quality sleep. **A Community Health Survey conducted by Statistics Canada in 2017-2018 showed that those in PEI are much more likely than those in Canada overall to report 7 or more hours of sleep, and to say that their sleep is usually of good quality, most or all of the time.** Perhaps the island context (natural landscapes, surrounded by water) lends itself to better sleep patterns.

Percentage who slept 7 or more hours a night, with good-quality sleep most or all of the time in 2017-18



Source: Statistics Canada. General Social Survey. Table 45-10-0014-01.



*Every day has its challenges
and with patience and time,
all things are possible.*

- SURVEY PARTICIPANT

Trying to sustain relationships during a pandemic

Island residents are seeking to re-connect with family, church, and community members. Sustaining relationships during pandemic restrictions has been a challenge and has tested people emotionally, spiritually, and creatively. And yet, there is a sense that the experiences of the past two years will not extinguish existing relationships and that people will take time to be together in the future. Communities and organizations may want to provide more activities and places to meet in anticipation of this strong desire to connect.

The last year has been exceptionally strange for us all so it's been challenging to stay reasonably sane when you can't connect with anyone. Frankly, I've often thought about leaving, but given the world situation, it still seems like the best place to be. This too shall pass.

I don't even know where to begin. Work-life balance is impossible. I am fatigued, constantly stressed about finances. No motivation to do what normally brings me joy (creative outlets). But I keep going. Every day has its challenges and with patience and time, all things are possible.

My faith community is where I spend most of my time and resources. Most people I know are heavily involved in their church community which has been hard to do during COVID.

The only thing I feel I am lacking are more social networks since I work from home. There are so few volunteer opportunities and places to meet, it is very difficult to make and meet new friends.

All of my grandchildren and most of my children live out-of-province so it has been difficult with COVID. We are a close family. It's been a lonely time.

Islandness—a Distinct Domain

There is evidence of an additional domain beyond the eight as defined by the Canadian Index of Wellbeing. **We refer to this distinct domain as “Islandness,” which emanates within many of the indicators for the other eight domains and also in the individual and focus group responses related to overall well-being.**

This domain is uniquely an island-related phenomenon and is expressed in terms that may be considered as emerging indicators:

- **A sense of isolation and connectedness**
- **Sustainability and resilience**
- **The environment**
- **Cohesion, culture, and way of life**
- **Historical and contemporary identities**

Islandness transcends and enriches the CIW indicators. It is a sense of being that amplifies connections to the natural world and to each other because of a heightened experience of physical isolation and water-bounded existence.

Islandness nourishes island communities despite economic hardship and environmental challenges. In many ways, it is the tangible and metaphysical resiliency-lifeblood of PEI. Newcomers and visitors are acutely aware of Islandness and desire to be included in its collective embrace rather than feel like outsiders.

As **Project Well-Being** moves forward, this ninth domain of Islandness is worthy of a more focused analysis to help reveal indicators and dimensions of well-being. For now, we note its presence in the data.

What you told us:

The *Islandness* domain appears to be a more encompassing concept than the term *Islander*, as the latter may carry exclusionary characteristics—even if unintentional. However, Islandness has relational, material, and subjective components that deepen and broaden what is understood as being an Islander. **In effect, Islandness enlightens and enhances the term Islander making it more inclusive.**

Islandness has important characteristics reflected in people and place; in particular, it is a way to mitigate and push back against concerns about environmental degradation, fractious societal issues, inequality, social justice, and civic discord.

For many people, there is a deep sense that PEI has something special to offer the rest of the world—characteristics reflected in the red dirt cliffs and rolling green fields, in the creativity and ingenuity exhibited so often by its inhabitants, and community values that can soothe, inspire, heal, and welcome.

I desire to see new and improved markers of well-being become culturally accepted so that we no longer base value in economics such as GDP [Gross Domestic Product] and instead use measures of well-being as indicators of how well we are respecting human needs as well as the needs of land, air, and water.

I am incredibly concerned for the environmental well-being of my local community and this Island as a whole and this impacts my own well-being. Last night when taking in a stunning sunset on the south shore I was struck with the phrase from Tennyson... “’Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.” And I spoke with two of my kids about how it seemed to encapsulate my feelings of grief over living in this strange time of climate change, species extinction, and social upheaval.

Growing economic inequality concerns me, housing access concerns me, and the climate crisis concerns me. We have to work together and listen more—to everyone.

Whenever I get together with relatives here all they want to do is show me the land and the homes they own. They’ve forgotten who they are—Islanders used to know how to welcome people in ways far more gracious than that.

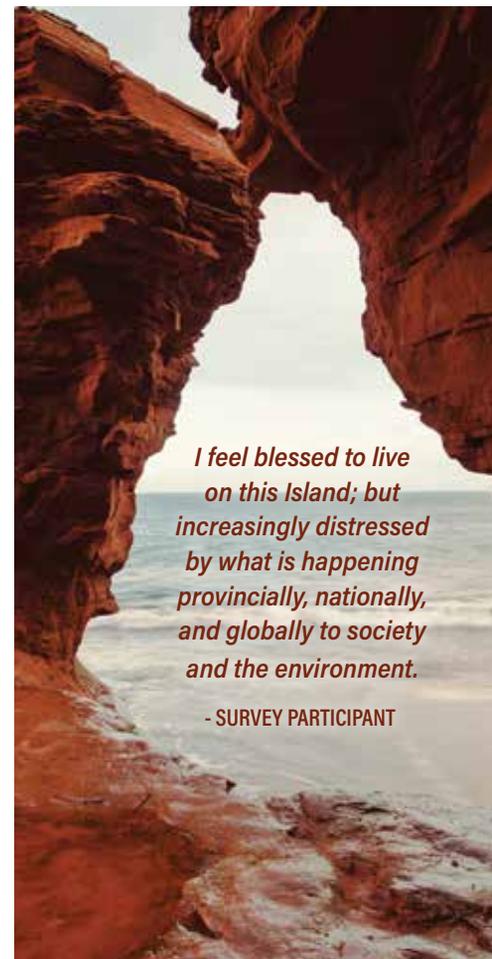
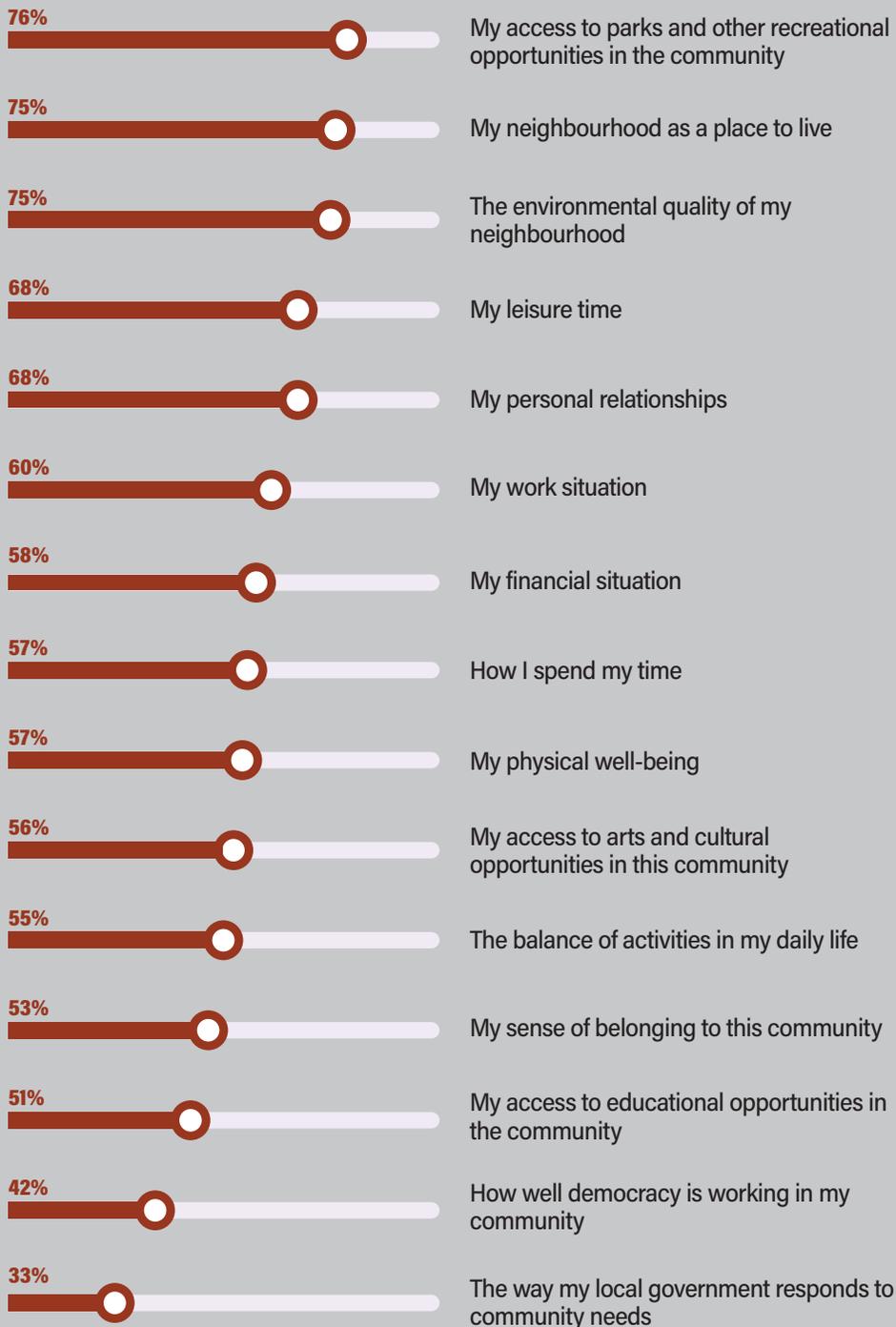


*Prince Edward Island is an amazing place to live. I feel very fortunate and grateful to be able to call this place home. Let's make sure that everyone—
all peoples of this planet—feel welcome.*

- SURVEY PARTICIPANT

Survey conclusion

At the conclusion of the survey, we asked survey participants to rate their perceptions of overall well-being in several areas. The data shown reflects those who indicated Satisfied or Extremely Satisfied.



I feel blessed to live on this Island; but increasingly distressed by what is happening provincially, nationally, and globally to society and the environment.

- SURVEY PARTICIPANT

Consistent with the previous domain responses, people are generally pleased with their community as a place to live and with their access to parks and recreational activities on PEI. They enjoy living on the Island and want to connect closely to people and place.

However, many are concerned about their financial situation and job security. They are worried about how they spend their time; especially regarding work-life balance. Further, not everyone feels they have a sense of belonging to their community despite wanting close connections.

Access to educational, arts, and cultural opportunities are seen as limited and, as noted elsewhere in this report, this impediment seems to result in people feeling that their creativity and innovation are stifled and their economic situation more tenuous. Finally, there appears to be a disquiet regarding local government and democracy in general which may be the result of COVID restrictions and a feeling of being controlled rather than consulted—sentiments that were peppered throughout the open-ended survey responses.

How we compare:

What do the measures we have tell us about of overall well-being in PEI versus Canada as a whole?

There are several findings from the indicator analysis that reveal comparisons to well-being in PEI versus Canada as a whole.



PEI can be seen as having *higher* levels of well-being in terms of:

- Having a strong sense of belonging to one's community
- Undertaking formal volunteering of groups or organizations
- Having five or more close friends
- Undertaking informal volunteering—providing unpaid help for others
- Feeling very safe walking after dark
- Having a low crime severity index
- Reporting low levels of discrimination based on one's ethno-cultural characteristics
- Being likely to vote
- Being likely to volunteer for a law, advocacy, or political group
- The ratio of student to educators in public schools and, until recently, lower undergraduate tuition fees
- Mental health being very good or excellent
- The percentage reporting getting immunized against influenza
- The GINI coefficient of inequality being lower
- The percentage of the population below the low-income cut-off (LICO)
- Fewer people working 50 hours a week or more
- More time with friends
- Less time pressure
- Getting 7 to 9 hours of what is usually good-quality sleep.

The measures for which we have data that seem to indicate *lower* well-being in PEI are:

- Having lower levels of confidence in the federal parliament
- Having a lower percentage of female MPs
- Lower average expenditure per student in public and private schools
- Lower percentage of the population participating in education-related activities
- Lower percentage of the population with a high school diploma or equivalent
- Lower percentage of the population with a university degree
- Lower percentage reporting an absence of limitations which restrict their daily activities
- Higher percentage diagnosed with diabetes
- Higher percentage of occasional or daily smokers (at least since 2016)
- In recent years, being less likely to have a regular health care provider
- Lower rates of participation in vigorous physical activity (except in 2020)
- Lower average spending on recreation and culture
- Lower after-tax income
- Higher unemployment rate
- Higher percentage of the population who are food insecure
- Lower employment rate
- Higher percentage of the population below the low-income measure (LIM).

For other measures, the pattern is *inconsistent, unclear, or similar* in PEI and in Canada overall in terms of:

- PEI has lower levels of energy production
- PEI has higher levels of residential energy consumption
- PEI has more farmland per resident than in Canada as a whole
- The percentage reporting their overall health as very good or excellent
- Life expectancy at birth; any difference shows a very slightly reduced life expectancy in PEI
- Percentage of household income spent on recreation and culture
- The percentage in long-term unemployment; the slight difference that exists tends to suggest more long-term unemployment in PEI
- The percentage of the population living below the Market Basket Measure of the low-income threshold
- Working part-time (less than 30 hours a week), not by choice
- Working during regular daytime hours
- Working with flexible work hours.



I wish this PEI peacefulness for all as I am deeply concerned for the social well-being of fellow Islanders in a world which is becoming more fractious with each passing day.

- SURVEY PARTICIPANT

Observations and next steps:

This report provided background material on specific indicators identified as relevant within the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW). The goals of the CIW are specific to that project and focus on national measures of well-being and how they are changing over time. It is also designed to allow for international comparisons on similar measures. Central to the goal of CIW is the recognition that there are important components to well-being that are not captured in the heavily used measure of Gross Domestic Product.

We realize that the CIW indicators have limitations for provincial level analyses. For instance, some data sets are more limited at the provincial level, and PEI has additional “well-being” components which are not covered by the domains and indicators designated by the CIW but should be documented (e.g., Islandness).

Further, we are aware that this current analysis would be enriched by an examination of patterns by age, sex, gender identification, race, ethnicity, nationality, 2SLGBTQIA+ perspectives, Indigenous understandings, and, where possible, rural versus urban areas of the province. Our future work will aim to include such analysis.

So, what can we conclude from the Project Well-Being analysis?

We think it is important for everyone on PEI to identify which aspects of well-being are important to them and then determine what they can do to improve the measures within that domain. The key is to identify measures of well-being that resonate and are amenable to policy and practice interventions—by individuals, organizations, communities, and government. Our province-wide community conversations in 2023 will aim to explore how people can begin this process.

While there is no overarching specific conclusion, it is fair to say that while PEI has many solid well-being attributes and is clearly a good place to live, work, and play, we have work to do to ensure that all people on PEI have opportunities for a full and abundant life. At the moment, that reality is not the case.

Project Well-Being is a call to action for all of us to lean in and engage with each other.



We have now had two years of experiencing how our personal decisions have an impact on the health of those around us. Let's take those lessons learnt and apply them to all aspects of our lives to the benefit the well-being of our neighbours, friends, and communities.

RESEARCH TEAM

Institute of Island Studies

Laurie Brinklow
Jim Randall
Phil Davison

Secondary Indicator Researchers

Dianne Looker
Ray Bolman
Nigel Burns

Design

Ruby Square Graphic Design

Cover Photography

Sarah Davison Media

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CONTACT

INSTITUTE OF ISLAND STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
550 UNIVERSITY AVENUE
CHARLOTTETOWN, PE C1A 4P3
902.894.2881 | BRINKLOW@UPEI.CA
ISLANDSTUDIES.COM

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