

Community Safety & Well-being

2026

In Ontario, municipalities are required to create Community Safety and Well-being (CSWB) Plans under the **Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019** with the aim of building sustainable communities where residents feel safe and have access to needed services.

These plans unite local governments, police, healthcare, social services and community members to proactively **identify issues and find solutions**.

The goal of the plan is to shift from a reactive, police-only response to **a proactive, collaborative approach that targets the root social causes of crime and systemic risk**.

5 Key Areas of The County's 2022-2025 CSWB Plan



Housing & Homelessness

Housing is a significant challenge. Secure, affordable housing supports physical and mental health, children and families, education, employment and the overall well-being of the community.



Poverty Reduction

Poverty can include low income, limited financial resources and financial literacy. Some residents also miss out on benefits and supports for which they are eligible.



Mental Health & Problematic Substance Use

Mental health challenges and problematic substance use are growing concerns, compounded by barriers to accessing services and supports.



Seniors Support

Seniors make up a large share of PEC's population. Mobility, independence, social connection and financial security are key to their well-being, while fraud and scams pose particular risks.



Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence and Intimate Partner Violence

Domestic, Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence have significant impacts on individual and community health and well-being.

The enclosed Community Well-Being Data Briefs, compiled by Vital Signs and published in partnership with The County, provide a snapshot of key issues affecting well-being in Prince Edward County. They are intended to support informed decision-making, community conversations and collaborative action.



Poverty Reduction

Strong communities are built when basic needs are within reach for everyone.

The Low Income Measure (LIM) is households earning less than half of the median after-tax income, adjusted for household size.

A Living Wage is the hourly wage a worker needs to earn to cover their basic expenses and participate in their community. (Ontario Living Wage Network)



~3,600

residents, or 1 in 7
(13.4%), live on low
income LIM (2023)



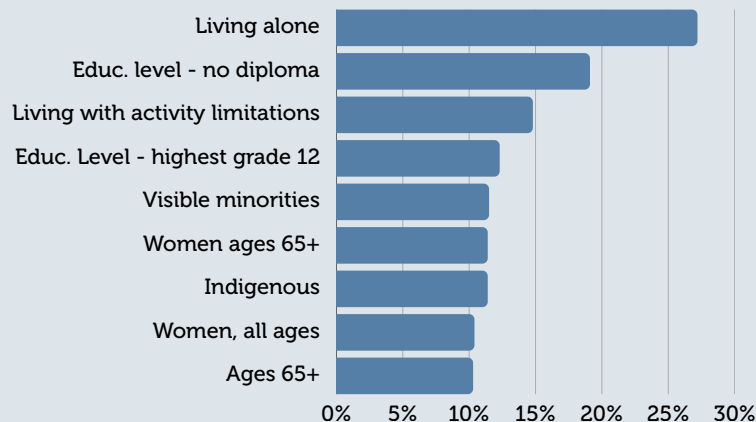
79%

Ontario's minimum
wage is only 79% of
the Living Wage

Several Factors Contribute to Low Income in PEC

- precarious employment
- lower income rates compared to Ontario
- high dependence on government transfer income eg. Old Age Security

Some Groups Face Greater Risk of Low Income



Barriers Limit Financial Security

Poverty is shaped by more than income. Access to affordable housing, transportation, childcare and education also affects financial stability.



Housing costs are a major pressure, with rents remaining elevated since the pandemic and leaving less income for food and other essentials.



Limited transportation options add another barrier. With limited public transit across PEC, households without personal vehicles can struggle to reach jobs, health care and services.

Reducing poverty means addressing both income and the cost and accessibility of basic needs.



Municipal and Community Supports for Low-Income Residents

- Municipal Financial Relief Grant (taxes and water/wastewater relief)
- Free income tax filing and benefits screening
- Disability Tax Credit application medical fee payment
- Repurposed cellphones for those in need
- Employment readiness supports
- Emergency assistance (Prince Edward Lennox & Addington Social Services)



To learn more about poverty reduction data in Prince Edward County, visit PECdata.ca – Economy.

LEARN MORE 
PECdata.ca





Food Security

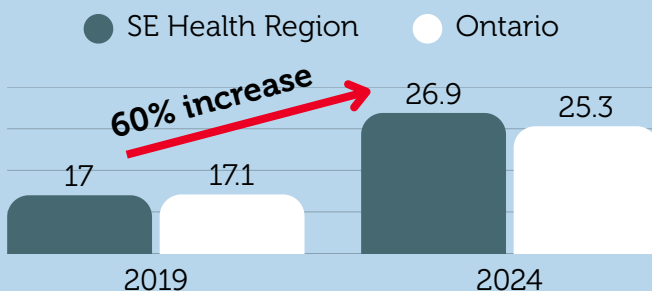
Food security is an important aspect of the CSWB Plan's Poverty Reduction priority area. Food insecurity isn't caused by a lack of food. It results from not having enough financial resources to afford sufficient healthy, nutritious food.
(Food Banks Canada)



Approximately 1 in 4 households in Hastings Prince Edward are considered food insecure. They do not have enough financial resources to afford sufficient healthy, nutritious food.

Food Insecurity is Increasing

Locally, food insecurity has increased 60% since the pandemic. (Public Health Ontario)



More Households Struggle with Food Costs

In 2025, the Picton United Church Food Bank served 1,024 individuals—a 40.5% increase over 2024. One in three people receiving food assistance is a child. The increase is being driven by a growing number of first-time users, especially families struggling with rising housing and grocery costs.

Food Access is Essential to Good Health

- Poor diet quality and emotional strain negatively impact physical, mental and social health.
(Community Food Centres Canada)
- Annual health care costs are 23-121% higher in food insecure households in Ontario.

In primary care, 1 dollar spent on nutrition interventions can save up to 99 dollars by reducing medication use, hospitalizations, and freeing up physician time.

(Canadian Malnutrition Task Force)

Food Insecurity Does Not Affect Everyone Equally

At higher risk are:

- Single parents (especially mothers)
- Persons living with disabilities
- Families with children
- People living on low incomes
- Single adults (especially seniors)
- Renters





Affordable Housing

Access to adequate, affordable housing is a key determinant of health, economic stability, and community well-being. (*Statistics Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation*)



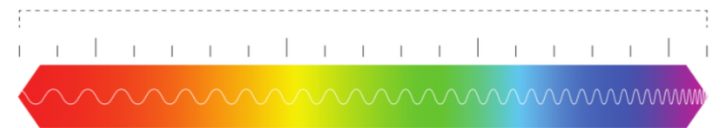
Nearly 4 in 10 renter households in PEC face housing affordability pressures.

Low Supply is Driving up Rents

- Prince Edward County's rental vacancy rate was just 0.2% in 2022 – the fourth lowest in Ontario (*PEC Housing Plan*)
- Only 7% of housing built in rural municipalities over the past 25 years was rental housing, despite an estimated need of 25%. (*KPMG, 2022*)
- Homelessness in Ontario continues to rise following decades of underinvestment in affordable and social housing. (Association of Municipalities of Ontario)

Single person households and 1-bedroom apartment affordability in The County

	Maximum Ontario Works for one person	Maximum Ontario Works ODSP for one person	Single Senior OAS & GIS only	Full time minimum wage for one person	Single person Median Gross Household Income	Minimum Monthly Income Required
Monthly	\$733	\$1,408	\$1,852	\$2,669	\$3,400	\$6,660
Annually	\$8,796	\$16,896	\$22,224	\$32,032	\$40,800	\$79,920



Rent that is affordable (based on CMHC's 30% of gross household income)

\$218 \$422 \$556 \$800 \$1020 \$1,698

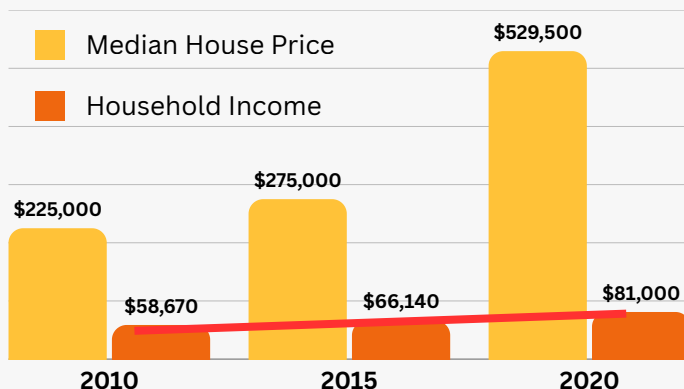
Produced by The County of Prince Edward. Data Sources: PEC Market Report, CMHC, Statistics Canada

Average Market Rent Q2 2026

A household income of \$68,000 is required to afford a 1-bedroom apartment. The average household income is \$81,000.

Affordable rental housing in PEC is defined as a unit costing no more than 30% of household income, OR at least 20% below the median market rent.

House Prices Spiked During the Pandemic



Household incomes have not kept pace with rising housing costs, increasing pressure on the rental market.

Lack of Affordable Housing Affects Everyone

Rising housing costs are making it difficult for many young families, low-income residents, and seniors to afford living in PEC.



- Housing shortages are affecting the local workforce; 32% of employers surveyed reported insufficient housing for staff. (*PEC Chamber of Commerce, 2023*)
- Lack of attainable and affordable housing is also a barrier to attracting doctors, health care workers, and child care staff.

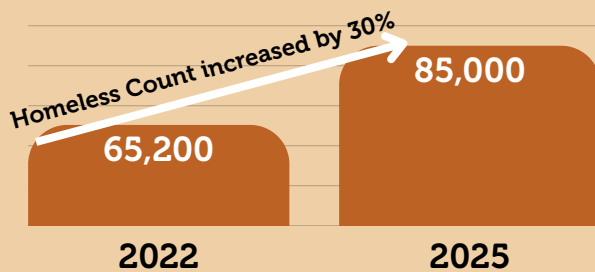




Homelessness

Rural homelessness is not always evident. It can include living in tents or vehicles, “couch-surfing”, or staying in shelters.

Homelessness is Rising Rapidly in Ontario



~85,000 Ontarians experienced homelessness in 2025—30% more than in 2022.

A more coordinated approach is recommended to address the conditions associated with homelessness (e.g. investment in income supports, healthcare, mental health services and other related systems)

(Association of Municipalities of Ontario)



Without significant changes, homelessness in Ontario is projected to more than double by 2035, and could triple in an economic downturn.

(Association of Municipalities of Ontario)

More People May Be Experiencing Homelessness Locally Than Counts Show



Point-in-Time Counts in Prince Edward County identified 32–45 people experiencing homelessness between 2018 and 2026, with an estimated 3–5 additional people uncounted for every person identified.

Key factors include low incomes, high rents, mental health and addiction challenges, abuse and family or landlord conflicts.

Seniors face growing risk due to high rents and fixed incomes.

Services Support PEC Housing Stability

- **Leeward House:** Ten transitional beds with a waiting list of 9, wraparound supports and housing stability programming. Currently 3 residents are seniors.
- **Housing Help Program:** Helps residents find and keep housing
- **Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP):** Enhanced supports for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness
- **The County's Rental Housing Online Registry:** Information for residents who are looking for housing
- **Municipal Financial Relief Grant:** Tax and water/wastewater relief
- **Comfort Kits:** Essential items for people experiencing homelessness, supported through the Community Safety & Well-being Plan

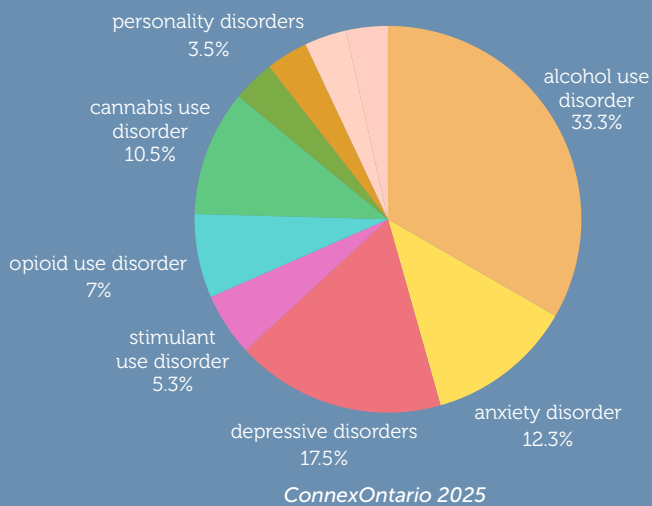




Mental Health & Problematic Substance Use

Addressing these issues supports individual well-being, strengthens community safety, and helps reduce crisis and emergency service pressures.

Calls to Connex for Mental Health Services Prince Edward County



In Prince Edward County, alcohol use, anxiety, depression and stimulant use are among the top reasons for mental health service calls.
(ConnexOntario)

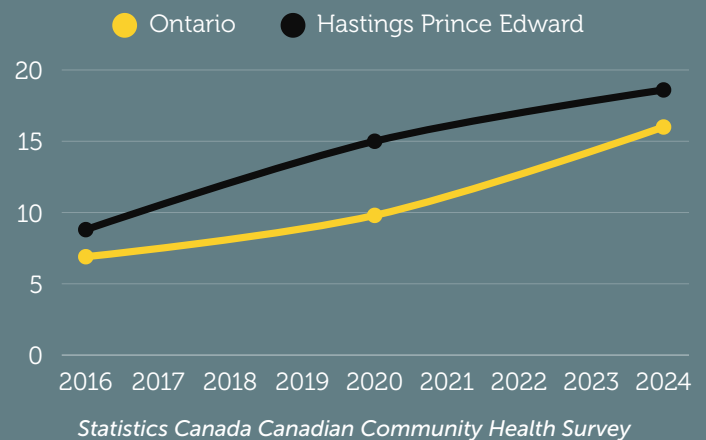
PEC Youth Identify These Challenges

- bullying/harassment
- addiction/substance use (incl. vaping, drugs)
- mental health (incl. anxiety, panic, depression)
- academic stress/education (incl. schoolwork, math)
- activities/sports (nothing to do/ less sports)
- belonging/friends (fitting in, making friends)

(CSWB Youth Mental Health Resource Fair 2025
Student Feedback Survey results)



Poor or Fair Mental Health Self-reported



Self-reported poor or fair mental health has more than doubled since 2016. The increase accelerated during the pandemic, when lockdowns intensified isolation and disconnection and contributed to uncertainty about safety, employment and the future. (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health)

Income has a Strong Connection to Mental Health



In any given year, 1 in 5 Canadians experiences a mental illness. Canadians in the lowest income group are 3 to 4 times more likely than those in the highest income group to report poor to fair mental health. (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health)





Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence and Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence (IPV), also known as domestic violence, is a common form of gender-based violence involving abuse by a current or former intimate partner or spouse.

IPV has been Declared an Epidemic in Prince Edward County

- In 2023, Prince Edward County Council declared intimate partner violence an epidemic, following a recommendation of the Renfrew Inquest.
- The Renfrew Inquest, prompted by the 2015 murders of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk, and Nathalie Warmerdam by the same former partner, called for Ontario to declare IPV an epidemic—a declaration the province has not yet made.

IPV is a Persistent Issue Locally

- IPV affects all ages.
- 242 intimate partner violence incidents were referred by OPP to victim service agencies in 2025—an increase of 35% from 2024. Increased reporting may reflect greater awareness and willingness among survivors to seek help.
- Case complexity is influenced by mental health, substance use, financial stress, and dementia.
(Prince Edward County OPP)

Intimate Partner Violence Is More Than Physical Abuse

IPV often begins with coercive control—a pattern of behaviours used to intimidate, isolate, or control another person.

It can occur with or without physical violence and is often an early warning sign of escalating abuse.



Intimidation

Isolation

Control

The Scope of IPV is Broader than Reported Incidents Suggest

IPV is one of the most widespread forms of violence affecting Canadians.

44%

of women in Canada have experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime.

(Statistics Canada, 2021)

- **Most IPV cases are not reported** to police.
(Statistics Canada, 2019)
- **43 femicides** were recorded in Ontario between November 2023 and November 2024.
(OAITH Annual Femicide List)
- **Rural areas** experience gender-related homicide rates more than twice as high as urban areas. (Statistics Canada, 2021)
- **IPV involving firearms increased 58%** over the past decade and is far more likely to be fatal. (Statistics Canada July 2026)

Where to Get Support

If you are experiencing intimate partner violence, or are concerned about a family member, friend, neighbour, co-worker or employee, help is available.



Alternatives for Women

The confidential line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Crisis Line: 613-476-2787

Website: www.alternativesforwomen.org





COMMUNITY
Safety & Well-being Plan

Prince Edward County's Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan for 2027-2031

A new Community Safety and Well-being Plan for Prince Edward County is currently being developed in partnership with the municipality, Loyalist College's Centre for Healthy Communities, and The County Foundation's Vital Signs program. The goal is to create a plan that is evidence-informed, measurable, and grounded in community voices.

The process focuses on three core activities, undertaken in consultation with CSWB Action Teams and the community:

Evaluating the
Previous Plan

Identifying
Priorities

Developing Locally
Actionable and
Measurable Strategies

Next steps:

Update to
Council

September 2026

Fall/Winter 2026

Draft CSWB plan
framework for review

Present CSWB Plan
for Council approval

Early 2027

How Can I Get Involved?

Stay Informed

Sign-up for
the CSWB
Newsletter



Contact Us



cswb@pecounty.on.ca



thecounty.ca/cswb

CSWB Partners:

HPE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD, UNITED WAY HPE, WELLINGTON STOREHOUSE FOOD BANK, CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION HPE, PEC AFFORDABLE HOUSING CORPORATION, PEC OPP, THE COUNTY FOUNDATION, THE SALVATION ARMY, SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRE QUINTE AND DISTRICT, ALTERNATIVES FOR WOMEN, H.J. MCFARLAND MEMORIAL HOME, COMMUNITY CARE FOR SENIORS, PRINCE EDWARD LEARNING CENTRE, REACHING FOR RAINBOWS, HPE LEARNING FOUNDATION, PRINCE EDWARD COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE, COUNTY FOOD HUB, PRINCE EDWARD LENNOX AND ADDINGTON SOCIAL SERVICES, VICTIM SERVICES HPELA, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF QUINTE, SOUTHEAST PUBLIC HEALTH, ST. LEONARD'S COMMUNITY SUPPORT, PROGRAMS AND RESIDENTIAL SERVICES, 993 COUNTY FM, QUINTE HEALTH, PRINCE EDWARD FAMILY HEALTH TEAM, COMMUNITY LIVING, ST. VINCENT DE PAUL, HASTINGS QUINTE PARAMEDIC SERVICES, PEC FIRE & RESCUE, QUINTE IMMIGRATION SERVICES, NEXT STEP HOUSING, THE HOPE CENTRE, THE MUNICIPALITY OF PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY, GREATER THAN COUNTY YOUTH COLLECTIVE, THEROC YOUTH SERVICES, SOLO SENIORS PEC, ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY HPE, FOOD TO SHARE, ONTARIO HEALTH AT HOME, INDIGENOUS VICTIM SERVICES, STUDENTS COMMISSION OF CANADA, ALL WELCOME HERE, COUNTY KIDS READ, HIGHLAND SHORES CAS, PEER SUPPORT SOUTH EAST ONTARIO, PICTON UNITED CHURCH FOOD BANK, LOYALIST COLLEGE CFHC, THREE OAKS, PEC HOARDING ACTION RESPONSE TEAM.

Upcoming Events

Scan the QR codes to register!

**Bystander Intervention:
Standing Strong for our
Neighbours**

Sept. 16th from 1-4pm



**Youth Mental Health:
An Inside Look**

Oct. 6th from 6:30-8:30pm



**Changing the Story:
Community Education &
Narrative Building on
Homelessness**

Oct. 22nd from 9am-4pm

