



RURAL WELLBEING

Work Factsheet



HIGHLIGHTS



- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, significantly more people worked from home in 2021 in both urban and rural communities.
- Urban areas saw a greater increase in individuals working from home than rural and Indigenous communities.
- Remote work opportunities in rural and Indigenous communities may be limited by a lack of reliable internet service.

Summary – What do work statistics tell us?

Census data helps us understand the local workforce. Understanding where people worked, how much they worked, and if they held a permanent or temporary job can help a community make decisions about workforce development and employment support programs. This factsheet presents data for place of work, job permanency, and work activity for rural and urban municipalities in Ontario. Summary statistics for census divisions and economic regions are presented in the appendices.

Data source

Statistics Canada. 2023. 2021 Census Profile for Census Subdivisions in Ontario. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. [98-401-X2021021](#). Ottawa. Released February 8, 2023.

Note that regional totals are calculated from data at the census subdivision level. However, data are not always available for every census subdivision. Some communities could not be sampled. And some data are suppressed for confidentiality reasons. Because of missing data at the census subdivision level, some of the totals or averages presented here and in our accompanying dashboard may differ from other sources using different geographic levels or different methods for aggregation.

For interactive maps and data visualizations, see the [Economics page](#) of the **Community Wellbeing Dashboard**.



Definitions

Rural: Any municipality outside of census metropolitan areas.

Urban: Any municipality within a [census metropolitan area](#).



Municipality: Census subdivisions, municipalities, and areas treated as municipal for statistical purposes, including unorganized territories and Indigenous reserves and settlements.

Indigenous community: Census subdivisions designated as Indigenous reserves or settlements.

Women+: Includes women (and/or girls), as well as some non-binary persons.

Men+: Includes men (and/or boys), as well as some non-binary persons.

Worked from home: Persons whose job is located in the same building as their place of residence, persons who live and work on the same farm, and teleworkers who spend most of their work week working at home.

Usual place of work: Persons who report to the same (usual) workplace location at the beginning of each shift.

No fixed address: Persons who do not go to the same workplace location at the beginning of each shift, such as building and landscape contractors, travelling salespersons, independent truck drivers.

Worked outside Canada: Persons who work at a location outside Canada, such as diplomats, Armed Forces personnel and other persons enumerated abroad.

Job permanency: The classification of paid jobs as either permanent or temporary for persons aged 15 years and over.

Permanent position: A job with no fixed end date.

Casual position: A temporary job for less than 1 year. Includes seasonal or short-term positions.

Fixed term position: A temporary job for 1 year or more.

Work activity: Refers to whether a person worked full-time or part-time, or did not work.

See Statistics Canada's [2021 Census Dictionary](#) for more information.

Place of Work

It should come as no surprise that more people worked from home in 2021 than in 2016, due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Table 1). However, urban areas saw a greater increase (from 7% in 2016 to 32% in 2021) than rural communities (from 9% in 2016 to 18% in 2021). Indigenous communities did not see a significant increase in the proportion of remote workers. In 2016, 3% of workers in Indigenous communities worked from home, compared to 8% in 2021.

It's possible that remote work opportunities in rural and Indigenous communities were limited due to a lack of reliable internet service. According to the [Auditor General of Canada](#), 40% of households in rural communities and 57% of households in Indigenous communities did not have access to 50/10Mbps broadband in 2021.

The proportion of people who did not report to a fixed workplace remained relatively consistent for rural and urban communities. This is probably because certain jobs cannot be done remotely, such as construction, manufacturing, and emergency services.

Table 1. Proportion of workers by place of work for rural and urban areas.

Place of work	Rural		Urban		Ontario	
	2016	2021	2016	2021	2016	2021
Usual workplace	79%	68%	81%	56%	81%	58%
Worked from home	9%	18%	7%	32%	7%	30%
No fixed workplace	12%	14%	11%	11%	11%	12%
Worked outside Canada	0.3%	0.2%	0.6%	0.5%	1%	0.5%

Table 2. Proportion of workers by place of work for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Place of work	Indigenous communities		Non-Indigenous communities	
	2016	2021	2016	2021
Usual workplace	82%	75%	81%	58%
Worked from home	3%	8%	7%	30%
No fixed workplace	14%	17%	11%	12%
Worked outside Canada	0.5%	0.1%	0.6%	0.5%

Job permanency and work activity

Most workers in Ontario are in permanent employment positions (Table 4). Rural communities have a slightly higher proportion of self-employed workers. Twenty-two percent of workers in Indigenous communities are working in temporary positions, compared to 12% of workers in rural communities. There are fewer self-employed workers in Indigenous communities.

A similar proportion of people worked part time in both rural and urban areas (Table 5). There is a higher proportion of full-time workers in Indigenous communities.

Table 3. Class of worker and job permanency.

Class of worker	Rural	Urban	Indigenous communities	Ontario
Permanent position	72%	72%	72%	72%
Self-employed	16%	15%	6%	15%
Temporary position - Casual	9%	9%	15%	9%
Temporary position - Fixed term	3%	5%	7%	5%

Table 4. Work activity.

Work activity	Rural	Urban	Indigenous communities	Ontario
Worked part year and/or part time	46%	45%	39%	46%
Worked full year full time	54%	55%	61%	54%



This factsheet was prepared by Danielle Letang, Manager of Data Strategy for the Rural Ontario Institute. Questions about data sources and comments or feedback can be directed to facts@ruralontarioinstitute.ca.

This factsheet complements ROI's [Community Wellbeing Dashboard](#). Factsheets provide insight and analysis of rural facts and trends featured in the dashboards.

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Appendix 1. Summary of work statistics for Census Divisions.

Census Division	2016 Worked from home	2021 Worked from home	Permanent position	Temporary position	Self-employed	Did not work
Algoma	5%	16%	76%	14%	10%	47%
Brant	6%	18%	76%	11%	13%	38%
Bruce	13%	23%	67%	13%	20%	41%
Chatham-Kent	7%	16%	75%	11%	14%	42%
Cochrane	4%	11%	77%	14%	9%	41%
Dufferin	9%	21%	74%	10%	16%	31%
Durham	7%	29%	75%	12%	13%	36%
Elgin	8%	18%	74%	11%	15%	38%
Essex	4%	16%	77%	11%	12%	42%
Frontenac	7%	25%	70%	17%	13%	39%
Greater Sudbury / Grand Sudbury	4%	19%	77%	15%	9%	39%
Grey	13%	21%	68%	11%	22%	41%
Haldimand-Norfolk	9%	16%	73%	11%	16%	40%
Haliburton	11%	21%	64%	13%	23%	51%
Halton	9%	39%	72%	12%	16%	33%
Hamilton	6%	25%	74%	13%	13%	39%
Hastings	7%	16%	74%	13%	13%	44%
Huron	15%	21%	68%	11%	21%	38%
Kawartha Lakes	10%	19%	71%	12%	17%	45%
Kenora	4%	10%	74%	18%	9%	43%
Lambton	7%	17%	73%	14%	13%	43%
Lanark	9%	26%	73%	12%	15%	40%
Leeds and Grenville	9%	20%	72%	13%	15%	42%
Lennox and Addington	8%	19%	75%	11%	14%	41%
Manitoulin	13%	18%	63%	18%	19%	49%
Middlesex	7%	25%	73%	14%	14%	38%
Muskoka	10%	21%	65%	13%	22%	41%

Census Division	2016 Worked from home	2021 Worked from home	Permanent position	Temporary position	Self-employed	Did not work
Niagara	7%	21%	73%	12%	14%	41%
Nipissing	5%	18%	74%	15%	11%	44%
Northumberland	10%	20%	72%	11%	17%	44%
Ottawa	7%	44%	72%	16%	12%	34%
Oxford	8%	18%	76%	9%	15%	35%
Parry Sound	9%	17%	67%	14%	19%	46%
Peel	6%	28%	71%	13%	15%	37%
Perth	12%	20%	72%	10%	18%	33%
Peterborough	8%	22%	71%	13%	16%	43%
Prescott and Russell	8%	26%	75%	12%	13%	35%
Prince Edward	13%	28%	62%	12%	26%	47%
Rainy River	6%	10%	70%	17%	13%	41%
Renfrew	7%	16%	73%	15%	12%	41%
Simcoe	7%	21%	73%	12%	16%	37%
Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry	8%	17%	74%	12%	14%	42%
Sudbury	6%	14%	74%	14%	11%	47%
Thunder Bay	4%	16%	75%	16%	9%	41%
Timiskaming	7%	13%	75%	12%	12%	44%
Toronto	7%	39%	70%	14%	16%	38%
Waterloo	7%	29%	75%	12%	12%	34%
Wellington	9%	26%	73%	12%	15%	32%
York	9%	36%	68%	13%	20%	37%

Appendix 2. Summary of work statistics for Economic Regions.

Economic Region	2016 Worked from home	2021 Worked from home	Permanent position	Temporary position	Self- employed	Did not work
Hamilton--Niagara Peninsula	7%	24%	74%	12%	14%	39%
Kingston-- Pembroke	7%	20%	72%	14%	14%	42%
Kitchener-- Waterloo--Barrie	8%	25%	74%	12%	14%	35%
London	7%	23%	73%	13%	14%	38%
Muskoka-- Kawarthas	9%	20%	70%	12%	18%	44%
Northeast / Nord-est	5%	16%	75%	14%	11%	43%
Northwest / Nord-ouest	4%	14%	74%	16%	9%	42%
Ottawa	8%	38%	73%	15%	13%	36%
Stratford--Bruce Peninsula	13%	21%	69%	11%	20%	38%
Toronto	7%	35%	70%	13%	16%	37%
Windsor--Sarnia	5%	16%	76%	12%	12%	42%