

2023 YOUTH IMPACT SURVEY

GEOGRAPHY SNAPSHOT

The Youth Impact Survey (YIS) is our community's opportunity to hear directly from young people about their well-being. It's based on the Canadian Index of Child and Youth Well-being, a framework developed by UNICEF Canada to better understand how children and youth are doing across the country.

The Children and Youth Planning Table's (CYPT) vision is happy, healthy children and youth— today and tomorrow, applies to all children and youth in our community. Given the importance of centering equity, social inclusion, and anti-discrimination in our belonging-related work, we are disaggregating the 2023 YIS across a several demographic and identity-based dimensions.

WHAT IS DISAGGREGATED DATA?

Disaggregated data is data that is broken down into smaller units or groups; in our case, demographic categories. When possible, we disaggregate data to paint a more reflective picture of the experiences and needs of the diverse children and youth in our community. (For example, what are the experiences of 9 to 11 year olds, as opposed to all youth ages 9 to 18.) This helps us reveal trends or patterns that might be hidden when focusing only on the total (i.e., aggregate) numbers.

It is important to remember that the data presented in this snapshot only reflects the responses from the children and youth who filled out the 2023 YIS. While we are excited to have received 1,876 responses in 2023, we also recognize that our survey does not capture the experiences and input of ALL children and youth in Waterloo Region. Please note that the percentages in red are based on a smaller number of individual respondents (less than 25) and therefore should be interpreted with caution.

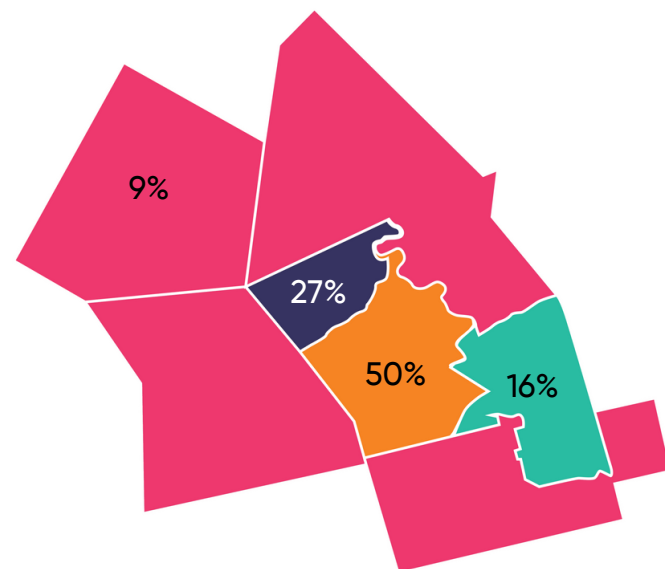
TAKING ACTION

The Youth Impact Survey lets us learn directly from young people in Waterloo Region about their well-being—how they're doing and what they're doing. Listening to what children and youth have to say is a good first step to making our community a better place.

After completing the survey, young people were asked what they think should happen next with the data. Here's what they think adults should do:

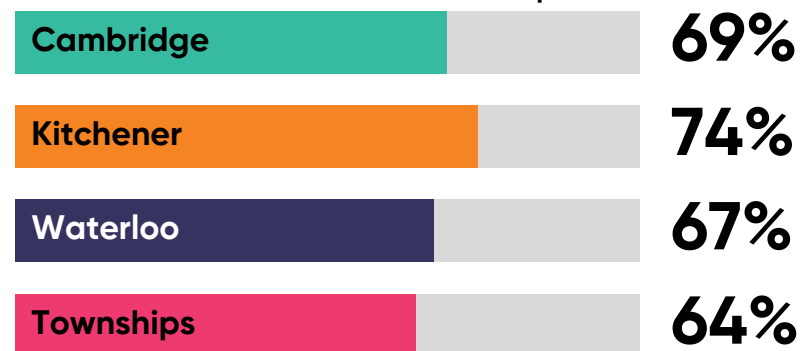
- **Make Changes:** Take the initiative to change programs to make things better for young people in Waterloo Region. Do their best to make our whole community better, including the places that young people use.
- **Understand Everyone:** Learn and better understand the diverse needs of young people in our community, and work at being inclusive.
- **Share Results:** Young people want us to share the results of the YIS with others in the community, including schools, community centres, government, and other institutions.
- **Reach Out:** Personally reach out to young people more often.

RESPONDENT BREAKDOWN



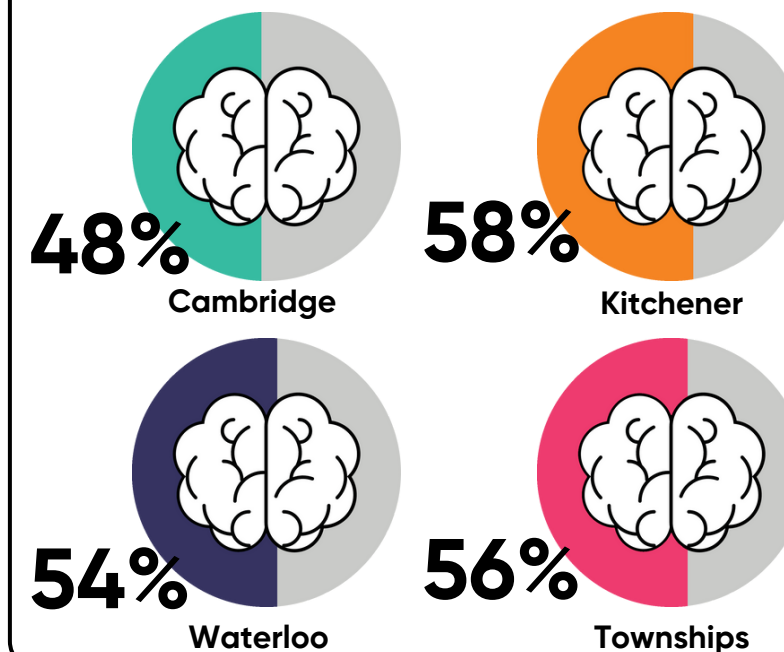
SENSE OF BELONGING

71% of all YIS respondents said they felt a very strong or somewhat strong sense of belonging to their community. In general, sense of Belonging in Cambridge increased by 15% between 2021 and 2023. Geographically, we see a 10 percentage point difference between Kitchener and the Townships.



SELF-ASSESSED MENTAL HEALTH

55% of respondents described their mental health as more positive, however it varied 10 percentage points between Cambridge and Kitchener.



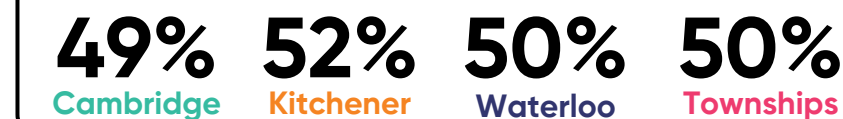
LIFE SATISFACTION

78% of young people said they had at least a moderate level of life satisfaction—an increase (7 percentage points) from 2021. There is a 10 percentage point difference between Cambridge and the Townships.



VALUED MEMBER OF COMMUNITY

51% of respondents felt like they are a valued member of their community. This number didn't change much between each community.

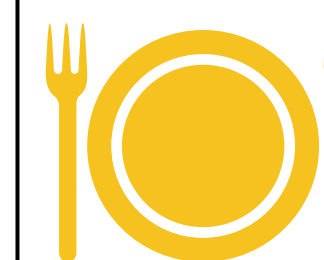


SELF-ASSESSED PHYSICAL HEALTH

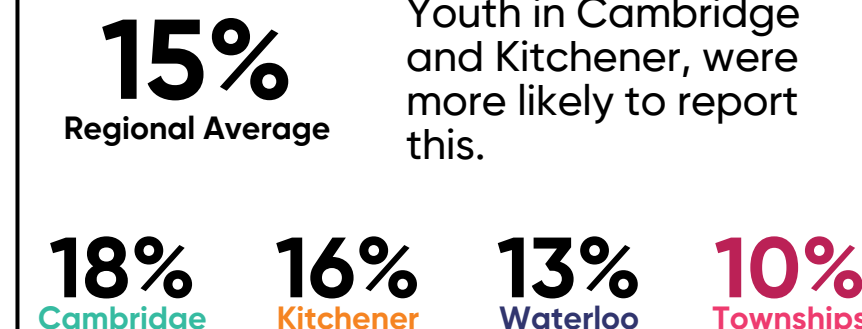
While the majority of respondents across Waterloo Region (76%) described their physical health as positive, there were slight differences across each community.



FOOD (IN)SECURITY

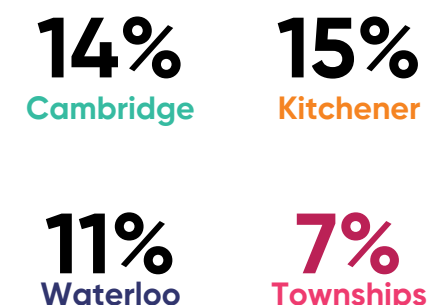
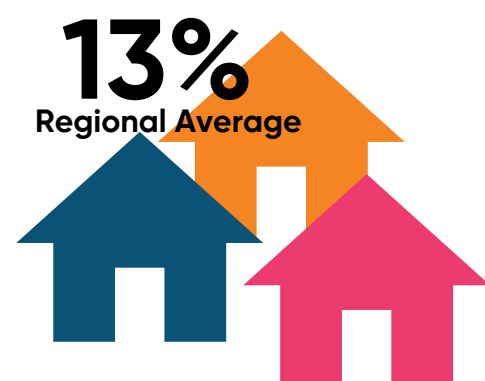


The number of young people who at least sometimes go to school or bed hungry has increased from 5% in 2021 to 15% in 2023. Youth in Cambridge and Kitchener, were more likely to report this.



HOUSING (IN)SECURITY

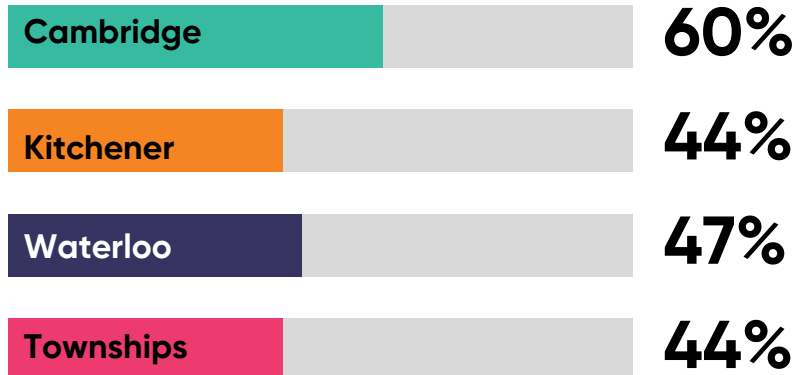
Youth experiencing homelessness or hidden homelessness has increased from 8% in 2021 to 13% in 2023. Respondents from Cambridge and Kitchener were 7 to 8 percentage points more likely to have those experiences.





EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION

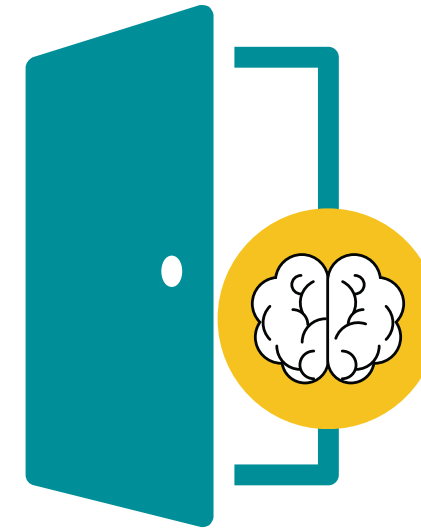
In every way we measured it, young people experienced discrimination more often in 2023. 48% said they had experienced discrimination, compared to 41% who said the same in 2021. Respondents from Cambridge, however, were 16% more likely to experience discrimination compared to young people from Kitchener and the Townships.



SAFETY



85% of youth said they felt reasonably safe or very safe from crime in their neighbourhood (down from 91% in 2021). Breaking this down, we see a 15 percentage point difference between Cambridge and the Townships.



ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

45% of young people felt good about access to (easy to get to or use) mental health services, like counselling, in their community. Respondents from Cambridge and the Townships were less positive.



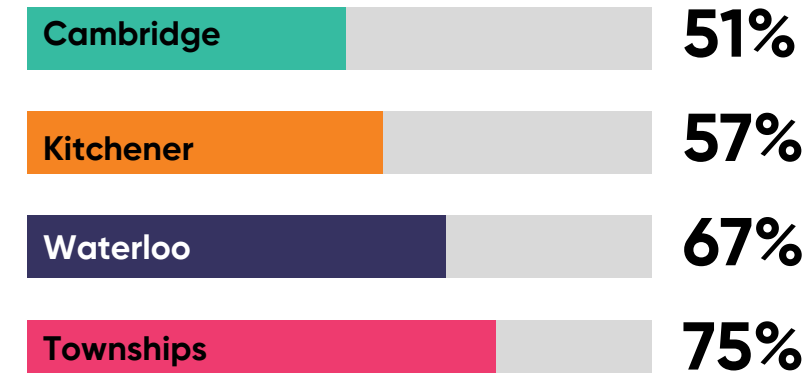
ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE SERVICES

72% said they had good or excellent access (easy to get to or use) to health services like the doctor or dentist in their community. Respondents from Cambridge and the Townships were less positive.



THE QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT AROUND US

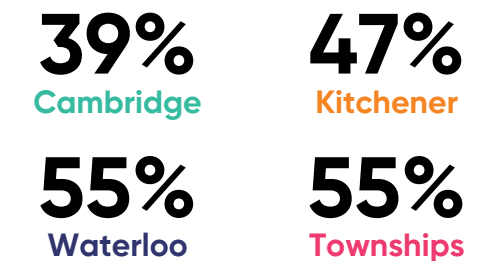
60% of YIS respondents indicated that the quality of the environment around them was high (down from 74% in 2021). Cambridge and Kitchener respondents, however, were less likely to report the quality of the natural environment in their neighbourhood as being high.



THE QUALITY OF RECREATION AND CULTURE FACILITIES



Collectively, 49% of YIS respondents felt the quality of recreation and culture facilities was high. Breaking this down, we see a 15 percentage point difference between Cambridge and Waterloo and the Townships.



"WE CAN IMPROVE THE WELL BEING OF OUR COMMUNITIES BY SETTING UP MORE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES THAT INTEREST EVERYONE AND ACTIVITIES THAT CAN HELP PEOPLE FIND MORE FRIENDS AND PEOPLE SIMILAR TO THEM."

-YIS 2023 Respondent

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ACCESS TO RECREATION AND CULTURE FACILITIES

Collectively, 56% of YIS respondents felt that recreation and culture facilities were easy to get to. Breaking this down, we see that youth from Cambridge and Kitchener were less likely to agree.

