

# Niagara Priority Profiles



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To improve health and health equity, it is important to understand specific groups in the planning of programs and services. The information in these profiles will help you understand how the different conditions and systems in which people are born, grow, work, and live impact their health. They provide some comparisons of different groups and over time. As populations change, programs can adapt to meet changing needs.

These profiles were created for Niagara Region Public Health and Emergency Services, but can be used by anyone. You can use these profiles in planning and making decisions in any sector, department, or organization.

Intersectionality is the idea that people have many layers of their identity. Each person has a unique identity. That identity leads to different ways that the systems they live in benefit or harm them. Due to this, some individuals experience more health concerns than others. When you read these profiles, think about these different experiences. When planning projects, think about how you can include people with different voices and perspectives. To learn more about intersectionality, visit: [NCCDH Intersectionality and Health Equity](#)<sup>1</sup>.

For further information, please visit:

[Government of Canada Health Inequalities Data Tool](#)<sup>2</sup>

[Public Health Ontario Health Equity Data Tool](#)<sup>3</sup>

Please note the date ranges used within these profiles vary based on the data available, and are included in the references. These Profiles were created in 2020 and updated in 2023. The intent is to update with each census cycle. For more information or if you have any concerns, please contact [healthequity@niagararegion.ca](mailto:healthequity@niagararegion.ca).

<sup>1</sup> <https://nccdh.ca/resources/entry/public-health-speaks-intersectionality-and-health-equity>

<sup>2</sup> <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/health-inequalities/data-tool/index>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/data-and-analysis/health-equity>

# Niagara Priority Profiles



Niagara Priority Profiles: Sex and Gender  
Version 2

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Note:

If referencing a hardcopy of this Niagara Priority Profile, please confirm that it is the most up to date version by visiting: <https://www.niagararegion.ca/health/equity/priority-profiles.aspx>

The version number can be found at the top of this page on each profile.

# Niagara Priority Profiles



## Sex and Gender: Demographic Information

### Sex

- **Sex** refers to the biological status of a person and can be categorized into three different terms: male, female, or intersex (1)
- **Intersex** refers to a person who has variations in their chromosomes, hormones, or anatomical features that fall outside of the conventional biological sex classifications of male and female (14)
- In 2021, Statistics Canada added “at birth” to the end of the sex question and added a new question on gender identity (11)
- As a result, the census now reports sex as Men+ to include men and/or boys as well as some non-binary individuals and Women+ to include women and/or girls as well as some non-binary individuals (1). These definitions are outlined by Statistics Canada.
- In Niagara in 2021, 51.3% of the population was women+ and 48.7% of the population was men+ (2)

### Gender and Sexual Orientation

- **Sexual Orientation** refers to the emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction that a person may feel towards another person (12)
- **Gender** refers to the characteristics of being a Woman, Man, Two-Spirit or another gender that is socially constructed, including norms, behaviours, and roles. A person’s gender may differ from the sex a person was assigned at birth (male or female) and may change over time (2) (3)
- **Gender Identity** is linked to a person’s sense of self and the sense of being a man, woman, both, or neither. It encompasses your **gender expression** through actions, dress and demeanor, including the name or pronoun you use and the type of clothing you wear (3)
- For a visual depiction to facilitate understanding of sex, gender identity, and gender expression, please visit [The Genderbread Person](https://www.itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2015/03/the-genderbread-person-v3/)<sup>4</sup>

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# Niagara Priority Profiles



- In 2021, Canada became the first country in the world to add a question specifically related to gender, giving the opportunity for individuals of all genders to report on their gender including those identifying as transgender and non-binary (11)
- **Cisgender** describes individuals whose gender identity conforms to their sex at birth (12)
- **Transgender** describes people who do not conform to their gender identity and/or gender role that was given to them at birth (1). People who are transgender may also describe themselves as trans
- People whose gender identity falls outside of the gender binary may refer to themselves as **non-binary**, genderqueer, gender fluid, and androgynous (1)
- The term trans may also be considered an umbrella term utilized by people who do not identify as males or females (15)
- **2SLGBTQ+** is an acronym that stands for [Two-Spirit<sup>5</sup>](#), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning (3)
- **Two-Spirit** is a term used within some Indigenous communities, encompassing cultural, spiritual, sexual and gender identity (16).
- The term Two-Spirit may be also be used by Indigenous people who identify as part of the 2SLGBTQ+ community
- **+** indicates other sexual orientations and gender identities that might not be directly captured in the acronym including those who identify as intersex, asexual etc.

To learn about terms to describe different gender identities and sexual orientations, please visit [2SLGBTQ+ What Does it Mean?<sup>6</sup>](#)

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<sup>5</sup> <https://2spirits.org/history/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-info/lgbtq2s-what-does-it-mean>

# Niagara Priority Profiles



## Transgender and Non-Binary People in Niagara

- In 2021 in the St. Catharines-Niagara Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), 680 individuals identify as transgender (17)
  - 310 (45.6%) of these individuals are transgender men and 365 (53.7%) are transgender women (17).
- 51.5% of individuals who are transgender in the St. Catharines-Niagara CMA are aged 15-34 while 47.8% are aged 34 years or older (17).
- 385 people in the St. Catharines-Niagara CMA identify as non-binary (17)
  - 75.3% of individuals who are non-binary in the St. Catharines-Niagara CMA are aged 15-34 while 24.7% are aged 34 years or older (17).
- The proportion of people identifying as non-binary or transgender in the St. Catharines-Niagara CMA (0.5%) are very similar to the reported proportions at the provincial level (0.5%) (17, 18).
- Note: The St. Catharines-Niagara CMA is not inclusive of the entire Niagara region, it excludes Grimsby and portions of West Lincoln

## Gender Wage Gap

- Women that have the exact same experience, demographic background, and socioeconomic background as men earn about \$7,200 dollars less than men annually in Ontario (4)
- The COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted the inequalities between men and women in the workforce in Niagara (5):
  - Women dominate the workforce in some of the hardest hit sectors, such as accommodation and food service and retail trade
  - Women overwhelmingly bore the brunt of employment losses in Niagara when the pandemic shutdown happened in March of 2020
  - Women are also more likely to reduce their workload to care for children. Despite the reopening of schools and childcare centres, families may still be keeping their children home for reasons such as affordability, flexibility, and safety. This disproportionately prevents women from re-entering the workforce, a trend which persists beyond the COVID-19 pandemic

# Niagara Priority Profiles



## Gender and Civic Participation

- Of the 128 elected council positions across Niagara, 40 (31.3%) are held by females, this just surpasses the 30% target for female representation in governance as set by the UN
- Of 30 seats on regional council, 9 are held by woman comprising 28.1%, this is just shy of the target set by the UN of 30% for female representation in governance (11)
- From 2014 to 2018, the number of female **candidates** in the regional and municipal elections across Niagara increased from 72 to 97 candidates, an increase of 34.7%<sup>7</sup>
- From 2018 to 2022 the number of female **candidates** in regional and municipal elections across Niagara decreased from 97 to 80 candidates, a decrease of 17.5%, but still an increase compared to 2014<sup>8</sup>
- Between 2014 and 2022 the number of females **elected** to regional and municipal council positions has steadily increased from 23 to 40 individuals<sup>9</sup>
- Of all community advisory committees or boards across Niagara, 45.1% of committee members are female, and 54.9% of committee members are male (6)
- These numbers suggest that in Niagara women are more likely to participate in local government through appointed committees and boards, rather than through elected positions (6)
- Barriers to civic participation for women include (6):
  - A lack of political confidence, particularly in terms of ability to fundraise, deal with the media and navigate the nomination and campaign processes
  - Women are perceived as less likely to be interested or knowledgeable about politics than men
  - Long hours required after traditional business hours, when children are not in school and childcare centers are closed
- Barriers to civic participation among trans and non-binary people include (13):
  - Difficulty changing key legal documents to align with their current gender identity or out of fear that doing so can have negative consequences
  - Lack of gender-affirming practices in some institutions

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# Niagara Priority Profiles



## Sex and Gender: Social Outcomes

Sex, gender, and sexual orientation are the core of each person's identity. One's gender identity and sexual orientation can impact social support networks and sense of belonging, which play an important role in emotional, mental, and physical health. Further, people identifying as 2SLGBTQ+ face barriers to good health stemming from discrimination, a lack of culturally relevant care, and substance use. Overall, health outcomes also may differ based on sex.



### Gender and Health

#### In Canada, compared to women, men:

- Are 1.2 times more likely to be unemployed

#### In Canada, compared to men, women:

- Are 1.4 times more likely to experience an occupational mismatch where they are overqualified for their position
- Are 1.3 times less likely to perceive their neighbourhood as safe
- Are 1.4 times more likely to experience food insecurity
- As seniors, live alone 1.9 times more often

**Data Source:** Pan-Canadian Health Inequalities Data (7)

## Victims of Violence in Canada

- According to the Government of Canada, 26% of all violent crimes in Canada are classified as family violence and 67% of family violence is directed at women and girls (8)
- According to Women's Shelters Canada, Indigenous women are 2.7 more times likely to be victims of violence compared to non-Indigenous women (9)

# Niagara Priority Profiles



## Barriers to Transgender Health

- Based on a summary of findings from the Trans PULSE project, a Canadian Institutes of Health Research study in Ontario, transgender people in Ontario face many barriers (10):
  - 34% have been verbally threatened or harassed but not assaulted
  - 20% have been abused physically or sexually
  - 13% have been fired because of who they were
  - 10% have had trouble getting medical attention and their care was stopped or denied

## Sexual Orientation and Outcomes



### In Canada, compared to those who identify as heterosexual:

- Members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community are 2.0 times more likely to experience homelessness
- Members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community are 1.2 times more likely to live in housing below standard
- Those who identify as bisexual are 1.5 times more likely to experience workplace stress
- Those who identify as bisexual experience are 2.7 times more likely to experience food insecurity (7)

# Niagara Priority Profiles



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# Niagara Priority Profiles



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