WATERLOO REGION'S VitalSigns

Can you meet the expenses of owning or renting a home?







Access to safe, stable, accessible, and affordable housing is one of our most basic human requirements.

Waterloo Region's Vital Signs, a snapshot on the quality of life in our community, encourages us to consider how having access to affordable housing affects some of our most vulnerable and marginalized citizens.

For someone trying to survive on a low income (less than \$20,000) like new immigrants, people suffering with mental illnesses, or those recently paroled, finding suitable housing is nearly impossible in Waterloo Region.

The past few years have seen our rental vacancy rates dip down lower than the suggested 3% – which is necessary for a competitive market for both consumers and landlords. We know that renting traditionally provides a more affordable housing option over home ownership and right now that rate (for a two bedroom apartment) is sitting at 2.9% – down from 3.6% in 2009.

And, to make matters worse, rent in our community has been increasing as well. In 2010, the average monthly rent for a two bedroom apartment was \$872. This would total \$10,464 per year.

As a community, it is in our best interest to create and sustain affordable housing. It is a matter of public safety but also affects other areas like health and education. Paying over half of your available resources to keeping a roof over your head is just not feasible. Doing so means that basic needs are not being met and that individuals are not able to actively participate in society.

To learn more about the housing issues in our community, talk to organizations like Supportive Housing of Waterloo (SHOW), Cambridge Shelter Corporation (The Bridges), John Howard Society, and the Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group (HHUG). Along with the Region of Waterloo, these groups are working hard on behalf of our most disadvantaged – but they can't do it alone.

Waterloo Region's Vital Signs is an checkup through which The Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation and the Cambridge & North Dumfries Community Foundation measure the vitality of our Region, identity significant trends, and invite community supporters to assign grades in 11 key areas critical to Waterloo Region's quality of life.

Community foundations provide a simple, powerful, and highly personal approach to giving and help others to make a lasting difference in their community.



