

Hamilton's Community Safety & Well-Being Plan 2025-2029



Hamilton



CONTENTS



1	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
2	HAMILTON AT A GLANCE	4
3	THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELL-BEING PLANS	5
4	HAMILTON'S CSWB 2021 PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS	7
5	GUIDING PRINCIPLES	9
6	SYSTEM ADVISORY LEADERSHIP TABLE	12
7	UPHOLDING INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP AND VOICES	13
8	REVISION PROCESS: INSIGHTS AND FINDINGS	14
	Asset Map	16
	Municipal Scan of CSWB Plans	17
	Data Analysis	18
	Community Engagement	20
9	HAMILTON'S CSWB PLAN MOVING FORWARD 2025-2029	23
	A New Approach Through Focus Areas	25
	Focus Area #1: System Capacity	27
	Focus Area #2: Equitable Access and Availability of Services	30
	Focus Area #3: Community Safety	32
10	CALL TO ACTION	35
11	PUTTING THE PLAN INTO ACTION	37
12	WORK CITED	39

01

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hamilton's Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan 2025-2029 builds on the initial plan established in 2021, incorporating updated data, community insights, and emerging focus areas aligned with Ontario's Community Safety and Well-Being Planning Framework. The plan takes a collaborative, action-oriented approach to enhancing safety, reducing risk, and improving the well-being of all residents.

Under the Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019, municipalities must develop a CSWB plan to address the root causes of social issues affecting community safety. Municipalities are also required to submit revised CSWB plans to the Ministry of the Solicitor General by July 1, 2025. This revised plan results from community engagement, data analysis, and multi-sector collaboration to reflect Hamilton's evolving needs.

In 2024, the City of Hamilton initiated a comprehensive review of its CSWB Plan to ensure it continues to reflect the evolving needs, challenges, and opportunities in the community.

The revision process included:

- City-wide community engagement through surveys, focus groups, and lived experience input
- Data analysis of population trends
- Asset mapping and a municipal scan to identify alignment and best practices.

The review confirmed that the six original CSWB priorities are still relevant, urgent, and inter-connected: hate incidents, substance use, violence, housing and homelessness, mental health and stigma, and access to income. They continue to reflect the community's most pressing needs and remain important alongside new priorities identified in the review. A renewed strategic structure, introduced later in this plan, will guide how these issues will be addressed.



Key Enhancements

- **Updated Focus Areas & Actions:** The plan builds on the 2021 CSWB Plan with a refined approach to better address emerging risks and systemic challenges. This will be achieved through three interconnected focus areas:
 - o System Capacity
 - o Equitable Access and Availability of Services
 - o Community Safety
- **Stronger Governance and System Leadership:** While the System Advisory Leadership Table (SALT) is already in place, this plan clarifies its role in oversight, accountability and strategic coordination.
- **Evidence-Based & Community-Driven:** We have strengthened data collection, evaluation and engagement to ensure our actions are responsive and evidence-based.
- **Strategic Alignment:** This plan enables stronger integration with existing City of Hamilton strategies, plans and community-led initiatives to maximize impact.
- **Ongoing Indigenous Engagement:** Structured revisions will follow to reflect ongoing Indigenous engagement and input.

Next Steps & Accountability

- **System Leadership Table Oversight:** The Table will continue to provide overarching governance, coordination, and accountability for the Plan. The table will guide implementation across the three focus areas, ensure cross-sector alignment, and foster shared leadership among partners. Enhancing SALT's role will also include deeper engagement with underrepresented voices and ongoing integration of partner feedback to support long-term systems change.
- **Annual Progress Reporting:** Transparent annual progress updates will continue to be provided through publicly accessible reports. A data dashboard will be developed and maintained to support real-time monitoring of community indicators tied to the goals of the Plan. An evaluation tool will be integrated into this process to help track performance, measure outcomes, and guide responsive adjustments throughout implementation.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** The plan will strengthen connections between City-led strategies and community-led initiatives. There is an opportunity to better coordinate efforts, share data, use resources more effectively, and develop stronger policies. Building these partnerships will also support joint advocacy, reduce duplication, and help expand successful approaches across systems.
- **Community Collaboration:** Community partners will continue to help guide how the CSWB Plan is put into action, including creating clear steps and ways to measure progress. Voices of people with lived experience will be involved throughout the process. Ongoing collaboration with service providers will ensure the Plan reflects the needs of Hamilton's diverse communities. Regular public updates will support accountability and transparency.

Hamilton's CSWB Plan 2025-2029 is a shared commitment between municipal government, community organizations, service providers and residents to create a safer, more inclusive and resilient Hamilton for all.

02

HAMILTON AT A GLANCE Demographic Overview



Hamilton is situated upon the traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Mississaugas.

THE **5th**
LARGEST
MUNICIPALITY
IN ONTARIO

HAMILTON SPANS
1,118 sq. km
WITH A POPULATION DENSITY OF
APPROX. **550 PEOPLE** PER SQ. KM²

2023
POPULATION OF
615,244
RESIDENTS³

PROJECTED TO GROW TO
809,661
BY 2046
reflecting ongoing
urban expansion and
demographic shifts.⁴

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Hamilton has an aging population. The senior population is the fastest-growing age group, highlighting the need for age-friendly services, healthcare accessibility, and housing options that accommodate aging residents.



SENIORS
(65+) make up
17.3%
of the population
surpassing the
16% of children and
youth under 15⁵

RACIAL DIVERSITY

The city has seen growing diversity in its newcomer population, with significant representation from South Asian, Black, Chinese, Filipino, and Middle Eastern communities.

Hamilton's increasing diversity underscores the importance of inclusive policies, culturally responsive services, and anti-racism initiatives.

IN 2021 **27.4%**
OF HAMILTON RESIDENTS
identified as belonging to a
racialized group⁶



IMMIGRATION & NEWCOMERS

Hamilton continues to be a destination for newcomers and refugees, contributing to the city's economic and cultural vibrancy. The city's policies and programs aim to enhance newcomer integration, access to employment, and social inclusion.



INDIGENOUS POPULATION

Hamilton is home to a growing Indigenous population, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit residents.

Indigenous communities contribute significantly to the city's cultural and social fabric while also facing disproportionate barriers in healthcare, housing, and economic security. Strengthening partnerships with Indigenous-led organizations remains a priority for advancing reconciliation.



LANGUAGE

While English remains the dominant language, Hamilton is home to a notable Francophone population and a wide array of multilingual communities⁵.

Language diversity presents both opportunities and challenges in ensuring equitable access to services, education, and community engagement.



Hamilton's evolving demographic landscape drives the focus areas of Hamilton's CSWB Plan 2025-2029, reinforcing the need for **equity-driven, inclusive, and community-responsive** solutions to support the city's growing and diverse population.

03

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELL-BEING PLANS

Provincial Mandate and Framework

The Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019², mandates that all municipalities in Ontario develop and implement a Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan. This requirement recognizes that proactive, collaborative, and preventive approaches are essential for improving safety and well-being.

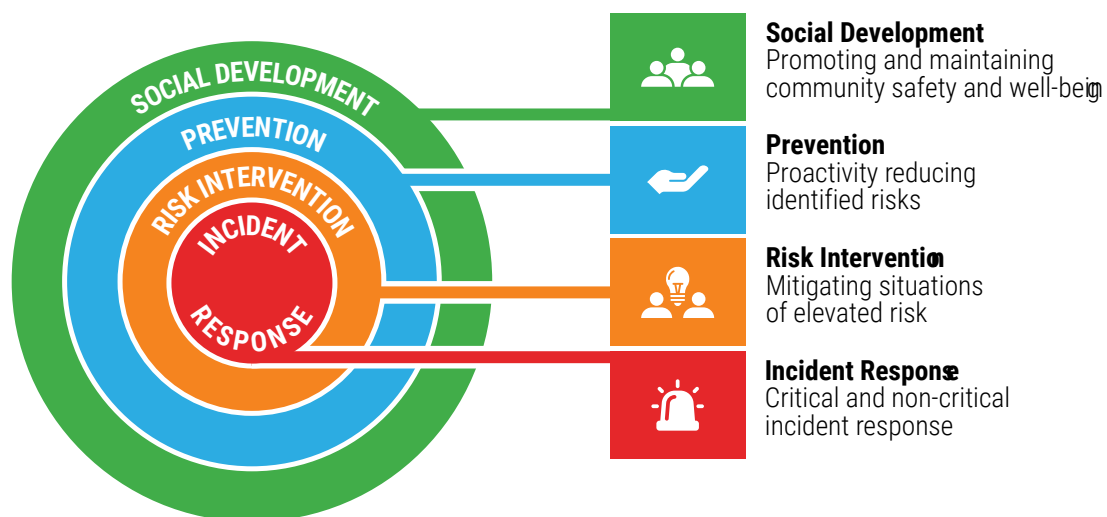
CSWB Plans play a crucial role in supporting organizations by enhancing system planning and building organizational capacity. This approach enables organizations involved in health, social services and safety to better coordinate their efforts, utilize resources more effectively, and implement sustainable interventions that address both immediate and long-term community needs. These plans also establish a structural framework that enhances service efficiency and strengthens community resilience and safety.

The CSWB Planning Framework is designed to:

- Shift focus from reactive emergency response to proactive risk prevention.
- Foster multi-sector collaboration between municipalities, police, health and social service providers, and community organizations.
- Address root causes of social issues that impact safety and well-being.
- Ensure that all residents feel safe, included and have access to necessary supports.

FOUR PILLARS OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELL-BEING PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The framework emphasizes four key areas for addressing community safety and well-being:



Key Requirements for Municipalities

Municipalities are required to:

- Develop a CSWB Plan in collaboration with multiple sectors.
- Conduct community engagement to identify local priorities and needs.
- Establish governance and accountability mechanisms to oversee plan implementation.
- Align local strategies with the provincial CSWB framework to ensure coordination.
- Report progress and ensure transparency through ongoing evaluation and public updates.

Hamilton's CSWB Plan 2025-2029 is built on this provincial framework, ensuring a structured, evidence-based approach that reflects community needs while aligning with Ontario's vision for safer, healthier and more inclusive communities.



04

HAMILTON CSWB 2021 PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since the approval of CSWB Plan in 2021, Hamilton has made significant progress in enhancing the safety and well-being of its residents. These advancements have been achieved through a combination of collaborative initiatives initiated by the CSWB Plan and contributions from System Advisory Leadership Table (SALT) member organizations. This collective work which addresses the key priority areas is reflected in a wide range of categories such as programs, training, advocacy, service enhancements, funding, community engagement and partnerships.

Key accomplishments include:

- **Enhancing Community Safety and Well-Being Governance**

- o Expanded committee representation to ensure diverse perspectives in planning and implementation.
- o Strengthened relationships across sectors to address service gaps.

- **Indigenous representation**

- o SALT membership now includes representation from the Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership (CHIL), Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg, and the City of Hamilton's newly formed Indigenous Relations Division.

- **Implementing Community Safety Initiatives**

- o Building Safer Communities (BSC) Grant: Provided nearly \$2.5 million multi-year funding for community agencies to implement initiatives aimed at reducing youth gun and gang violence in Hamilton.
- o Hamilton C.A.R.E.S.: Launched Hamilton's first multisectoral risk intervention situation table, connecting more than 20 community partners to support youth and families to the support resources they need.

- **Addressing Gender-Based Violence**

- o Hamilton City Council Action: Declared a gender-based violence epidemic, and allocated funding to the Woman Abuse Working Group to identify strategies to address gender-based and intimate partner violence in Hamilton.
- o Gender-Based Safety Audit: Conducted in partnership with the YWCA, resulting in recommendations to address safety concerns of women and gender-diverse individuals in public spaces. The findings and recommendations will be used to inform the next steps in creating a more inclusive city for women and gender-diverse individuals in Hamilton.

- **Anti-Hate and Anti-Racism Initiatives**

- o WeSupportHamilton.ca: A community-driven platform for reporting hate incidents and accessing resources, developed by the Hamilton Anti Racism Resource Centre and Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion, in partnership with the community.
- o Hamilton for All Campaign and Anti-Hate Toolkit: Created in collaboration with Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council, Anti-Hate Coalition and the community to promote awareness and empower residents to take action against discrimination.
- o Canadian Institute for Health Research Grant: Partnered with McMaster University, Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre, Empowerment Squared and Hamilton's Youth Strategy, on a research study to explore the effects of racism and discrimination on youth mental health.

- **Mental Health Crisis Response**

- o Conducted a review of the mental health crisis response system in Hamilton and other jurisdictions to enhance coordination and improve outcomes.
- o Secured funding for a designated senior leadership role to work with the Greater Hamilton Health Network to advance mental health initiatives.

- **Capacity Building and Community Engagement**

- o Collaborate 2024: Building Connections for a Resilient Community: A capacity-building and professional development event for human services practitioners, hosted in partnership with Mohawk College's Challenge 2025 to enhance networking and resource sharing among frontline providers.
- o Held community education sessions on topics including the Canada Disability Benefit, Indigenous justice, queer justice, and housing rights.
- o Implemented equity, diversity and inclusion and trauma-informed care training across organizations.

- **Housing and Homelessness**

- o Housing and Shelter Expansion: Added over 270 temporary shelter beds and launched a Tenant Support Team for eviction prevention.⁷

While these accomplishments demonstrate progress and momentum, gaps and emerging needs remain. Hamilton's CSWB Plan 2025-2029 builds on these achievements while adapting to new challenges and priorities identified through community engagement and data analysis.

05



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Hamilton's CSWB Plan 2025-2029 is grounded in key principles that promote equity, sustainability, and collaboration across all initiatives. These principles ensure inclusive, data-driven, and community-led approaches that respond effectively to Hamilton's evolving needs.

First established through extensive community consultations in 2021, these guiding principles have been refined through discussions at the CSWB System Advisory Leadership Table and extensive community consultation that took place during the 2025 revision process. This iterative approach ensures the CSWB Plan remains responsive, relevant and effective.



Truth and Reconciliation

- **Upholding Indigenous rights and sovereignty:** Develop initiatives that address historical and systemic barriers, while supporting decolonization.
- **Acknowledge Historical Injustices:** Recognize the impacts of colonization and work to address disparities in Indigenous communities.
- **Engage Indigenous Communities:** Collaborate with Indigenous communities to co-develop the CSWB Plan, respecting their knowledge and culture.
- **Promote Healing and Cultural Safety:** Prioritize restorative justice, trauma-informed support and culturally safe services



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility

- **Strengthening anti-racism, anti-oppression, and decolonization efforts:** Embed these values in decision-making processes to address systemic barriers comprehensively.
- **Ensuring diverse representation in governance:** This principle emphasizes the importance of including individuals with lived experience and Indigenous leadership, to reflect the true diversity of our community.
- **Embedding equity-based funding criteria:** Ensure criterion of funding fosters more equitable and accessible opportunities for service providers and communities, to enable a fairer distribution of resources.

Community Engagement

- **Offering multiple avenues for participation:** Ensure accessibility across all communities.
- **Amplifying voices of lived experience:** Prioritize those directly impacted to ensure they are involved in decision-making.
- **Partnering with trusted organizations and leaders:** Create safe spaces for meaningful dialogue.
- **Ensuring transparency and accountability:** Using community feedback to drive action.
- **Coordinating engagement efforts across sectors:** Reduce duplication and maximize impact.





Data and Evaluation

- **Piloting and scaling targeted initiatives:** Expanding programs with measurable, proven success.
- **Enhancing data coordination:** Improve data-sharing among agencies while safeguarding privacy and consent.
- **Strengthening Indigenous data governance:** Ensure Indigenous-led organizations manage and analyze data impacting their communities.
- **Ensuring equity in data collection:** Use data to guide equitable decision-making and actions.
- **Collaborating with post-secondary institutions and research bodies:** To support ongoing evaluation and knowledge-sharing.

Sustainability

- **Fostering collaborative funding approaches:** Reducing competition among service providers.
- **Sharing resources and training:** Strengthen sector-wide capacity.
- **Building and strengthening partnerships:** Support long-term collaboration and capacity-building.
- **Addressing historical funding disparities in Indigenous communities:** Advocate for necessary resources.
- **Enhance grant-writing and partnership efforts:** Expand funding opportunities to scale successful programs.



System Collaboration

- **Align existing City strategies and plans with the CSWB Plan:** To ensure a more cohesive and strategic approach.
- **Engaging with community-led initiatives:** Foster two-way communication between planning tables to strengthen partnerships, share insights and align efforts.
- **Enhancing cross-sectoral collaboration:** Improve service accessibility through shared resources, co-located services and streamlined information sharing to improve effectiveness.

06

SYSTEM ADVISORY LEADERSHIP TABLE

The System Advisory Leadership Table (SALT) is a mandated multisectoral group that brings together government agencies, community organizations, and institutional leaders to work together on community safety and well-being. SALT helps break down silos, improve coordination, and align efforts across different sectors.

To better reflect the community and include more voices, SALT expanded its membership to include more diverse perspectives. One key step was including the City's Director of Indigenous Relations. This helped bring Indigenous knowledge and experiences into the work, making the group's discussions and decisions more inclusive. It's an important milestone in helping SALT better serve the whole community.

The membership includes the following:

- Banyan Community Services
- City of Hamilton:
 - o Children's and Community Services
 - o Housing Services
 - o Indigenous Relations
 - o Public Health Services
- Centre de santé communautaire Hamilton Niagara
- Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership
- Conseil scolaire Viamonde
- Good Shepherd Centres
- Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion
- Hamilton Child and Family Supports
- Hamilton Community Legal Clinic
- Hamilton Health Sciences
- Hamilton Police Services
- Hamilton Police Services Board
- Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction
- Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board
- Hamilton Wentworth District School Board
- Indwell
- McMaster University
- Mohawk College
- Niwasa Kendasaawin Teg
- St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton
- United Way Halton & Hamilton
- Women Abuse Working Group
- YWCA Hamilton

07



UPHOLDING INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP AND VOICES

Hamilton is committed to fostering meaningful and respectful relationships with Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous voices, rights, and leadership are integral to the development and implementation of the CSWB Plan.

The CSWB Plan recognizes the unique histories, rights, and experiences of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, and acknowledges the ongoing impacts of colonialism. It supports reconciliation, self-determination, and equity.

While the 2025–2029 CSWB Plan reflects early engagement with leaders in the Urban Indigenous community in Hamilton, it does not yet fully reflect the voices and priorities of Indigenous communities. The CSWB team in partnership with SALT are working with the Indigenous Relations team to define next steps and create a respectful, trauma-informed approach to engagement.

As part of this commitment, the CSWB System Advisory Leadership Table is exploring the engagement of an Indigenous consultant to:

- Reflect on the work completed to date,
- Assess alignment with Indigenous priorities, and
- Guide culturally appropriate next steps.

Given that this work has not yet been undertaken, we recognize there are limitations to the approach and actions identified in this plan that may not fully reflect Indigenous communities.

The work forward will ensure Indigenous leadership, knowledge systems, and community-defined approaches to safety and well-being are fully embedded into the CSWB's actions and evaluation. This approach is rooted in trust, respect, and a commitment to ensuring Indigenous-led solutions shape the work ahead.



REVISION PROCESS: INSIGHTS AND FINDINGS

Hamilton's CSWB Plan was revised using two main approaches: community engagement and data analysis. This process was designed to ensure that the revised plan is based on both strong evidence and the real-life experiences of people in Hamilton.

Key components of the process included

- **Asset Map:** Developed to identify local strategies, networks, and groups already supporting safety and well-being.
- **Municipal Scan:** Five comparable municipalities were selected and CSWB plans reviewed to identify priorities, best practices, and key lessons.
- **Data Analysis:** A group of community and institutional representatives reviewed multiple data sources, to identify key risks and opportunities across CSWB priority areas.
- **Community Engagement:** Engagement activities gathered input from residents, community organizations, and service providers. These included: partner network conversations, agency-led discussions with vulnerable populations, a public survey, and creative engagement with children through the Art of Belonging initiative.

Throughout the process, the System Advisory Leadership Table (SALT) provided guidance and validation by reviewing data and engagement findings, identifying emerging risks, and making final recommendations.

By integrating diverse voices with local evidence, the revised 2025–2029 CSWB Plan reflects Hamilton's collective priorities and reinforces the city's commitment to collaborative, equity-driven solutions for community safety and well-being.

Asset Map

As part of the CSWB Plan review, a comprehensive asset mapping exercise identified strategies, networks, and working groups that support community safety and well-being across Hamilton. This work highlighted opportunities to better align, amplify, and integrate efforts across sectors.

The asset map is organized into three categories:

System-Level Coordination: Cross-cutting strategies and governance structures that support citywide planning and policy alignment across CSWB priorities.

CSWB Priority-Related Connections: Collaborative initiatives aligned with one or more CSWB priorities, contributing to outcomes in areas such as mental health, housing, substance use, and violence prevention.

Additional Connections: Focused groups addressing specific issues or populations, such as seniors, climate resilience, or digital inclusion.

Many strategies, tables or networks intersect categories, reflecting the complexity and interconnectedness of community needs.

In total, the asset map includes 60 connections.

Key Findings

The asset map identified that there is an opportunity for better system coordination and alignment between City-led and community-led initiatives and strategies, with the potential to reduce duplication and increase impact. It also highlighted the importance of having shared goals across sectors to foster a unified approach to community safety and well-being. This improved alignment would enhance resource efficiency, service coordination, and the collective impact of CSWB efforts.

Snapshot of Hamilton's Asset Map



SYSTEM LEVEL COORDINATION

Hamilton's Youth Strategy	Hamilton's Indigenous Health Strategy	Community Safety and Well-Being System Advisory Leadership Table
Hamilton's Youth Serving Agency Network	Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy	Communaute, Francophone Accueillante
Hamilton's Plan for an Age-Friendly Community	Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council	Greater Hamilton Health Network Partnership Council
Hamilton's Urban Indigenous Strategy	Hamilton C.A.R.E.S Situation Table	Hamilton Community Benefits Network
Housing and Homelessness Action Plan	Hamilton's Child and Youth Network	Hamilton Anchor Institutions Leadership
Hamilton's Housing Sustainability and Investment Roadmap	Interagence – Table de Concertation Francophone de Hamilton (Hamilton Francophone Roundtable)	Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committee

CSWB PRIORITY-RELATED CONNECTIONS

HATE INCIDENTS

Hamilton Anti-Hate Coalition
Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre
Hate Crime Case Review Team
Hamilton Police Race and Identity Based Strategy
Hate Prevention and Mitigation Initiative

MENTAL HEALTH AND STIGMA

Infant and Early Years Mental Health Committee
Youth with Complex Suicide Needs Table
Greater Hamilton Health Network Mental Health and Addictions Secretariat

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Women's Housing Planning Collaborative
Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee
Encampment Response Team
Rapid Intervention Support Team
Hamilton is Home Alliance
Housing Secretariat - Community Partnership Action Table

SUBSTANCE USE

Hamilton Drug Strategy
Greater Hamilton Health Network Mental Health and Addictions Secretariat

ACCESS TO INCOME

Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction
Hamilton's Food Advisory Committee
Living Wage Network
Hamilton Food Strategy

VIOLENCE

Woman Abuse Working Group
Building Safer Communities Collaborative
Elder Abuse Network
Violent Threat Risk Assessment Table
Anti-Human Trafficking Coalition

ADDITIONAL CONNECTIONS

Street Youth Planning Collaborative	Hamilton Recreation Master Plan	Professional Aboriginal Advocacy Network Group
Hamilton's Senior Advisory Committee	Hamilton's Early Years Plan	CMSM Early Years Advisory
Age Friendly Collaborative	City of Hamilton Digital Strategy	Early Years Equity and Engagement Advisory Group
Hamilton Paramedic Service Master Plan	Hamilton Public Health's Annual Service Plan	Heat Strategy
Hamilton Fire Department 10 Year Service Delivery Plan	Circle of Beads	Hamilton Health Coalition
10-Year Downtown Hamilton Revitalization Strategy	Hamilton Trans Health Coalition	

Disclaimer: This snapshot is intended as a starting point for ongoing development. It is considered an evergreen resource and may evolve over time to reflect new insights or community tables.

Municipal Scan of CSWB Plans

A review of CSWB Plans from five comparable municipalities (Ottawa, Windsor, York, Toronto, and Edmonton) was conducted. The results identified common challenges and priorities, including:

- Poverty and financial security
- Mental health
- Crime and violence
- Anti-racism and equity measures
- Housing and homelessness solutions
- Reconciliation efforts

Key Findings

The shared priorities show a clear trend: communities are tackling complex social issues with more holistic and integrated approaches to safety and well-being.

Successful CSWB plans are characterized by several key elements:

- **Integrated governance:** Strong collaboration between government, non-profits, and community groups forms a foundation for coordinated and sustained action.
- **Community engagement:** Meaningful engagement ensures initiatives are rooted in local realities and responsive to diverse needs.
- **Resource allocation:** Targeted funding and dedicated human resources are essential to the success and sustainability of CSWB efforts.
- **Data-driven strategies:** Evidence-informed planning and evaluation help shape effective interventions and track outcomes.
- **Anticipating challenges:** Lessons from other municipalities reveal persistent challenges such as securing long-term funding, coordinating across systems, and addressing systemic inequities in service delivery.

Insights from the scan offer Hamilton opportunities to align its work with national best practices and proactively address gaps or barriers to implementation.

Data Analysis

A Data Strategy Working Group was created to guide the data analysis, making sure the plan is based on evidence, best practices, and a strong understanding of Hamilton's needs. The group included representatives from organizations across the community, including:

- City of Hamilton:
 - o Children's and Community Services
 - o Housing Services
 - o Housing Secretariat
 - o Public Health Services
 - o Economic Development
 - o Transit (HSR)
- Good Shepherd Centre
- Greater Hamilton Health Network
- Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion
- Hamilton Community Foundation
- Hamilton Police Service
- Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board
- Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre
- Social Planning and Research Council
- Workforce Planning Hamilton
- YWCA Hamilton

The Data Strategy Working Group analyzed key data sources, including the Hamilton Public Health Community Health Status Report 2024. This report provides an overview of residents' health, emphasizing social determinants, health inequities, and key indicators. It served as a vital, evidence-based resource that helped identify community trends, challenges, and disparities, enabling the group to prioritize strategies that respond to the most pressing needs of Hamilton's diverse populations.

The group also partnered with the Muflehun Resource Centre, a research and policy organization funded by Public Safety Canada, that uses a public health approach to address complex social issues and build community resilience.

Through the CREWS (Community Resilience, Empowerment, and Well-being Support) Project²³, Muflehun worked with the Data Strategy Working Group to analyze 75 socio-ecological factors across areas like health, safety, education, and social cohesion.

Using local data, community context, and interviews with group members, the CREWS Profiles identified key risks and protective factors across the six CSWB priorities. These insights helped shape the group's final recommendations for the revised Plan.

Key Findings

The Data Strategy Working Group, using insights from the 2024 Public Health Community Health Status Report and CREWS Profiles developed in partnership with Muflehun, identified the following key priorities and areas of focus for the revised CSWB Plan:

- **Address unmet care needs:** Many marginalized communities face barriers to essential services due to limited availability of culturally appropriate care and uncoordinated access to supports like housing, mental health, and social services.
- **Support anti-racist and anti-oppressive actions:** Rising hate-motivated incidents and systemic inequities disproportionately impact racialized and vulnerable populations, calling for stronger, targeted measures to address racism and oppression.
- **Enhance affordable access to services:** Low-income residents continue to experience poorer health and social outcomes, highlighting the need for expanded access to affordable housing, income supports, and services addressing food insecurity.
- **Expand mental health and addictions services:** Increased demand and limited funding have strained mental health and addiction services, with urgent action needed to address opioid-related harms and improve system-wide coordination.
- **Support healthy child and youth development:** Gaps in early childhood and youth supports can lead to long-term challenges. A coordinated approach is needed to help children and youth thrive across developmental stages.
- **Improve public safety and community belonging:** When people see social challenges in public spaces, it can make them feel unsafe or divided from others. To help everyone feel safer and more connected, we need to make public spaces feel secure and welcoming, and support ways for people to build stronger relationships in their communities.





Community Engagement

Community Engagement was designed to gather insights from a diverse range of people living and working in Hamilton. A variety of engagement methods were used to capture community priorities, lived experiences and recommendations for enhancing safety and well-being in Hamilton.

The engagement approach included:

- **Community partner conversations:** Direct discussions with members of diverse tables and networks connected to the CSWB Plan, aimed at understanding key issues and challenges faced across sectors. This included discussions with the following tables:
 - Age Friendly Collaborative
 - Building Safer Communities Collaborative
 - Child and Youth Network
 - Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council
 - Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction
 - HamOnt Youth Steering Committee
 - Housing and Homelessness Action Plan
 - Seniors at Risk Collaborative
 - Street Youth Planning Collaborative Frontline Advisory Committee
 - Woman Abuse Working Group

- **Focused agency-led discussions:** Local organizations, working with the City of Hamilton, led engagement activities with vulnerable communities and residents with lived experience, to make sure their voices were heard and included.

Partners collaborated:

- BGC Hamilton Halton
 - Centre de santé communautaire Hamilton Niagara
 - City School by Mohawk College
 - Eva Rothwell
 - Good Shepherd Centre
 - Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction
 - Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre
 - Interval House
 - Mishka Social Services
 - Neighbour 2 Neighbour
 - Niwasa
 - YWCA Hamilton
- **Public survey on Engage Hamilton:** An online survey available to the public to collect broad-based feedback on community priorities.
 - **Art of Belonging Initiative:** A creative engagement initiative where children contributed drawings on the theme of belonging, offering unique insights into children's perspectives on inclusion and safety.



Key Findings:

Between October 2024 and January 2025, community engagement efforts gathered input from partner organizations, agencies, and Hamilton residents.

Community partner conversations: Discussions with local networks confirmed that all six CSWB Plan priorities from 2021 (hate incidents, substance use, violence, housing and homelessness, mental health and stigma, and access to income) remain relevant, with increasing urgency and interconnectedness. Emerging challenges included social isolation and food security.

Agency-led engagement:

- Community agencies engaged individuals from equity-deserving groups and communities with lived experience. All six CSWB priorities were seen as important, with housing and homelessness noted as the most urgent, followed by mental health. Participants emphasized that the priorities are deeply interconnected and difficult to rank.
- Emerging concerns raised included service access, affordability, food security, and barriers experienced by newcomers, youth, and seniors. Participants strongly emphasized the need for continued inclusion of lived experience voices in shaping the plan.

Public survey on Engage Hamilton: Nearly 1,000 survey responses were gathered; of which housing ranked as the top priority. Emerging concerns included crime, encampments, safety and homelessness, highlighting the need for coordinated action to address both existing and evolving challenges in Hamilton.

Children's perspective on belonging: Children from Hamilton childcare centres participated in an activity where they drew pictures reflecting their thoughts on belonging. Their artwork emphasized the importance of care, kindness and inclusivity, highlighting actions like helping friends, sharing and offering support. Belonging was also linked to inclusive environments, ensuring everyone feels accepted, has someone to play with and can participate in group activities.





HAMILTON'S CSWB PLAN

MOVING FORWARD 2025-2029

The updated CSWB Plan lays out a clear path for action. The System Advisory Leadership Table (SALT) will continue to lead this work, with clearer roles, stronger accountability, and more support for collaboration. The plan also strengthens its commitment to Indigenous-led planning, ensuring Indigenous communities have the voice and resources to guide decisions. These changes support a new way of working, built around three connected focus areas: System Capacity, Equitable Access and Service Availability, and Community Safety. This approach helps partners work together, break down barriers, and tackle the root causes of issues like poverty, housing, violence, and discrimination—so we can build safer, healthier communities for everyone.

Actions to Strengthen SALT Governance

To strengthen governance, the Terms of Reference for the SALT will be reviewed and updated to:

- Clarify SALT's mandate, roles, and governance model, including authority, responsibilities, and alignment with member organizations.
- Establish expectations around participation, communication, and resource commitment.
- Expand and diversify membership to ensure voices with lived experience and priority-area organizations are represented and engaged.
- Embed CSWB priorities into internal planning across member organizations and create mechanisms for regular feedback and alignment.
- Strengthen collaborative infrastructure through shared data, evaluation frameworks, co-location of services, and joint funding strategies.
- Establish shared accountability by developing performance indicators, timelines, and outcomes to monitor and report on implementation progress.

These actions will help ensure SALT remains a strong, coordinated leadership advisory body—supporting clear, accountable implementation of the CSWB Plan and advancing shared priorities across the community.



Actions to Strengthen Indigenous-Led Planning and Participation

Hamilton's CSWB Plan is committed to advancing safety and well-being through meaningful partnership with Indigenous communities. As implementation moves forward, the following actions will guide the CSWB's ongoing work, in alignment with the City's Urban Indigenous Strategy:

- Ensure that Indigenous-led organizations and representatives have a central role in shaping actions, reinforcing self-determination and Indigenous governance in community safety work.
- Collaborate with Indigenous community partners and the City's Indigenous Relations team to co-develop an engagement approach and data strategy rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing and community-defined priorities.
- Identify and advocate for resources to strengthen Indigenous-specific supports, with a focus on trauma-informed, culturally grounded programming that responds to the lived realities of Indigenous Peoples in Hamilton.
- Consult with an Indigenous specialist to support critical reflection on the CSWB Plan next steps.

Through these actions, Hamilton aims to build deeper trust, advance reconciliation, and ensure that Indigenous voices continue to shape and strengthen the City's approach to safety and well-being.

A New Approach Through Focus Areas

Guided by community input and data, the revised CSWB Plan introduces three connected focus areas that bring a more coordinated and strategic approach to improving safety and well-being in Hamilton.

These focus areas build on the six original priorities from the 2021 Plan—hate incidents, substance use, violence, housing and homelessness, mental health and stigma, and access to income. Within these six priorities, new and growing concerns like food insecurity and social isolation will also be addressed.

An important shift in the 2025–2029 Plan is how we, as a community, engage in this work. Rather than addressing each issue in isolation, the revised approach recognizes how challenges are connected. It encourages stronger collaboration, reduces duplication, and supports actions that are community-led, equity-focused, and easier to carry out together.

This shift helps move beyond reacting to individual problems and working collectively as individuals and as a system toward addressing root causes like poverty, discrimination, and lack of access to services—leading to more sustainable, long-term solutions.

FOCUS AREAS

1. System Capacity

This focus area strengthens how City and community partners work together. It aligns planning, improves coordination, reduces duplication, and builds systems that are more responsive and accountable. It helps address mental health and stigma, substance use, and access to income through more connected, resourced, and accountable systems.

2. Equitable Access and Service Availability

This focus area works to remove barriers and create fair, clear pathways to essential services—like housing, mental health support, food, and crisis intervention. It focuses on improving service navigation, cultural responsiveness, and accessibility, especially for equity-deserving groups, including newcomers, seniors, and youth. It addresses issues like housing and homelessness, income support, and food insecurity.

3. Community Safety

This focus area promotes both prevention and response strategies to reduce harm and build a sense of belonging and safety. It includes actions to address hate, violence, discrimination, and safety concerns in public spaces. The goal is to strengthen inclusion, reduce gender-based violence, and support safer, more connected communities.

A more detailed description of the three focus areas is found below in the following section.

COMMUNITY SAFETY & WELL-BEING ECOSYSTEM



Governance
& Legislation
Data Infrastructure
Intersectoral Collaboration
& Engagement
Resource Management
Knowledge
Mobilization

ENABLING FACTORS

CSWB VISION

Hamilton is a sustainable community where everyone feels safe, has a sense of belonging and can access the services they need.

FOCUS AREAS

Community
Safety

System
Capacity

Equitable
Access &
Service
Availability

PRIORITIES

Housing & Homelessness
Mental Health & Stigma
Access to Income

Hate Incidents
Substance Use
Violence

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Truth &
Reconciliation

Sustainability

Data &
Evaluation

Community
Engagement

System
Collaboration

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
& Accessibility

Focus Area #1: System Capacity

Current State: Hamilton's human services system is under pressure from growing social needs, limited funding, and fragmentation. While the CSWB Plan cannot fully fund or integrate the entire system, it can support efforts to better coordinate and align programs and services. By working together, CSWB members can help maximize existing system capacity and drive more effective responses.

What We Heard:

- Clear goals and actions across strategies and ways to demonstrate collective accountability for community safety and well-being are needed.
- System-level gaps include: the need for greater service integration, program funding and resources, data collection and collective commitment to addressing policy-related issues.

KEY INSIGHTS FROM NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL DATA

- **Social assistance and health integration improve health outcomes:** A coordinated approach that integrates social assistance programs with health services has been shown to improve physical and mental health outcomes. For instance, participants in both social assistance and health programs experienced a 30% improvement in health within six months.⁸
- **Housing and health services for homeless populations yield positive results:** Combining housing with health services for homeless individuals significantly improves health outcomes, with a 50% reduction in emergency medical visits and a 30% decrease in substance abuse after one year.⁹
- **Long wait times for mental health services:** As of 2020, the average wait time for mental health services for youth in Ontario was around 710 days, which has worsened in many regions. The demand for services significantly outpaces available resources. These long wait times reflect broader systemic issues impacting the mental health care system. In Ontario, average wait times for counselling and therapy are around 67 days, with more intensive treatment services averaging 92 days.¹⁰

KEY INSIGHTS FROM LOCAL DATA (HAMILTON-SPECIFIC)

- **Rising homelessness:** An estimated 1,693 Hamilton residents experienced homelessness in October 2023. That year, homelessness ranged from 1,465 to 1,985 individuals per month (as of October 2023). This was up sharply from 2020, which had a monthly range from 864 to 1,105 individuals.¹¹
- **Sharp increase in opioid-related deaths:** Hamilton's opioid-related death rate increased by 446% from 2005-2022.¹¹ The rate of opioid-related deaths decreased in 2023 and 2024 after peaking in 2022 but remains high and trends are consistently higher than the province.¹²
- **Increased hospitalizations for mental health conditions (2012- 2021):**
 - o Schizophrenia-related hospitalizations increased by 37.7%¹¹
 - o Substance use-related disorders hospitalizations increased by 46.1%¹¹
 - o Other adult personality disorders hospitalizations increased by 77.5%¹¹
- **Hamilton's Francophone community** consists of 9,005 individuals with French as their mother tongue and 50,125 bilingual residents. This highlights the need for robust French-language infrastructure.¹³ Hamilton supports this with institutions such as two school boards (Conseil Scolaire Viamonde and Conseil Scolaire Catholique Mon Avenir) operating five schools, a cultural centre (Centre francophone de Hamilton), a health centre (Centre de santé communautaire Hamilton/Niagara), and other services like daycare centres, language services (Collège Boréal) and Employment Centre (Options Emploi). The 6.5% bilingual population (50,125 people) further necessitates bilingual staff and resources to meet demand.¹⁴
- **Gender-based violence** continues to be an epidemic in Hamilton, with police responding to 12,042 domestic and intimate partner violence (DV/IPV) calls and laying 3,514 related charges in 2024.¹⁵ Despite these numbers, the issue remains significantly underreported – studies indicate that 90% of sexual assaults and 70% of domestic violence incidents go unreported.¹⁶
- **Homelessness and poverty** disproportionately affect certain groups in Hamilton, with 22% of households led by single mothers living in core housing need—significantly higher than the citywide average of 13%.¹⁷ Additional data was drawn from the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) Tool, developed by the Housing Assessment Resource Tools (HART). This tool uses 2021 Census data to identify core housing needs and support evidence-based housing planning which highlights similarly elevated housing vulnerability among Indigenous-led, youth-led (under 24), Black-led, and women-led households.¹⁷

Note: The information provided is in the form of descriptive statistics that may not fully reflect the health experiences of a community. This descriptive information requires contextualization through shared dialogue to gain a deeper understanding of these complex issues. It is important to acknowledge that data are not perfect, and we must consider the limitations of what data alone can tell us. Refer to the 'About this Report' section of Hamilton's Community Health Status Report for more information regarding the use and limitations of data (visit www.Hamilton.ca/HealthData).

ONGOING INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS

- **Coordinating City and Community Efforts:** City staff are working to better align City strategies with community-led initiatives to improve coordination, make better use of resources, and increase collective impact on safety and well-being..
- **Strengthening Governance and System Leadership:** The CSWB governance model is being enhanced to focus more effectively on securing resources and shaping policies that support long-term system change.
- **Advancing Gender-Based Safety:** An action plan will be developed to implement recommendations from the YWCA-led Gender-Based Safety Audit, aiming to improve safety for women and gender-diverse individuals across Hamilton.
- **Improving Mental Health Access and Collaboration:** The Greater Hamilton Health Network (GHHN) Mental Health Secretariat is coordinating services, advocating for resources, and building cross-sector partnerships to support mental health and well-being.
- **Promoting Health Equity:** GHHN partners are working on health equity initiatives to reduce gaps in health outcomes and access across diverse populations in Hamilton.
- **Responding to Substance Use:** Staff supporting Hamilton's Drug Strategy are focused on prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery to support residents affected by substance use.
- **Tackling Poverty and Financial Insecurity:** The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction is advocating for improvements to income security, social assistance, and access to a living wage.
- **Addressing Gender-Based Violence:** The Woman Abuse Working Group is working to close service gaps for women experiencing abuse and is leading efforts to increase awareness, training, and education about gender-based and intimate partner violence.

GOAL STATEMENT:

By 2029, Hamilton will enhance cross-sector collaboration among CSWB member organizations, strengthening knowledge sharing, coordination and integration of programs and services and efforts, in order to increase system capacity.

- **Support joint efforts across sectors** to strengthen system capacity and respond to a range of community safety and well-being needs. This includes better coordination, shared learning, and identifying opportunities to align or streamline services where possible.
- **Improving widespread training adoption** which will increase service providers' capacity in cultural competency, trauma-informed care and crisis intervention.
- **Sharing and aligning efforts to secure long-term funding**, including advocating for financial sustainability through a mix of government, grant and private sector contributions.
- **Developing a fully operational Community Safety and Well-Being dashboard** which will provide relevant and updated community-level data that drives informed decision-making and tracks progress.



Focus Area #2: Equitable Access and Service Availability

Current State: Inequitable access to income support, food, housing, and mental health care creates barriers to timely support. Individuals with complex needs face additional challenges navigating multiple service pathways, limiting access to essential care.

What We Heard:

- Improved service coordination is needed to provide low-barrier access and additional holistic wraparound supports.
- Increased awareness of available services and supports for both service providers and residents is needed.
- Greater engagement with individuals with lived experience is necessary to design effective solutions.
- Equity-deserving communities face disproportionate gaps in specialized healthcare services.
- A Housing First approach should be prioritized.
- Food security is an emerging concern, including affordability, access to nutritious food and the need for more food support programs.

KEY INSIGHTS FROM NATIONAL DATA

Low-income Canadians face significant barriers to accessing healthcare, including transportation difficulties, lack of affordable services and long wait times. These factors contribute to poorer health outcomes, such as higher rates of chronic diseases and mental health issues¹⁸.

KEY INSIGHTS FROM LOCAL DATA (HAMILTON-SPECIFIC)

- Approximately 8% of Hamilton residents were living in poverty in 2020, young adults aged 18-24 years old experiencing the highest rate of poverty at 13.7%.¹¹
- In 2021, more than one in five households in Hamilton lived in unaffordable housing. Between 2020 and 2023, Homelessness increased in Hamilton with over 1,400 individuals identified as homeless in each month in 2023.¹¹
- Unintentional poisoning and intentional self-harm are the primary causes of death for individuals aged 20 to 44, accounting for 39.3% and 11.1% of deaths in that age group, respectively.¹¹
- Food insecurity affected 27.3% of Hamilton households in 2023, up from 18.1% in 2022.¹⁹
- Hamilton residents in low-income areas are nearly three times more likely to die from diabetes, five times more likely to self-harm, and six times more likely to experience assault.¹¹
- With 6.4% of the population speaking French, ensuring equitable access to adapted services in French is essential. This is particularly important for the 2.4% of immigrants and 3.9% of recent immigrants who are Francophone, many of whom may face language barriers.²⁰

Note: The information provided is in the form of descriptive statistics that may not fully reflect the health experiences of a community. This descriptive information requires contextualization through shared dialogue to gain a deeper understanding of these complex issues. It is important to acknowledge that data are not perfect, and we must consider the limitations of what data alone can tell us. Refer to the 'About this Report' section of Hamilton's Community Health Status Report for more information regarding the use and limitations of data (visit www.Hamilton.ca/HealthData).

ONGOING INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS

- **Greater Hamilton Health Network (GHHN) and the City of Hamilton's Mental Health Crisis Response Integration:** A review of Hamilton's mental health crisis system led to new funding for a senior leadership role to enhance coordination with service providers.
- **Hamilton's Anti-Racism Resource Centre (HARRC):** Promotes social justice, raises awareness of systemic racism and operates to reduce racial disparities in health and other essential services. In partnership, the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion (HCCI) and HARRC also operate an online community hate reporting tool.
- **Hamilton C.A.R.E.S Situation Table:** Explores opportunities for multisectoral planning to provide holistic, wraparound services for individuals and families.
- **Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC):** Connects newcomers to community resources to improve equitable access to affordable housing, food, employment and healthcare.
- **Empowerment Squared and Hamilton Child and Family Supports:** Collaborating to support newcomer and marginalized families, with a focus on Black and racialized children and youth to address systemic barriers and promote positive outcomes.
- **Hamilton's Drug Strateg:** A comprehensive, coordinated approach that focuses on prevention, treatment, harm reduction and recovery for residents suffering from addiction.

GOAL STATEMENT:

By 2029, Hamilton aims to strengthen seamless, equitable access to prevention and early intervention services among CSWB members by:

- **Embedding equitable practices into local policies,** such as applying an equity lens when developing funding models or considering waitlist policies. This ensures that all future community planning and resource decisions actively prioritize inclusion and remove barriers for equity-deserving groups.
- **Enhancing service navigation supports** to streamline referrals and reduce wait times for individuals with complex needs.
- **Exploring technology** to improve knowledge-sharing and timely access to support services for both residents and providers.
- **Collaborating to develop service offerings** that improve access to services, supports and resources (e.g. low barrier services, community hubs).

Focus Area #3: Community Safety

Current State: Community safety in Hamilton is shaped by a complex set of factors. While some residents express concerns about increasing crime and demand greater security, others face daily threats rooted in systemic discrimination, racism, and oppression. Hate-motivated actions, gender-based violence, and rising incidents of targeted attacks against racialized and 2SLGBTQI+ communities contribute to a growing sense of unsafety. At the same time, violence and mental health-related crises continue to impact individuals and families. A balanced approach is needed—one that distinguishes between the root causes of violence (e.g., poverty, trauma, and service gaps) and those of hate (e.g., racism, oppression, anti-immigrant sentiment, misogyny, and anti-trans rhetoric). Effective community safety requires responses that address both through equity-driven, community-informed, and coordinated action.

What We Heard:

- Unhoused individuals face significant safety risks due to lack of housing and supports.
- Residents identified rising hate, gun violence, property crime, and unsafe public spaces – especially near encampments – such as major safety concerns.
- Social isolation, lack of belonging, and the need for stronger community ties were noted as contributing factors to perceptions of unsafety.
- There was a strong call to address the rise in discrimination, racism, and anti-trans rhetoric, which contribute directly to feelings of unsafety and exclusion.
- Community feedback also emphasized that hate incidents and violent crime must be understood and addressed as distinct issues with different root causes.

KEY INSIGHTS FROM NATIONAL DATA

- **Sense of belonging is linked to better health outcomes:** Research indicates that higher levels of belongingness are associated with improved health outcomes, including better self-assessed health and lower rates of chronic diseases.²¹

KEY INSIGHTS FROM LOCAL DATA (HAMILTON-SPECIFIC)

- Since 2020, police-reported hate crimes in Hamilton have increased by 175%, primarily targeting the Black community, as well as the Jewish, Muslim, and LGBTIQ+ communities (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer or questioning).¹¹
- Hate incidents targeting sexual orientation and gender identity rose by 433% (12 occurrence) between 2019 and 2023, primarily targeting the Two-Spirit and LGBTIQ+ community.¹¹
- Gender-based violence, rooted in misogyny, is increasingly being recognized as a hate crime. The Women Abuse Working Group (WAWG) is advocating for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) to be formally classified as hate crimes and counted in hate crime statistics—framing them as critical public safety issues. In 2024, Hamilton police responded to 12,042 domestic violence/intimate partner violence calls and laid 3,514 related charges, underscoring the urgent need for systemic change.¹⁵
- Suicide and homicide are leading causes of death for young adults, with homicide rates reaching a record high in 2021.¹¹

- In 2021, Hamilton had 250.6 emergency visits per 100,000 for assault injuries, significantly higher than the Ontario average of 192.8 per 100,000. These injuries show considerable inequities in socioeconomic conditions.¹¹
- In 2024, Hamilton saw firearm-related offences surge significantly, reaching 692 incidents, representing a 38% rise over 2023. At the same time shootings also rose sharply, with 60 incidents reported in 2024, an alarming 71% increase compared to the year before.²²

Community safety involves integration and social cohesion, which can be supported by understanding Francophone immigrants need. The statistics indicate the need for community programs addressing cultural adaptation, housing, and employment, especially for recent immigrants (67.3%). Hamilton's designation as a Welcoming Francophone Community under Canada's Action Plan for Official Languages, announced in 2019, aims to enhance integration, which can reduce isolation and improve safety outcomes.

Note: *The information provided is in the form of descriptive statistics that may not fully reflect the health experiences of a community. This descriptive information requires contextualization through shared dialogue to gain a deeper understanding of these complex issues. It is important to acknowledge that data are not perfect, and we must consider the limitations of what data alone can tell us. Refer to the 'About this Report' section of Hamilton's Community Health Status Report for more information regarding the use and limitations of data (visit www.Hamilton.ca/HealthData).*

ONGOING INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS

- **Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre (HARRC):** Provides education, support, and advocacy for individuals impacted by racism, and supports systemic change through partnerships and research.
- **Downtown Hamilton Creative Placemaking Grant Program:** Launched through the City's Planning and Economic Development Department, provides funding for new, community-led placemaking projects that temporarily animate outdoor public spaces in a designated area of Downtown Hamilton. These placemaking initiatives allow residents to feel ownership of public space and use it in a way that is specific to community needs.
- **Rapid Intervention Support Team (RIST):** A collaborative initiative supporting individuals experiencing homelessness, mental health challenges, or addiction issues. RIST was established with funding from the Ontario government's Community Safety and Policing Grant Program, bringing together various community organizations to offer wraparound case management.
- **NPAAMB Indigenous Youth Employment and Training:** funded by Hamilton's Building Safer Communities grant initiative supports Indigenous youth at risk of or exiting gang involvement with culturally grounded training and certification in the field of sport.
- **Suspension Alternate Program:** funded by Hamilton's Building Safer Communities Grant supports youth in accessing culturally and linguistically responsive services. Working in partnership with the YMCA, Centre de Sante Communautaire Hamilton Niagara is providing this alternate school suspension program to French-speaking students in Hamilton to assist them with accessing support and services and reintegrating into school after a suspension.

- **Community Resource Development:** Creating public education tools for residents and businesses to connect individuals in need with appropriate services.
- **Hamilton's Building Safer Communities Grant initiative:** Multi-year funding for youth-focused programs aimed at preventing gun and gang violence, supporting organizations like BGC Hamilton, YMCA, YWCA, Empowerment Squared, Centre De Sante Communautaire Hamilton Niagara, NPAAMB Indigenous Youth Employment and Training, Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg, STAC Hamilton and Wesley.
- **YWCA Gender-Based Safety Audit:** Recommendations from this audit will inform future planning to improve public safety for women and gender-diverse individuals.
- **Woman Abuse Working Group (WAWG):** Works to address service gaps and increase awareness around gender-based and intimate partner violence, which are recognized as forms of hate and oppression rooted in misogyny.

GOAL STATEMENT:

By 2029, Hamilton will foster a safer, more inclusive community through the CSWB by working together to:

- **Reduce hate crimes, assault, homicide and property crime rates** through multisector interventions that target the root causes of violence and hate.
- **Confronting racism, oppression, and systemic discrimination** through anti-hate and anti-oppression strategies that ensure equity and dignity for all communities.
- **Increasing residents' sense of safety and belonging** through inclusive public spaces, community engagement, and cultural expression.
- **Expanding community-led safety programs and crisis response initiatives** to support diverse needs in culturally responsive and trauma-informed ways.



CALL TO ACTION

A Message from the CSWB System Advisory Leadership Table

The work being done within our Hamilton community—day in and day out—is truly remarkable. Residents, organizations, and partners are the driving force behind real, positive change, and the impact of these efforts cannot be overstated. The dedication, passion, and commitment to making Hamilton a safer, healthier, and more connected city is deeply appreciated by all.

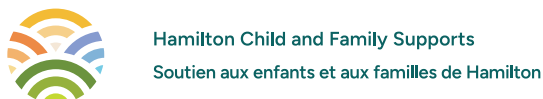
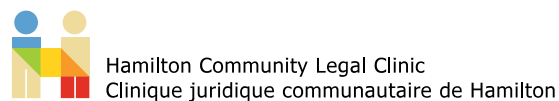
In these challenging times, social cohesion has never been more important. Strong communities are built on relationships—on people stepping up for one another, supporting neighbours, and finding strength in collaboration. However, we are also witnessing increasing divisions and polarization that threaten the very fabric that holds us together.

So, the question is: What does it mean to be a good neighbour? Being a good neighbour means showing up—not just in times of crisis, but in everyday moments. It means recognizing that the challenges we face—whether poverty, housing insecurity, mental health struggles, or community safety—are not isolated issues. They are interconnected, complex, and require collective solutions.

The Community Safety and Well-Being System Advisory Leadership Table is committed to working collaboratively with the community to address these challenges. Many are now facing homelessness, food insecurity, and financial hardship—challenges that were once unimaginable to them. The reality is that the systems in place are being stretched, and the need for support is growing.

This call to action is for the entire community. True impact comes from collaboration—when everyone, from residents to organizations and sectors, works together to break down silos and align efforts for the greater good. Together, we can build a stronger, more supportive network that meets people where they are, ensuring that no one is left behind.

As a community, the path forward is clear: Lead with compassion, strengthen collaborations, amplify efforts, and move forward with urgency. Be intentional in bridging divides, fostering connections, and taking action to ensure Hamilton is a place where everyone is supported, valued, and safe. The work ahead requires all of us, and together, we can create lasting change.



10

PUTTING THE PLAN INTO ACTION

As we move forward with implementing Hamilton's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, our commitment to creating a safer, more inclusive and equitable city remains stronger than ever. To build a future where every individual feels secure, valued and supported, we must take deliberate steps to review, enhance and evolve the systems that guide our work.

The next phase of this plan will focus on reviewing and enhancing the governance model to ensure that decision-making is transparent, inclusive and responsive to the needs of all community members. A key priority will be actively including those with lived experience—individuals whose perspectives must be at the heart of our actions. Their insights will be invaluable in shaping the future of community safety, ensuring that the services we provide are not only effective but compassionate and aligned with the real needs of those most impacted by issues of safety and well-being.

Another critical component of our implementation plan is our continued commitment to a community-led approach to safety and well-being. Community partners and residents are best positioned to identify issues, develop culturally appropriate solutions and drive sustainable changes. By fostering ownership, trust and collaboration, we will ensure that diverse voices are heard, social connections are strengthened, and collective responsibility for safety and well-being is reinforced.



To support evidence-informed decision-making and accountability, we will develop a comprehensive data strategy and evaluation plan. This will enhance our ability to track progress, measure success and hold ourselves accountable. By focusing on data-driven decision-making, we can ensure that our efforts are making a meaningful impact and are responsive to emerging needs and challenges.

At the heart of this plan is a commitment to long-term system change. Sustainable improvements in community safety require more than just short-term interventions they will require enhanced service coordination across sectors. By breaking down silos and strengthening partnerships between local government, social services, law enforcement and community organizations, we can create a seamless, efficient and accessible support network that addresses the root causes of safety and well-being concerns.

Community cohesion is another fundamental priority. Through intentional initiatives, our aim is to create a Hamilton where everyone feels safe, has a sense of belonging and sustainably has opportunities to thrive—whether through education, healthcare, food security, housing, income stability or cultural and social expression.

Safety is not just the absence of crime but also the presence of trust, connection and belonging. Through this work, we will create an environment where every individual in Hamilton is valued, included and empowered to contribute to the collective good. This commitment to belonging will help to build a stronger and more resilient community.

As we move forward, we are excited about the opportunities ahead. Together, through collaboration, accountability and a shared vision for a safer and more inclusive Hamilton, we will continue building a city where all individuals can thrive.



WORK CITED

1. Ontario. *Community Safety and Well-Being Planning Framework: Booklet 3: Shared Commitment to Ontario*. Ontario.ca. Accessed April 4, 2025.
<https://www.ontario.ca/document/community-safety-and-well-being-planning-framework-booklet-3-shared-commitment-ontario/section-2-community-safety-and-well-being-planning>.
2. Ontario. *Community Safety and Well-Being Act, 2019*. Laws of Ontario, 2019.
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/19c01>.
3. CityPopulation, “*Hamilton (Census Division, Canada) - Population Statistics, Charts, Map and Location*,” last modified 2023, accessed April 15, 2025,
https://www.citypopulation.de/en/canada/ontario/admin/3525__hamilton/.
4. Ontario Ministry of Finance, *Ontario Population Projections*, accessed April 15, 2025,
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-population-projections>.
5. Statistics Canada. “Focus on Geography Series, 2021 Census: Hamilton (Census subdivision).” Last modified February 9, 2022.
<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/fogs-spg/Page.cfm?Dguid=2021A00053525005&Lang=E&topic=1>
6. Statistics Canada. “2021 Census of Population: Immigration, ethnocultural diversity and languages in Canada.” Last modified June 21, 2023.
<https://www.nhs-enm.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/hlt-fst/ethno/index-eng.cfm>.
7. City of Hamilton. “Approved Temporary Shelter Expansion.” Last modified March 21, 2025.
<https://www.hamilton.ca/people-programs/housing-shelter/preventing-ending-homelessness/approved-temporary-shelter-expansion>
8. Snyder, Heather, Nancy D. S. Thompson, Kelly L. Furlong, and Jennifer L. Williams. “Integrated Health and Social Services: A Multiple Case Study in Ontario, Alberta, and Nova Scotia.” *International Journal of Integrated Care* 22, no. 1 (2022): 12-27.
<https://doi.org/10.5334/ijic.ICIC21181>.
9. Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. *Housing and Health Services for Homeless Populations: A Study of Integrated Approaches and Health Outcomes*. 2020.
<https://www.homelesshub.ca>.
10. Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario. *Long Wait Times for Mental Health Services*. Toronto: Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario, 2020.
<https://ontario.cmha.ca/documents/long-wait-times-for-mental-health-services/>

11. Hamilton Public Health Services. *Hamilton's Community Health Status Report*. Hamilton: City of Hamilton, 2024.
12. Hamilton Opioid Information System: <https://www.hamilton.ca/people-programs/public-health/alcohol-drugs-gambling/hamilton-opioid-information-system#opioid-related-deaths>; 2025.
13. Statistics Canada. *Focus on Geography Series, 2021 Census – Hamilton (Census Metropolitan Area)*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2022. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/fogs-spg/Page.cfm?dguid=2021S0503537&lang=E&topic=6>.
14. Statistics Canada, *Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population*, Table: 98-316-X2021001, "Knowledge of Official Languages," accessed April 15, 2025, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>.
15. Hamilton Police Service, "Domestic Violence Unit," accessed April 15, 2025, <https://hamiltonpolice.on.ca/about/specialized-units/investigative-services/domestic-violence>
16. Lucie Ogrodnik, Mia Dauvergne, Shannon Brennan, and Sara Cotton, *Criminal Victimization in Canada: Key Trends from 1999 to 2014*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X, Juristat (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2018), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/85-002-x/2018001/article/54960-eng.pdf>.
17. Housing Assessment Resource Tools (HART), "City of Hamilton - 2021, Ontario Housing Needs Assessment Data," accessed April 15, 2025, <https://hart.ubc.ca/our-resources/city-of-hamilton-2021/>.
18. Liu, M., Smith, M., and Schofield, D. "The Role of Social Determinants in Healthcare Access and Health Outcomes in Low-Income Canadian Populations." *Canadian Family Physician* 67, no. 5 (2021): 379-385.
19. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario), *Household Food Insecurity Snapshot – PHU (2019 to 2023)*
20. Statistics Canada, "Profile of Languages, 2021 Census of Population," Table 98-400-X2021065, accessed April 15, 2025, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm>
21. Ammi, Mehdi, Antoine Dedewanou, and Ian Allan. "The Effect of Belongingness on Health and Its Mechanisms: Evidence from Canada." *Applied Economics*, 2024.
22. City of Hamilton. *Hamilton Police Service Budget Presentation*, January 2025. Hamilton: City of Hamilton, 2025. <https://pub-hamilton.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=435231>
23. CREWS Project. *Community Resilience Early Warning System*. Muflehun. Accessed April 2025. www.muflehun.org.
24. Art of Belonging. *Today's Family*, July 2024. Art of Belonging, City of Hamilton, ON.
25. Art of Belonging. *East End Scholars*, July 2024. Art of Belonging, City of Hamilton, ON
26. Art of Belonging. *Umbrella Family Centres*, July 2024. Art of Belonging, City of Hamilton, ON

