

# Study: Life satisfaction across census metropolitan areas and economic regions in Canada, 2009 to 2013

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From 2009 to 2013, most Canadians were generally satisfied with their life as a whole. Residents of the census metropolitan areas (CMAs) of St. John's, Trois-Rivières and Saguenay were, on average, most satisfied with their life as a whole, while those in the CMAs of Vancouver, Toronto and Windsor were least satisfied.

Data from the General Social Survey (GSS) from 2009 to 2013 and the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) from 2009 to 2012 showed average life satisfaction across the country was 8 on a scale of 10 over this period.

By combining GSS and CCHS responses over several years, a new study examines the life satisfaction of nearly 340,000 Canadians, making it possible to compare results reliably across CMAs. As well, the study covers the population living outside CMAs, distributed across 58 economic regions across the country.

Across CMAs, there was a difference of almost 11 percentage points in the proportion of individuals rating their life satisfaction as 9 or 10. The shares were largest in Greater Sudbury, Thunder Bay, St. John's, Saint John and Saguenay, all between 42% and 45%, and smallest in Vancouver, Toronto, Barrie and Edmonton at 34% to 35%. There was a difference of almost 14 percentage points across CMAs in the proportion of individuals rating their life satisfaction as 8 or higher.

At the other end of the scale, 14% of all Canadians rated their life satisfaction as 6 or less. This proportion was smallest in Saguenay, Québec and Trois-Rivières at less than 10%, and largest in Windsor, Toronto, Abbotsford–Mission and Peterborough at about 17%.

These differences across CMAs changed very little when the socioeconomic characteristics of individuals, such as their age, immigration status, employment status, household income, and self-assessed health status, were taken into account. Differences were also found when CMAs of similar size were compared. For example, after taking into account socioeconomic characteristics, the share of individuals rating their life satisfaction as 8 or higher was 65% in Toronto and 71% in Montréal, and ranged from about 65% in Barrie and Guelph to 73% to 76% in Thunder Bay, St. John's, Saint John, Trois-Rivières and Saguenay.

## Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [3226](#) and [4503](#).

The research article "How's Life in the City? Life Satisfaction Across Census Metropolitan Areas and Economic Regions in Canada," which is part of *Economic Insights* ([11-626-X](#)) series, is now available from the *Browse by key resource* module of our website under *Publications*.

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