

WINKLER'S

# Vital Signs®

Community Well-Being 2024:  
Seeing the Big Picture



WINKLER  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION



## About the Winkler Community Foundation

The Winkler Community Foundation is passionate about growing partnerships in our community because we believe our community is stronger together. The Foundation invests in building endowment funds, providing ongoing funding to local non-profit and charitable organizations through grants, supports young people pursuing post-secondary education through education awards, and funding leadership initiatives.

Our mission is to identify, support and enhance the quality of life in our community.

## A Message from the Board Chair, Barb Neufeld

Since Manitoba's first Vital Signs project was launched by our foundation in 2012, which was followed by our second in 2018, there have been many changes in the community and in the world around us. From new technological developments to the COVID-19 pandemic, our community is not the same as it was 12 years ago. Now, more than ever, it's important to look at how we can improve our community's quality of life.

Community knowledge is critical to inform the Winkler Community Foundation as we collaborate with other initiatives to ensure our community's needs are met now, and in the years to come.

The 2024 WCF Vital Signs project provides local government, businesses, charitable sector leaders and others within the community the knowledge needed to make strategic and informed decisions that support the well-being of our community.

We are grateful for the community's participation in providing local information through workshops and surveys. This project was made possible by generous local sponsors, and by Manitoba Blue Cross. We look forward to the continued growth and success of our community and believe this report will create a platform to support conversation and action to address the well-being of our community.



## A Message from Endow Manitoba

Endow Manitoba, a program of The Winnipeg Foundation, was established in 2018 to "advance the sustainability, growth, and impact of Manitoba's community foundation network." As Canada's most generous province, Manitoba exemplifies the spirit of giving, with the work of community foundations serving as a testament to this generosity.

Community foundations hold a special place within their communities. They represent a "meeting space" between smart and caring donors and the organizations undertaking critical community work, creating lasting impact that enhances community well-being now and into the future. These foundations embody the heart and soul of their communities, reflecting the shared values and aspirations of the people they serve.

Endow Manitoba would like to acknowledge the exceptional leadership of the Winkler Community Foundation, the Vital Signs Committee, and the unwavering support of the Winkler/Stanley communities. The undertaking of their third Vital Signs initiative is truly commendable, as it brings the community together and generates meaningful insights that inform and inspire collective action toward positive change.

The Winkler Community Foundation's efforts are not just strengthening the fabric of their community, but also setting an inspiring example for others across our province and across our nation. Together, community foundations are building a brighter future for Manitoba.

## Land Acknowledgement

Here in the Pembina Valley, we live and work on Treaty One Territory: Original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples and the homeland of the Métis Nation. We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.





## Board of Directors

Pictured L–R: Tena Lane, Stacy Wiebe, Nina Pinlac–Manu-  
guid, Andy Schmidt, Viola Enns Woelk, Chad Harder, Myra  
Peters (ED), Corey Hildebrand, Barb Neufeld

Missing: Mayor Henry Siemens, Dan Ward

Vital Signs Committee: Viola Enns Woelk, Corey Hildebrand,  
Myra Peters, Scott Doell, Rob Unruh, Christina Wall

Project Lead and Researcher: Kara Gray, Gray Matter Insights

Photography: Paul Quaye and local contributors

## What is VitalSigns?

The Winkler Community Foundation’s 2024 Vital Signs report [delete initiative] is a community “check-up” that measures the vitality of the community, identifies challenges and opportunities, and supports action on issues that are critical to the community’s well-being. Vital Signs is a national initiative of Community Foundations of Canada. The report draws on a comprehensive well-being framework and community engagement to reflect what matters in the community. Now in its third edition, the 2024 Winkler’s Vital Signs report builds on the successes of 2012 and 2018, combining local data and community input to provide a comprehensive snapshot of well-being in the Winkler and Stanley communities.

Using the evidence-based approach of this report, all community leaders and stakeholders can better understand the challenges in the community and collaborate on the opportunities. For the Winkler Community Foundation, the report helps inform our governance, guides our responsive grant-making, and fosters collaborative partnerships. The goal of the report is to empower decision-makers, policymakers, and residents alike to take action, aiming to improve the quality of life for all in the region.

## Aknowledgements

*We would like to thank the following organizations for their participation and assistance: Access Credit Union, Alzheimer’s Society, Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Morden/Winkler, BTHC Foundation, Central Station Community Centre, Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba, City of Winkler, CW Wiebe Medical Centre, Eden Mental Health, Efficiency Manitoba, Elias Woodwork, Gateway Resources, Garden Valley School Division, Genesis House, Kroecker Farms, Northlands Day Care Centre, Pembina Counselling Centre, Pembina Valley Local Immigration Partnership, Red River College (Winkler Campus), Regional Connections, Rural Municipality of Stanley, Salem Home, Southern Health-Santé Sud Regional Health Authority, Triple E Canada, Winkler Affordable Housing, Winkler & District Ministerial, Winkler & District Health Care Board, Winkler Chamber of Commerce, Gardenland Co-op, Winkler Day Care, Winkler Economic Development, Winkler Family Resource Centre, Winkler Fire Department, Winkler Meats, Winkler Police Service, Winkler Recreation Department, Winkler Senior Centre.*

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# How to Read the Report

This Vital Signs report highlights important data and insights to help understand our community's strengths and areas for growth. Here's a guide to navigating the content.

## Contextual Indicators

Some indicators, listed without key icons, are included to provide additional context and background information. While they help paint a fuller picture of the domain, they **do not** directly affect the grade.

## Domain

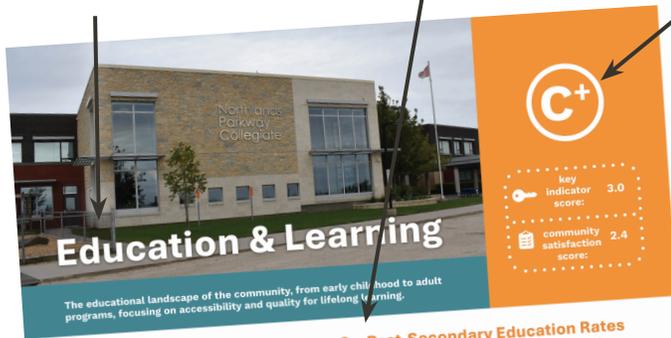
A domain is an area, or category of community life that contributes to the overall well-being of the community. While there are multiple domains, they are all overlapping and interlinked, creating a robust picture of well-being.

## Key Indicators

These are marked with a key icon and are crucial to calculating the overall grade for each domain. They provide essential insights into the most important aspects of each well-being domain.

## Grade

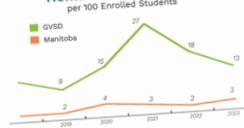
Each domain is assigned a letter grade based on the assessment of key indicators (80%) combined with community survey scores (20%).



## Homeschool Enrollment Trends

In September 2023, 561 students residing in the Garden Valley School Division (GVSD) catchment area were homeschooled, representing 11% of the province's homeschooled students.

## Homeschool Students



This chart shows the number of homeschooled students in the area, expressed as a ratio to every 100 students enrolled in schools. Note: Manitoba numbers include public school divisions and First Nations schools under educational agreements.

Source: GVSD, Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning

## Post-secondary School Attendance

In the 2020-2021 academic year, 18% of Winkler residents aged 18 to 24 attended post-secondary education, with 7% attending college and 11% attending university. For Stanley, 24% of this age group attended post-secondary school, with 10% choosing college and 13% opting for university.

Larger urban areas in Manitoba showed much higher attendance rates, with 47% of youth in Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) attending post-secondary education and 31% in Census Agglomerations (CAs). Post-secondary attendance in rural areas outside CMAs and CAs was 21%.

Source: Statistics Canada

## Post-Secondary Education Rates

Postsecondary attainment provides people with greater mobility and access to higher-paying employment opportunities, making this an important area for community development.

Source: Statistics Canada

## Post-Secondary Certificate, Diploma or Degree

% of population aged 15-64, 2021



## Student-to-Educator Ratio

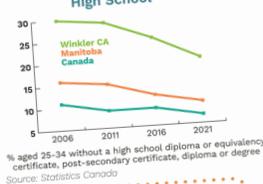
In 2023, the student-to-educator ratio for Garden Valley School Division (GVSD) was 14.2, down from 14.4 in 2019 but still higher than the Manitoba average of 13.2 in 2023.

This ratio includes all staff contributing to students' education, such as classroom teachers and school-based administrative staff (e.g., department heads, principals), offering a broader view of educational support.

This ratio does not represent average classroom size. A lower ratio generally means more educational support per student, which can enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

Source: Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning

## Have Not Graduated High School



"My daughter required some individualized learning supports, and the school was there for her."

WINKLER'S VITAL SIGNS | 2024

## Licensed Childcare Spaces

Access to licensed childcare is not only crucial for supporting working parents but also plays a significant role in early childhood development. According to the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW), "high-quality childcare is shown to positively influence children's social, emotional, developmental, and educational outcomes," with especially strong impacts for children from families with lower income or education levels who are otherwise disadvantaged.

In 2023, the Winkler area had 74 licensed infant and toddler spaces and 169 licensed pre-school spaces. However, wait times for these spaces range from 1 to 2+ years, making it difficult for families to secure subsidized public spaces. This is an increase from 2018, when there were 137 licensed spaces for children aged 0-4, but a similar wait list length, reflecting the growing demand for childcare services.

Source: Local Correspondence

## Feeling Unprepared

- In 2024, 60% of grade 11 and 12 survey respondents felt unprepared for life and wanted to learn more practical life skills.
- The students who felt more prepared wanted more advanced academic courses, and courses in leadership and career preparation.

"I think our Garden Valley School Division has worked very hard to address academically and always find new, strategic ways to boost learning opportunities for students."

## Community Insight

Reflection session participants were generally impressed with the high school graduation rates. However, concerns were raised about the impact of homeschooling and the growing number of students outside the traditional school system, as well as the limited access to post-secondary education options, which has led some families, particularly newcomers, to leave the area.

While the potential of online learning was seen as a positive step toward expanding access, maintaining engagement in these programs remains a challenge in rural communities. Participants also expressed mixed views on whether local schools adequately prepare students for life beyond graduation, with some calling for more emphasis on practical skills like financial literacy. Overall, while the community takes pride in its educational system, there is a clear need for greater support and accessibility for diverse learners, as well as more opportunities for higher education and life skills training.

## 2024 Community Survey takers in Winkler and Stanley were most positive about:

- Satisfaction with Education
- Skill Development
- Special Educational Needs

They were least happy with:

- Course Fees
- Access to Higher Education
- Options in the Community
- Course Availability at Convenient Times

## Quotes

Throughout the report, you will find quotes from community reflection sessions and survey responses. These quotes provide personal stories and insights that help bring the data, and the story of our community, to life.

## Community Insight

After analysing the data and survey results, we hosted focus groups with residents to discuss preliminary findings and to gather feedback. The *Community Reflection* sections include insights and experiences shared during these discussions, offering a local perspective on the data.

## Community Perspective

Survey responses are ranked using average positive response levels, from high (*very satisfied* or *strongly agree*) to low (*very dissatisfied* or *strongly disagree*). High-scoring areas reflect aspects that residents take pride in, while low-scoring areas highlight opportunities for improvement.

## Legend

**GVSD:** Garden Valley School Division

**SHSS:** Southern Health - Santé Sud (Regional Health Authority)

**Stanley:** Rural Municipality of Stanley (Stanley RM) Census Subdivision

**Winkler:** City of Winkler (Winkler CY) City Census Subdivision

**Winkler/Stanley:** Winkler CY + Stanley RM Census Subdivisions, combined

**Winkler CA:** Census Agglomeration (includes Winkler CY, Stanley RM, and Morden CY)

# Our Framework of Community Well-being

Measuring well-being provides a “big picture” of a community’s health, resilience, and vitality. The results of this research can then be used to develop policies and practices that support community well-being in the long-term.



*These domains are interconnected, and investing in all of them in a balanced manner is important to a community’s overall health, resilience, and vitality.*

**As you read through the report, ask yourself:**

1. What gives you hope?
2. How can you get involved in making our community stronger?
3. Why is this area important to you and your family?



The City of Winkler and the RM of Stanley, located in the Pembina Valley, form a youthful, fast-growing community.

# If Winkler & Stanley were a VILLAGE of 100



## Citizenship

41 third-generation residents  
26 second-generation residents  
33 first-generation residents  
*(includes citizens & non-citizens)*



## Indigenous Identity

3 First Nations or Métis



## Marital Status

63 married  
2 living common-law  
27 never married  
4 separated or divorced  
4 widowed



## Age

26 youth (14 & under)  
62 working-age (15-65)  
12 seniors (65+)

## Employment Rate



## People in Low-Income Households

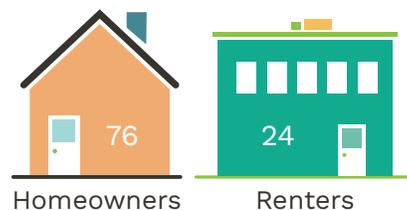
POVERTY RATE



## Languages Spoken at Home

English 79 Germanic 16 Other 5

## Housing Type by Tenure

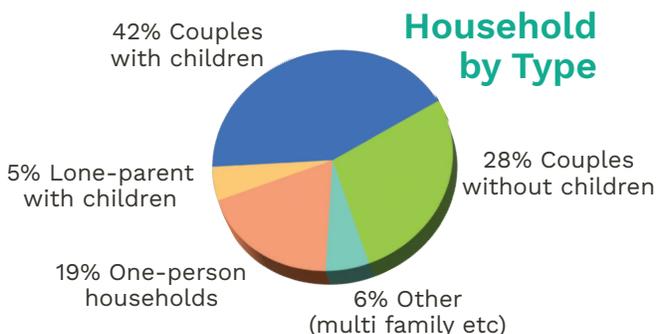


## Home Dwellings



## Population

Winkler's population reached **14,692** in 2023, a 25% increase over the last decade, while Stanley grew to **9,962**, up by 13%. Manitoba and Canada both grew by about 15% over the same period. **Winkler was also recognized as Canada's youngest census area in 2022.**



## Unprecedented Times

Since the last Vital Signs report, the COVID-19 global pandemic disrupted everything from healthcare to education to the economy, while the cost of living rose by 18% between 2019 and 2024. Keep these factors in mind when reviewing the data, as their impacts may influence the figures presented.

*Source - Village of 100 is based on the combined 2021 Census data for Winkler (City) and Stanley (RM), except where noted otherwise. For additional information regarding information sources and calculations, please refer to Winkler's Vital Signs® Source Document located at <http://winklercommunityfoundation.com/what-we-do/vital-signs/>*





# How is Winkler doing?

Overall, Winkler and Stanley scored a **B** for their performance across all eight domains, reflecting a generally positive but varied experience across the community's key areas of well-being.

<b>Environment</b>	This domain captures the community's commitment to sustainability, resource management, and preparedness for environmental challenges. The key indicator score of <b>3.9</b> reflects strong waste diversion and water conservation efforts, although some challenges, such as soil conservation, remain. The <b>community satisfaction score of 4.0</b> ranks Environment 4th out of 8 well-being areas.	<b>B+</b>
<b>Community Resilience</b>	This domain measures the community's ability to adapt and thrive amid challenges, focusing on public safety, transportation, and the economy. The key indicator score of <b>4.5</b> reflects a low crime rate, strong business density, and high employment. The <b>community satisfaction score of 4.1</b> ties Community Resilience for 2nd out of 8 well-being areas.	<b>A</b>
<b>Education &amp; Learning</b>	This domain assesses access to and quality of lifelong learning opportunities. The key indicator score of <b>3.0</b> reflects challenges in post-secondary attainment, though graduation rates are strong. The <b>community satisfaction score of 2.4</b> ranks Education & Learning 7th out of 8 well-being areas.	<b>C+</b>
<b>Standard of Living</b>	This domain reflects economic stability, affordability, and the balance between work and leisure. The key indicator score of <b>3.9</b> reflects strong income equity and affordable commute times, and is tempered by moderate housing affordability. The <b>community satisfaction score of 4.1</b> , ties Standard of Living for 2nd out of 8 well-being areas.	<b>B+</b>
<b>Health &amp; Wellness</b>	This domain measures physical and mental health, as well as access to healthcare. The key indicator score of <b>2.6</b> reflects improvements in joint replacement surgery wait times but ongoing challenges with healthcare access, preventative health care measures, and family physician availability. The <b>community satisfaction score of 2.2</b> ranks Health & Wellness 8th out of 8 well-being areas.	<b>C</b>
<b>Culture &amp; Belonging</b>	This domain focuses on building a close-knit, inclusive community through cultural participation. The key indicator score of <b>2.7</b> reflects challenges with political representation, but strong participation in community and cultural groups lifted the score. The <b>community satisfaction score of 4.4</b> ranks Culture & Belonging 1st out of 8 well-being areas.	<b>B-</b>
<b>Arts &amp; Recreation</b>	This domain assesses opportunities for participation in arts, leisure and sports activities including shows, events, clubs, and recreational facilities. The key indicator score of <b>4.0</b> reflects increasing investments in Arts & Recreation programs, and per capita spending rates that are in line with similarly sized Manitoba communities. The <b>community satisfaction score of 3.3</b> ranks Arts & Recreation 6th out of 8 well-being areas.	<b>B+</b>
<b>Civic &amp; Democratic Engagement</b>	This domain assesses civic and democratic involvement and engagement. The key indicator score of <b>4.3</b> reflects high rates of volunteerism and charitable giving, though lower voter turnout impacted the score. The <b>community satisfaction score of 3.9</b> ranks Civic & Democratic Engagement 5th out of 8 well-being areas.	<b>A-</b>

## Want to learn more?

Read on for detailed information about how Winkler and Stanley are doing in each domain of well-being, and to learn about ways to act.



# Environment

Reflects care for nature, community spaces and natural resources, and includes resource conservation, waste management and readiness for environmental challenges.



key indicator score: 3.9

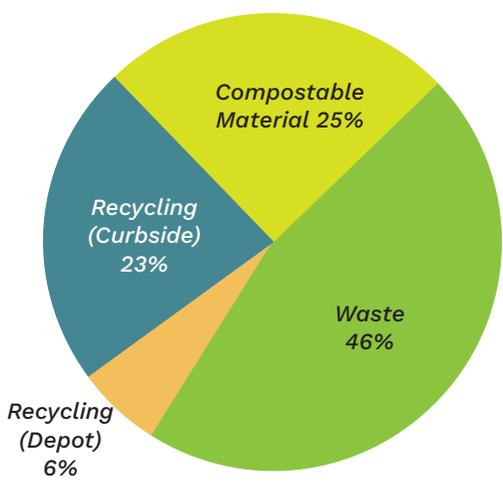
community satisfaction score: 4.0

## Waste Management

Winkler diverted **54%** of its total waste from landfill in 2023 by recycling over **1020** tonnes of material, and composting **885** tonnes of material.

For context, in 2023, Winnipeg diverted **29%** of its total waste, with **18%** from recycling and **11%** from yard waste.

Winkler's higher waste diversion rate, particularly in composting, demonstrates its proactive approach to reducing landfill use and enhancing environmental sustainability.



Source: City of Winkler, City of Winnipeg

## Recycling in the RM of Stanley

In 2024, the RM of Stanley had **1553** residences with recycling bins, primarily in Reinfeld and Schanzenfeld.

Source: RM of Stanley

## Soil Conservation and Carbon Storage

In 2021, 63% of farmland in Stanley used conservation tillage practices, up from 45% in 2016. This increase demonstrates a significant shift toward soil conservation in the region. For comparison, 71% of Manitoba farmland used conservation tillage methods in 2021.

In farming, conventional or traditional tillage methods plow plant material into the soil. Conservation tillage is a farming technique that minimizes soil disturbance and leaves more plant material on the soil surface, helping to maintain soil health and moisture. It provides several benefits:

- **Reduces Soil Erosion:** Prevents soil from washing or blowing away.
- **Sustainability:** Keeps soil healthy and productive over time.
- **Improves Biodiversity:** Supports more insects and microorganisms in the soil.
- **Moisture Retention:** Helps the soil retain water and improves drought resistance.
- **Reduces Greenhouse Gases:** Stores carbon in the soil, lowering emissions.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

## Electric Vehicle Charging

In August 2024, the City of Winkler announced it received a grant from the Manitoba Motor Dealers Association to install a two-port Level 2 Electric Vehicle (EV) charger in the Meridian Exhibition Centre parking lot with 2 dedicated parking spaces.

Source: City of Winkler Instagram (yeswinkler)



## 🔑 Drought Management

The City of Winkler provides drinkable water to over **14,000** customers through more than **4,600** service connections. Drought and water shortages are important concerns for the city. Additionally, with economic growth in the area, the impact of a potential drought could increase.

Planning for drought and water usage issues is essential for maintaining a safe and clean water supply. In 2024, the city updated its Drought Management and Water Supply Plan to offer guidance both before and during a drought, as well as long-term strategies to lessen the effects of drought.

Source: City of Winkler Drought Management and Water Supply Plan, 2024



### Working Together

The RM of Stanley is partnering with Winkler on a joint wastewater treatment project that will provide capacity for the area for many years to come.

Source: RM of Stanley, City of Winkler

## Disaster Management Preparedness

**60%** of survey respondents report knowing little or nothing about local plans and resources for environmental emergencies such as flooding, tornadoes, drought, and heatwaves. However, **69%** believe the community is at least moderately prepared to handle these emergencies, suggesting room for both increased awareness and preparedness.

Source: 2024 Community Survey

## Energy Efficiency

From 2020 to 2024, Winkler saw steady participation in various Efficiency Manitoba programs and offers, leading to notable energy savings.

Residential participation included **299** projects, resulting in **\$389,000** in incentives and annual savings of **341,587 kWh** of electricity and **74,684 m<sup>3</sup>** (cubic meters) of natural gas.

### Top programs for homes (2020-2024)

- Energy efficiency assistance: **130** projects, **83,994 kWh** and **40,021 m<sup>3</sup>** of natural gas saved annually.
- New homes: **8** projects, **94,471 kWh** and **1,567 m<sup>3</sup>** of natural gas saved annually.
- Home insulation: **79** projects, **51,682 kWh** and **25,728 m<sup>3</sup>** of natural gas saved annually.

Businesses in Winkler completed **129** projects, receiving **\$1.29** million in incentives and saving **4.4 million kWh** of electricity and **387,475 m<sup>3</sup>** of natural gas per year.

### Top programs for businesses (2020-2024)

- Business lighting: **80** projects, **2,602,299 kWh** saved annually.
- New buildings: **6** projects, **1,026,251 kWh** and **215,644 m<sup>3</sup>** of natural gas saved annually.
- Custom energy solutions: **7** projects, **607,980 kWh** saved annually.

This level of participation highlights the ongoing efforts in Winkler to reduce energy consumption and improve efficiency across both homes and businesses

Source: Efficiency Manitoba, by email

“A big part of what we did in school was to look at environment. But we looked at it across the world. I think it reminds us of how privileged we are.”

## Community Insight

In the reflection sessions, participants expressed satisfaction with local air quality and natural spaces. While environmental challenges like droughts and floods were acknowledged, climate concerns were generally not a focus. However, some community members noted that their children were worried about it, highlighting a generational divide.

Preparedness for climate challenges was a key theme in conversations. Participants noted the excellent work of schools conducting regular emergency drills. However, participants felt that older residents and newcomers could benefit from additional education on protocols, such as the local siren system and actions to take during severe weather. Younger participants prioritized sustainability, focusing on water conservation and recycling, and emphasized the need for more education to support these efforts, ensuring the community is both prepared and environmentally conscious.

2024 Community Survey takers in Winkler and Stanley were most positive about:



1. Waste management services
2. Air quality
3. Water quality

They were least happy with:



1. Tree planting and maintenance
2. Water conservation education
3. Quantity of public waste bins



# Community Resilience

The community's ability to withstand challenges and prosper, with a focus on access to services, a robust local economy and job market, public safety and transportation infrastructure.



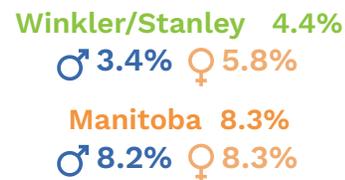
## Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate, which is the percentage of people in the workforce who would like to have jobs but do not, is a key indicator of economic health and resilience. In 2021, the unemployment rate in Winkler and Stanley was **4.4%**, significantly lower than the Manitoba rate of **8.3%**, and lower than the 2016 local rate of **5.8%**.

Source: Statistics Canada

## Unemployment Rate

% of people, in the work force without jobs, 2021



## Businesses with Employees, per Capita

Businesses with Employees, per Capita. This is an indicator of the health of the local economy, reflecting the density and diversity of businesses in the area. In June 2024, there were **181** businesses with employees in Stanley, and **773** in Winkler.

### Businesses with employees per 1,000 people aged 15+, 2024



Businesses with multiple sites are counted per site.

Source: Statistics Canada

## Self-Employment

In 2021, **21%** of workers in Stanley, and **13%** of workers in Winkler were self-employed, compared to **12%** in Manitoba.

Source: Statistics Canada

## Employment Rate

	Total	♂	♀
Winkler	62	71	52
Stanley	69	81	56
Manitoba	59	63	55
Canada	57	61	53

♂ Men      ♀ Women

Source: Statistics Canada

## Average Hourly Wage

In the first quarter of 2024, the average posted wage in the local economic region for vacant positions was **\$22.15** per hour. This hourly wage varied by occupation grouping, from **\$17.40** in Sales and Service occupations, to **\$35.00** in Natural and applied sciences and related occupations.

Overall, the average posted wage increased by **18.3%** between 2018 and 2023, outpacing Manitoba's increase of **14%**, and nearly keeping pace with the increases in cost of living, which grew by **18.5%**.

Source: Statistics Canada





## Winter Maintenance and Snow Clearing

**74%** were satisfied with winter maintenance and snow clearing on roads and streets

**65%** were satisfied, and **16%** were unsatisfied with winter maintenance of sidewalks and paths

Source: 2024 Community Survey

## Transportation to Hospitals and Medical Appointments

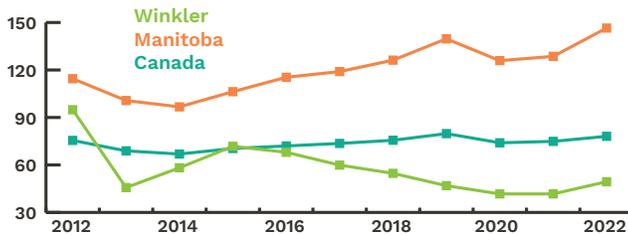
In the past year, **59%** of survey respondents drove at least 50 km to visit a hospital or attend a medical appointment.

**15%** of respondents required a ride to travel at least 50 km for a hospital visit or medical appointment.

Source: 2024 Community Survey

## Crime Severity Index

The Crime Severity Index (CSI) measures police-reported severe crimes, providing insight into the community's policing, safety and security. In 2022, Winkler's CSI was **49**, compared to Manitoba's **147** and Canada's **78**. Despite an increase between 2012 and 2022, Winkler continues to have a much lower rate than Manitoba and Canada.



Source: Statistics Canada

## Public Transportation Options

When asked how satisfied they were with public transportation options, **15%** were satisfied, and **55%** of respondents were unsatisfied.

Source: 2024 Community Survey

*"Taxis are often the only option for those without cars, but they're not always reliable or affordable."*

## Perceptions of Safety

When asked "How safe do you feel walking or being outside alone at night", **73%** of survey takers felt very safe or somewhat safe.



Source: 2024 Community Survey

*"I can let my kids roam around wherever. And I feel safe."*

## Community Insight

Reflection session participants acknowledged concerns about the lack of public transportation, particularly for those who cannot afford a car or are unable to drive. While many residents rely on personal vehicles, this creates barriers for others, pointing to a need for more accessible transit options. The local job market, particularly in manufacturing, was viewed positively, but there are worries about long-term employment sustainability for those with diverse educational backgrounds and skill sets.

Participants also emphasized the importance of maintaining well-cleared roads and safe sidewalks, especially in winter, and while road clearing is efficient, icy paths can make walking difficult or dangerous.

Overall, while most residents feel that Winkler is a safe community, improving access to key services like transportation remains a priority for enhancing resilience.

2024 Survey takers in Winkler and Stanley were most positive about:



1. Their connection and access to the internet
2. Their work
3. Winter maintenance and snow clearing of streets and roads

They were least happy with:



1. Public transportation options
2. The amount and affordability of childcare services



# Education & Learning

The educational landscape of the community, from early childhood to adult programs, focusing on accessibility and quality for lifelong learning.

key indicator score: **3.0**

community satisfaction score: **2.4**

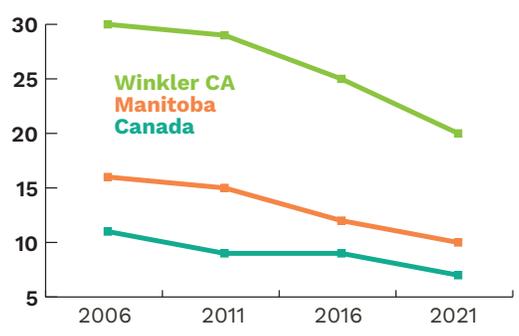
## High School Graduation Rates

In 2023, the 6-year high school graduation rate for Garden Valley School Division (GVSD) was **91%**, meaning that 91% of students who started grade nine in 2017 graduated in a public or funded independent school in Manitoba by 2023, slightly above the provincial average of **89%**, and an improvement over the 2018 rate of **81%**.

This rate highlights the division's effectiveness in supporting students to complete their high school education, which is key to increasing future educational and employment opportunities. GVSD's 4-year graduation rate was **84%** in 2023, also slightly higher than the Manitoba rate of **83%**.

Source: Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning

### Have Not Graduated High School



% aged 25-34 without a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree

Source: Statistics Canada

*"My daughter required some individualized learning supports, and the school was there for her."*

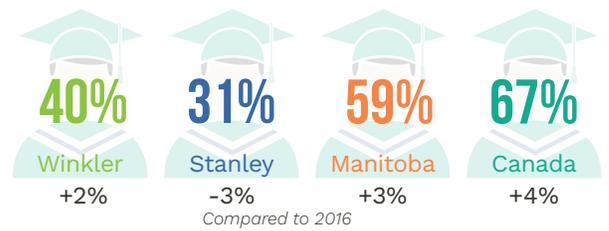
## Post-Secondary Education Rates

Postsecondary attainment provides people with greater mobility and access to higher-paying employment opportunities, making this an important area for community development.

Source: Statistics Canada

### Post-Secondary Certificate, Diploma or Degree

% of population aged 15-64, 2021



## Student-to-Educator Ratio

In 2023, the student-to-educator ratio for Garden Valley School Division (GVSD) was **14.2**, down from **14.4** in 2018 but still higher than the Manitoba average of **13.2** in 2023.

This ratio includes all staff contributing to students' education, such as classroom teachers and school-based administrative staff (e.g., department heads, principals), offering a broader view of educational support.

This ratio does not represent average classroom size. A lower ratio generally means more educational support per student, which can enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

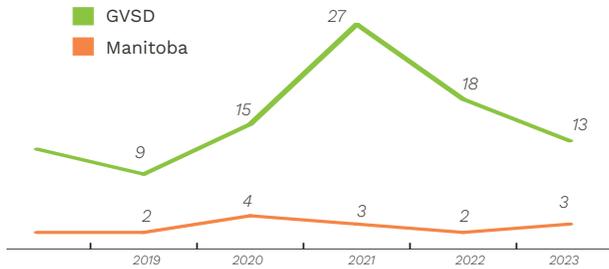
Source: Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning



## Homeschool Enrollment Trends

In September 2023, **561** students residing in the Garden Valley School Division (GVSD) catchment area were homeschooled, representing **11%** of the province’s homeschooled students.

### Homeschool Students per 100 Enrolled Students



This chart shows the number of homeschool students in the area, expressed as a ratio to every 100 students enrolled in schools. (Note: Manitoba numbers include public school divisions and First Nations schools under educational agreements.)

Source: GVSD, Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning

## Post-secondary School Attendance

In the 2020–2021 academic year, **18%** of Winkler residents aged 18 to 24 attended post-secondary education, with **7%** attending college and **11%** attending university. For Stanley, **24%** of this age group attended post-secondary school, with **10%** choosing college and **13%** opting for university.

Larger urban areas in Manitoba showed much higher attendance rates, with **47%** of youth in Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) attending post-secondary education and **31%** in Census Agglomerations (CAs). Post-secondary attendance in rural areas outside CMAs and CAs was **21%**.

Source: Statistics Canada

## Licensed Childcare Spaces

Access to licensed childcare is not only crucial for supporting working parents but also plays a significant role in early childhood development. According to the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW), “high-quality childcare is shown to positively influence children’s social, emotional, developmental, and educational outcomes,” with especially strong impacts for children from families with lower income or education levels or who are otherwise disadvantaged.

In 2023, the Winkler area had **74** licensed infant and toddler spaces and **169** licensed pre-school spaces. However, wait times for these spaces range from 1 to 2+ years, making it difficult for families to secure subsidized public spaces. This is an increase from 2018, when there were **137** licensed spaces for children aged 0–4, but a similar wait list length, reflecting the growing demand for childcare services.

Source: Local Correspondence

## Feeling Unprepared

- In 2024, **60%** of grade 11 and 12 survey respondents felt unprepared for life and wanted to learn more practical life skills.
- The students who felt more prepared wanted more advanced academic courses, and courses in leadership and career preparation

“I think our Garden Valley School Division has worked very hard to address academics and always find new, strategic ways to boost learning opportunities for students.”

## Community Insight

Reflection session participants were generally impressed with the high school graduation rates. However, concerns were raised about the impact of homeschooling and the growing number of students outside the traditional school system, as well as the limited access to post-secondary education options, which has led some families, particularly newcomers, to leave the area.

While the potential of online learning was seen as a positive step toward expanding access, maintaining engagement in these programs remains a challenge in rural communities. Participants also expressed mixed views on whether local schools adequately prepare students for life beyond graduation, with some calling for more emphasis on practical skills like financial literacy. Overall, while the community takes pride in its educational system, there is a clear need for greater support and accessibility for diverse learners, as well as more opportunities for higher education and life skills training.

2024 Community Survey takers in Winkler and Stanley were most positive about:



- Satisfaction with Education
- Skill Development
- Special Educational Needs

They were least happy with:



- Course Fees
- Access to Higher Education Options in the Community
- Course Availability at Convenient Times



# Standard of Living

Reflects economic stability, affordability of living essentials, and the balance between work and leisure.



key indicator score: **3.9**

community satisfaction score: **4.1**

## Key Average Household Income

Average after-tax income grew faster than the rate of inflation between 2015 and 2020. The average after-tax income of households in Winkler and Stanley grew to **\$75,550** in 2020\*, which was **8%** higher than in 2015, after adjusting for inflation. The Manitoba average after-tax income was higher, at **\$80,400**, but grew by **5%** over the same time period.

\* Covid-19 income support benefits are included in 2020 income.

Source: Statistics Canada

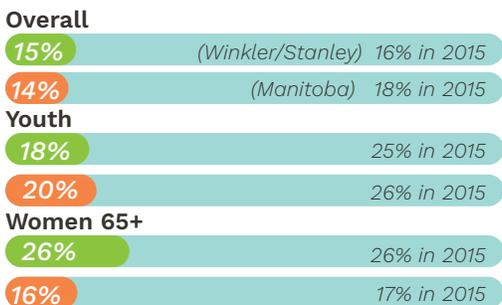
## Key Income Inequality

The Gini Index measures income distribution, with lower values indicating more equal income spread across households. Greater income equality is linked to economic growth, improved health outcomes, and stronger social cohesion. In 2021, Winkler had a Gini Index of **0.299** and Stanley **0.266**, indicating income was more evenly distributed compared to Manitoba (**0.333**) and Canada (**0.347**).

Source: Statistics Canada

## Key Poverty Rates, 2020

Proportion of the population living in poverty (Prevalence of low income based on the low-income measure, after tax (LIM-AT) (%).



Source: Statistics Canada

## Rising Demand at the Food Cupboard

\*active household means that they have visited the food cupboard at least once in the last six months

- 2018: **418** active households
- 2020: **470** active households
- 2023: **822** active households



## Housing Costs, 2021

In 2021, 66% of owner households in Winkler and Stanley had a mortgage, while 18% of tenant households lived in subsidized housing. 32% of tenant households in Winkler and Stanley spent 30% or more of their income on shelter costs, compared to 14% of owner households.

Average value of dwellings:  
**Winkler \$331,200** **Stanley \$391,600**

Median Monthly Shelter Costs (Tenant):  
**Winkler \$990** (↑15% since 2016)  
**Stanley \$950** (↓12% since 2016)

Median Monthly Shelter Costs (Owner):  
**Winkler \$1,140** (↑18% since 2016)  
**Stanley \$1,250** (↑4% since 2016)

Source: Statistics Canada

"Ever since COVID, the food inflation is unbelievable, especially for lower-income people. I have diabetes, and affording lettuce is hard."



“For the people I know who moved here like me, within about a year, they were able to purchase their own homes. They aren’t big houses, but at least they can pay for and own them now because they have steady jobs.”

## Key Housing Affordability

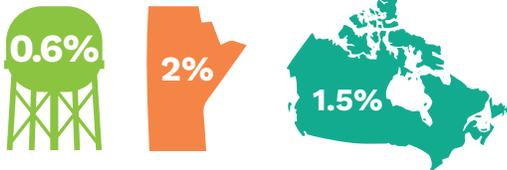
In 2021, **18%** of households (32% of tenant households, 14% of owner households) in Winkler and Stanley spent **30% or more** of their before-tax income on shelter, slightly above the Manitoba average of **17%**. This rate has been steady since 2016.

Shelter costs include rent, utilities and municipal services for renters, and mortgage payments, property taxes, condo fees and utilities for homeowners.

In 2021, **66%** of owner households in Winkler and Stanley had a mortgage, while **18%** of tenant households lived in subsidized housing.

Source: Statistics Canada

## Rental Vacancy Rates - Winkler, 2023



Source: Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation

## Social Housing Inventory

In 2024, Winkler had **89** social housing units, ranging from studios to 5 bedroom units.



In May 2024, the social housing waitlist in Winkler had **208** applications representing **526** people, and over **81%** of those waiting will require support to maintain their housing. **6%** of those waiting were 60 or older, and **41%** self-identified as indigenous.

Source: Central Station Community Centre

“My brother makes really good money actually, and he can’t find a rental if his life depended on it”

## Key Commute Time

30 minutes or less, 2021



**Winkler/Stanley 93%** **Manitoba 73%**

Source: Statistics Canada

## Community Insight

Reflection session participants noted growing concerns around housing affordability, particularly for young adults, seniors, and lower-income households. Some felt that available homes were either too small or in need of significant repairs, and low rental vacancies were seen as adding further strain for those looking for affordable options.

2024 survey results supported these concerns, with **16%** of respondents reporting that they worked multiple jobs to make ends meet in the past year, and **26%** cutting back on family recreational activities due to financial constraints. Additionally, **5%** of respondents reported missing rent or mortgage payments, and **7%** said they had to forgo medications and treatments in the past year.

The cost of food was also highlighted, with some reflection session participants calling for more affordable and healthy options. Good quality clothes and goods were also less affordable. Overall, while many residents feel that Winkler and Stanley offer a good quality of life, ensuring affordable housing, healthcare, and food will be essential to maintaining a strong standard of living moving forward.

2024 Community Survey takers in Winkler and Stanley were most positive about:



1. Their homes
2. Commuting time
3. Community support organizations and their work

They were least happy with:



1. Housing Availability
2. Home care availability
3. Supportive housing for individuals living with disabilities



# Health & Wellness

Reflects the physical and mental health of community members and aspects of the local health care system, including access to healthcare, home care and long-term care.



## Local Health System

Winkler and Stanley are located in the Southern Health-Santé Sud (SHSS) health region, which covers much of South Eastern Manitoba.

Boundary Trails Health Centre is the local hospital offering emergency, diagnostic, and inpatient services to the Winkler and Stanley area. Eden Mental Health Centre operates in partnership with SHSS and the provincial healthcare system, providing inpatient care and community programs such as Segue and Recovery of Hope.

The C.W. Wiebe Medical Centre in Winkler had **43** practicing doctors in 2024. **30** were family doctors, as well as **1** neurologist, **4** general surgeons, **4** orthopedic surgeons, and **4** obstetricians/ gynecologists. The centre also employs a full-time nurse practitioner who cares for a panel of primary care patients, a physician assistant who extends physician care, and a range of allied health professionals—all hired by Southern Health-Santé Sud.

## Mental Health Services



Pembina Counselling Centre (PCC), one of the organizations providing mental health care in the region, grew from **3** to **10** counsellors between 2019 and 2024 to meet growing needs.

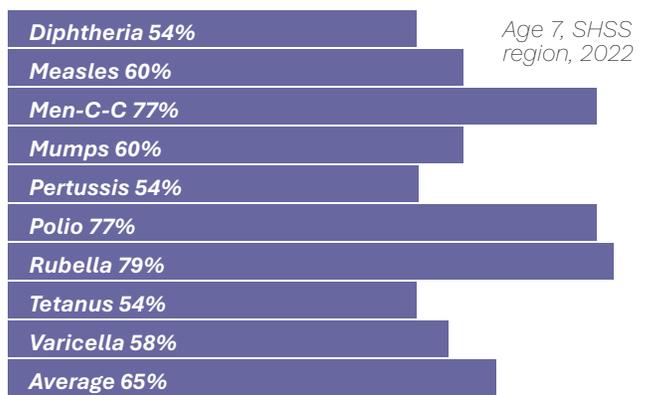
Source: Pembina Counselling Centre (email communication)

## Family Physicians per 100,000 Population

In 2022, the SHSS region had **81** family physicians per 100,000 people, down from **88** in 2017. This decline contrasts with Manitoba's steady ratio of **111** and Canada's increase from **121** to **124** physicians per 100,000. The median age of family physicians in SHSS dropped from **46** years in 2017 to **41** in 2022.

Source: Canadian Institute for Health Information

## Childhood Immunization Rate



The Childhood Immunization Rate measures the average percentage of children immunized by age 7 for nine critical childhood diseases. In 2022, the average immunization coverage in SHSS region was **64%** across vaccines, which falls below the provincial average of **71%** and the highest regional rate of **77%** in Prairie Mountain Health. SHSS' average immunization rate has dropped from **71%** in 2017.

In 2022, only **60%** of 7-year-olds in SHSS had been fully immunized for measles, a highly contagious and vaccine-preventable illness.

Source: Manitoba - Report of Immunization Surveillance



## 🔑 Wait Times for Knee and Hip Replacements

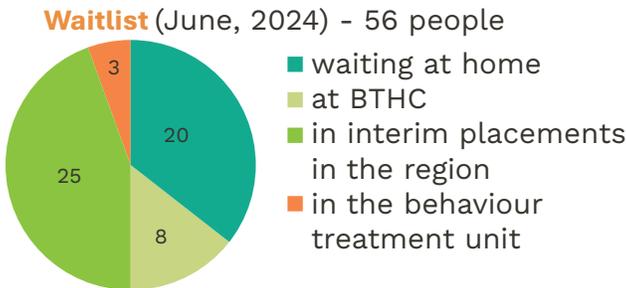
In 2023, the median wait time for hip replacements in SHSS improved significantly, dropping to **186** days from **223** days in 2018. Knee replacement wait times also saw a notable decrease, from **292** days in 2018 to **201** days in 2023.

For context, Manitoba's provincial wait times for hip and knee replacements were **154** and **215** days, respectively, while national wait times increased to **131** days for hip and **161** days for knee replacements.

Source: Canadian Institute of Health Information

## Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities

Salem Home, the primary long-term care facility in Winkler, has **146** beds, with 1 designated as a respite bed and 9 as behavior treatment beds. The facility is facing a waitlist, with **56** people waiting for placement as of June 2024. Of these:



Source: Salem Home (email communication)

*"I know as a family...we had an incredibly positive experience in the health care system here."*

*"There's a lot of people who are not getting the home care they need because they don't have enough workers."*

## Home Care Services

In July 2024, the local home care program had **310** clients. From April 2023 to March 2024, **128** new clients were admitted to Home Care in Winkler, a **19%** increase from the number of new clients in 2018/19.

Source: SHSS (email communication)

*"...our doctor is great. He is just stretched so thin."*

## 🔑 Perceived Mental Health

According to Statistics Canada, in 2020, **67%** of the population in SHSS rated their mental health as "very good" or "excellent," slightly above the provincial average of **63%**. This is down from **70%** in SHSS in 2018.

Sources: Statistics Canada

## 🔑 Perceived Overall Health

In SHSS, **59%** of the population rated their overall health as "very good" or "excellent" in 2020, which is slightly below the provincial average of **60%**. This also marks a decline from 2018 when **62%** of SHSS residents rated their overall health as "very good" or "excellent"

Sources: Statistics Canada

*Health Data Sources: Manitoba's major health reports are published every five years. The next round of Community Health Assessment is expected to be released in the Fall/Winter of 2024.*

## Community Insight

Reflection session participants were generally satisfied with their family doctors, though they noted that healthcare staff are "stretched thin." Those without a family doctor were concerned about finding one. Access remains a major issue, with long wait times for emergency and walk-in services, as well as challenges booking appointments.

Mental health and addiction services struggle to meet rising demand, especially for youth, leading to long waits.

Physical wellness could be improved with year-round options like an indoor pool and affordable fitness programs. Some felt the Meridian Exhibition Centre was underutilized for broader fitness needs.

For seniors, online access to medical services poses a barrier, and traveling for care adds further difficulty. While care quality is appreciated, many emphasized the need to attract new family doctors and other healthcare professionals to ensure residents can access care closer to home.

2024 Community Survey takers in Winkler and Stanley were most positive about:



1. Quality of primary care
2. Quality of services at local facilities



They were least happy with:

1. Access to medical care, particularly during evenings and weekends
2. Access to specialist services



# Culture & Belonging

Recognizing the importance of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Building a close-knit and welcoming community through events, activities celebrating culture, identity and faith, and public spaces that make everyone feel like they belong.



key indicator score: **2.7**

community satisfaction score: **4.4**

## Sense of Belonging

A strong sense of belonging is important for personal well-being and the overall health of a community. People who feel connected to their community tend to engage more in civic activities, volunteerism, and local initiatives, strengthening the social fabric.

**71%** of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that “I feel like I belong here in our community”, but that varied by age.

**58%** Ages 16-24  
**73%** Ages 40-54  
**78%** Ages 65-74

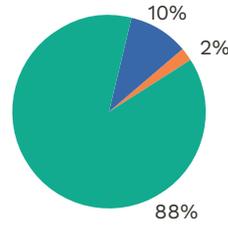


Source: 2024 Community Survey

*“...since I came here, I started seeing the community accepting other cultures, including us.”*

## Religion

Religion is a central part of life for many in Winkler, serving as a source of connection and belonging.



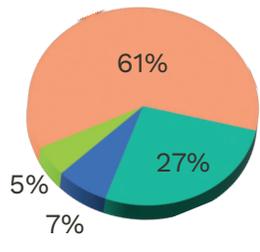
- Christian
- No Religion/Secular
- Other

Source: Statistics Canada

*“Not being religious in Winkler is interesting. I wish there were groups that met that have common interests besides religion.”*

## Participation in Cultural, Faith and Community Groups

Are you an active member of a local cultural, faith or community group? How often do you participate?



- 10+ times per year
- 3-10 times per year
- 1-2 times per year
- Not at all

Source: 2024 Community Survey

## Experiences of Discrimination

In the 2024 Community Survey, **21%** of respondents reported that they or a dependent experienced discrimination in the past year, citing that it was based on matters of race, gender, sexual orientation, language barriers, religious differences, and stances on COVID-19 measures.

*“It would be good to see more cultural diversity on government and community boards”*



## Local Political Representation

Balanced political representation is important for including diverse perspectives in decision-making.

In 2023, there were no women among the municipal political representatives for Winkler and Stanley, even though women make up half of the population. Notably, there were also no women candidates for these municipal positions in the 2022 election. This contrasts with broader trends: in 2023, women represented **31%** of municipal elected officials in Canada and **20%** in Manitoba.

While the gender gap at the municipal level is significant, this is not the case in other areas. For instance, **5** of the **8** elected GVSD School Trustees are women.

At higher levels of government, Carrie Hiebert, a woman, represents Morden-Winkler in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly, while Branden Leslie, a man, serves as the Member of Parliament for Portage-Lisgar.

Source: Federation of Canadian Municipalities 2023

*“Being a working woman who speaks her mind is frowned upon in our community. I have been told to ‘stay in my place’ as I’m a woman and therefore less valuable than a man.”*

## Local Social Connections

Survey respondents were asked about their social ties in the community. Most have close friends and family nearby, though some expressed a desire for more friendships.

**82%** have close friends in the community

**79%** have nearby family members

**65%** have other personal connections

**31%** want more friends

Source: 2024 Community Survey

## Community Survey Inclusivity Efforts

The 2024 Vital Signs Community Survey became more inclusive with support from Regional Connections, providing translations in Arabic, German, Russian, Spanish, and Ukrainian, as well as print and large print formats to amplify diverse voices. Volunteers distributed surveys at Central Station and Buhler Senior Centre to encourage participation from seniors and community members from all walks of life, resulting in more representative survey results.

## Community Insight

During the reflection sessions, those new to Winkler, whether from afar or nearby, generally reported feeling welcomed upon arrival. Several newcomers felt that as long as their values didn't conflict with the local majority's ability to practice their own, there was a reasonable level of "live and let live," and others felt that that cultural and religious diversity is increasingly celebrated in Winkler. Other participants concurred with the survey finding that some groups, such as racialized individuals, single parents, 2SLGBTQ+ community members and those outside the Mennonite faith can be made to feel excluded.

Community members emphasized the important role of local organizations like Regional Connections and Central Station in fostering a sense of belonging. These organizations are critical to helping residents access opportunities and contributing to a more inclusive community. Curiousness and openness to different cultures and religions were highlighted as key steps toward fostering mutual respect and a welcoming environment for long-term residents and newcomers.

A recurring theme among community members, whether discussing culture, belonging, education, or civic and democratic engagement, was that Winkler is seen as a "gem" and "truly special." The city takes pride in its strong sense of identity, with residents expressing deep appreciation for its values. While this perspective reflects many community members' confidence in its identity, it also presents an opportunity to further strengthen inclusivity while honouring its rich traditions.

2024 Community Survey takers in Winkler and Stanley were most positive about:



1. Community support
2. Self-expression
3. Friendly environment

They were least happy with:



1. Ease of forming social connections



# Arts & Recreation

Opportunities for participation in arts, leisure and sports activities including shows, events, clubs, and recreational facilities.



key indicator score: **4.0**

community satisfaction score: **3.3**

## Per Capita Spending on Recreation and Cultural Services

In 2023, the City of Winkler spent **\$275** (gross) per capita on recreation and cultural services. This compares closely with the average spending of **\$274** across a 5-city basket that includes Steinbach, Morden, Winkler, Selkirk, and Portage la Prairie, indicating that Winkler is investing competitively in its recreation and cultural services.

Winkler's per capita spending has seen a significant increase from **\$163** in 2018, reflecting the city's growing focus on arts, recreation, and public services. This increase suggests that Winkler is making strides in enhancing community well-being through its recreation and cultural investments, positioning it well among its regional peers.

Source: City Financial Plans Documents

## Employment

In 2021, **175**, or **1.6%** of workers in Winkler and Stanley were employed in arts, culture, recreation and sport occupations. In Manitoba, **2.3%** of workers were employed in the area, and **3.1%** in Canada.

Source: Statistics Canada

## Arts & Recreation Facilities

### Bernhard Thiessen Hall & Fieldhouse Turf

In 2023, the Bernhard Thiessen Hall & Fieldhouse Turf facility was reserved for **1,449** hours. The facility is used year-round for sports training, indoor leagues, competitions, special events, and private bookings, including birthday parties.

## Winkler Arts and Culture (WA+C) Programs

Year	Adult	Children/Youth
2023	103 (13 events)	156 (28 events)
2018	54 (98 events)	40 (6 events)

Note: Actual counts may be 10-25% higher due to tracking limitations.

Source: WA+C email correspondence

## Indoor Arts and Recreation Facility Use by Age Group

These indoor arts and recreation facilities were used frequently or a moderate amount by survey respondents of different age groups over the past year. The top four facilities are ranked by highest percentage of use in each group:

**Ages 18-39:** Library (35%), Ice Surfaces (31%), Walking Track at MEC (23%), Turf Facility at MEC (22%)

**Ages 40-64:** Library (39%), Walking Track at MEC (24%), Ice Surfaces (21%), Turf Facility at MEC (20%)

**Ages 65+:** Library (48%), WAC/ PW Ens Hall (39%), Walking Track at MEC (36%), School Gyms (8%)

Source: 2024 Community Survey

"As seniors, we love all the activities here at the Buhler Building. In the winter, you can do so much, and we have really enjoyed the indoor floor curling here."





### Winkler Aquatic Centre

Visits in 2024. Down **23%** from 2019.



### Fields, Pitches & Diamonds

The City of Winkler maintains **10** ball diamonds, **8** outdoor soccer fields, and one cricket pitch.

### Outdoor Arts and Recreation Facility Use by Age Group

These outdoor arts and recreation facilities were used frequently or a moderate amount by survey respondents of different age groups over the past year. The top four facilities are ranked by highest percentage of use in each group:

**Ages 18-39:** Parks, Playgrounds, Paths (85%), Sports Fields/Courts (51%), Swimming Pool (30%), Outdoor Rinks (26%)

**Ages 40-64:** Parks, Playgrounds, Paths (79%), Sports Fields/Courts (45%), Swimming Pool (28%), Golf Course (24%)

**Ages 65+:** Parks, Playgrounds, Paths (83%), Golf Course (21%), Sports Fields/Courts (21%), Swimming Pool (7%)

Source: 2024 Community Survey

*"I'm a regular at the library; my kids and I absolutely love it. We spend loads of time there, just sitting and reading, surrounded by all those books. It's really nice."*



### Winkler Arena

With the addition of a second sheet of ice, scheduled ice time more than **tripled** to **6,972** hours in 2023.

### Barriers to Youth Participation

Grade 11 and 12 students reported **missing or choosing not to participate in a sports activity, club, or event** over the past two years for various reasons. The most common reasons included:

I did not know it was happening	<b>32%</b>
It was too expensive	<b>29%</b>
It happened at the same time as another activity	<b>23%</b>
I felt like I did not belong	<b>20%</b>
I did not have a way to get there or to get home afterwards	<b>12%</b>
I did not have the right equipment	<b>10%</b>
<b>I haven't had to miss out on anything</b>	<b>35%</b>

Source: 2024 Youth Survey

### Winkler Library Highlights



**134,799** materials were borrowed in 2023, up **14%** from 2022.

**366** Internet user sessions

**261** Reference questions

## Community Insight

During the reflection sessions, community members were generally satisfied with recreation options like walking paths, baseball diamonds, and hockey rinks, though many expressed a desire for more variety. Some participants, facing financial constraints, found outdoor walks to be a valuable way to support their mental health, although icy paths in winter posed some risks.

The library was well-appreciated, and the concert hall received positive feedback, though there were calls for more arts and leisure activities outside of religious settings, and suggestions to make Parkland Hill more accessible for people with disabilities. Although there are programs to help families afford recreational activities, improved communication would help families learn about these opportunities in time to take full advantage of them.

Some newcomer participants noted that while hockey is popular, it wasn't always suitable for their families, and they expressed enthusiasm for more year-round sports and recreation. An indoor swimming pool was suggested by several participants, including both newcomers and seniors. Participants also noted pickleball's growing popularity in the community.

2024 Survey takers in Winkler and Stanley were most positive about:



1. Access to parks and playgrounds
2. Space and facility access
3. Welcoming atmosphere of facilities

They were least happy with:



1. Childcare availability during recreation hours
2. Sports team accessibility
3. Winter activity options



# Civic & Democratic Engagement

Involvement in democratic processes, government responsiveness and generosity with charitable giving and volunteering.



 **key indicator score:** 4.3  
 **community satisfaction score:** 3.9

## 🔑 Volunteering Activity

In 2024, **62%** of survey respondents reported volunteering (includes coaching, instructing, committees and board participation) in the past year, and an impressive **65%** plan to volunteer in the coming year. By comparison, **49%** of Manitobans and **41%** of Canadians reported volunteering in 2018.

The high rate of volunteering highlights a strong sense of community engagement and belonging in Winkler. Volunteering serves as a vital indicator of social cohesion, suggesting that Winkler residents are actively contributing to the well-being of their community at levels significantly above both provincial and national averages. This strong commitment to civic engagement underscores the community's dedication to supporting local initiatives and contributing to the common good.

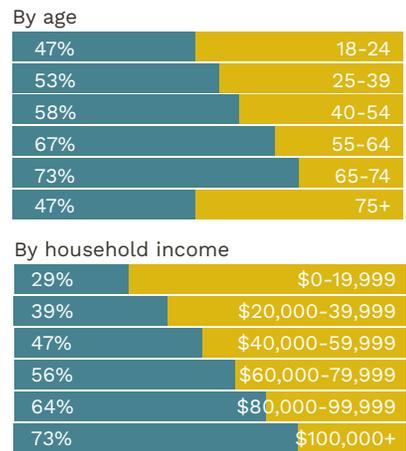
The 2024 Community Survey results show a clear relationship between volunteering, age and household income. Older respondents, particularly those aged 55 and above, reported higher volunteering levels than younger age groups. Similarly, participation increases with income, with respondents in higher income brackets being more engaged in community activities.

In contrast, younger and lower-income respondents showed lower levels of participation. Barriers to involvement, such as time constraints, financial limitations, and access to community resources, can significantly affect one's ability to volunteer.

*"If I didn't have a good income, I simply wouldn't have the time to volunteer."*

## Volunteering by Age & Income

% of respondents within age or income grouping who volunteered in the past year (including coaching, instructing, and committees and boards)



Source: 2024 Community Survey

## 🔑 Charitable Donations

Winkler stands out as one of Canada's most generous communities. In 2022, Winkler was recognized as the country's second most charitable urban center of 10,000 or more people, surpassed only by Steinbach. The median charitable donation per tax filer in Winkler was **\$1,820**, far exceeding the provincial median of **\$590** and the national median of **\$380**. Winkler's donations also increased from the 2017 median of **\$1,570**, indicating a growing trend of generosity within the community.

This positions Winkler, along with Manitoba— the most generous province in the country — as leaders in charitable giving, demonstrating an extraordinary commitment to supporting charitable causes locally and beyond.

Source: Statistics Canada



## 🔑 Voter Turnout

Voter turnout is a key indicator of civic engagement and reflects the health of a democracy. Higher turnout suggests a more active and involved community where citizens feel empowered to influence decisions that shape their lives. Conversely, lower turnout can signal disengagement, disenfranchisement, or barriers to participation.



### 2022 Municipal Election

Winkler 45%

Stanley 18%

### Provincial (Morden-Winkler)

2019 51%

2023 44%

### Federal (Portage-Lisgar)

2021 66%

2023 (by-election) 45%

Source: Elections Canada, Elections Manitoba, City of Winkler, RM of Stanley

*“The local youth ministry groups work together to organize an annual food drive, which is really great.”*

## Community Participation in Civic & Democratic Activities

Engagement is important for community well-being as it empowers residents to influence decisions, hold leaders accountable, and ensure diverse voices guide the future. Without active participation, people may miss the chance to contribute to local issues and be part of key conversations shaping their community.

2024 Community Survey respondents reported various ways they engaged and participated in the past year:

- **62%** Volunteered (includes coaching, committees and boards)
- **19%** Contacted a provincial or federal official about an issue
- **17%** Contacted a municipal official about an issue
- **14%** Engaged in a local issue on social media
- **11%** Attended a city or RM council meeting
- **11%** Attended a community planning meeting or open house
- **4%** Joined a protest or demonstration
- **2%** Wrote to local media about an issue

Source: 2024 Community Survey

*“People out here are a step above... because this is a small community, it doesn’t take long for the word to get out and people are going to step up and volunteer.”*

## Community Insight

Participants in the reflection sessions noted Winkler’s strong culture of volunteerism and generosity, but worried about shifts in community engagement. Businesses were commended for allowing employees time to volunteer, and faith-based organizations played a key role in promoting civic involvement. However, concerns arose about busier lifestyles limiting volunteering time, especially for younger residents who face constraints due to work or family obligations.

Youth involvement in community activities remains positive, although it often depends on factors like school programs or family influence. Participants highlighted the importance of increasing voter turnout and engagement in council meetings to ensure diverse voices in local decision-making. Overall, there is hope that businesses and local organizations will continue to foster civic and democratic engagement, and that community members will continue to be generous with their time and resources.

2024 Community Survey takers in Winkler and Stanley were most positive about:



1. Future plans to volunteer
2. Future plans to donate to a local charity
3. The generosity of fellow community members

They were least happy with:



1. How informed they felt about local government projects
2. Ease of reaching city and municipal officials

# Our Community in Action

## ENVIRONMENT

The **Discovery Nature Sanctuary (DNS)** provides a place of **refuge for native plants and animals** in the context of an urban and agricultural setting. The DNS provides opportunities for visitors to experience nature first-hand and serves as an excellent educational resource for school divisions wishing to broaden their students' learning experiences. By providing an opportunity to discover and appreciate nature, visitors will hopefully support and initiate conservation measures of their own interest.

## COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Healthy Muslim Families – **The Families, Settle and Thrive** initiative is a holistic program dedicated to helping newcomer families successfully transition into their new community. With a focus on three core pillars—Welcome (Settlement Assistance), Employment and Life Skills Workshops, and Community Networking and Inclusion—this initiative provides essential support tailored to the unique needs of newcomers. Led by a team with lived experience, these services are culturally sensitive and relevant, empowering families to feel welcomed, supported, and integrated into their new environment.

## EDUCATION & LEARNING

**Winkler Elementary School's Multicultural Week** celebrated the diverse cultures of its students. Throughout the week, national anthems were sung, students decorated puzzle pieces representing their cultures, and various cultural games were played in PE. Eight community members shared their traditions, foods, and clothing in classrooms, giving students a hands-on cultural experience. The week ended with a schoolwide pancake breakfast for students, followed by an assembly where flags from each represented country were proudly carried into the gym, celebrating the rich diversity of the WES community.

## STANDARD OF LIVING

Central Station – **The Winkler Poverty Reduction and Community Wellbeing Plan** is a key initiative aimed at improving lives and strengthening the Winkler region. By fostering collaboration among stakeholders, this plan addresses poverty while enhancing overall community well-being. Shared efforts create a more inclusive, supportive environment where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

## HEALTH & WELLNESS

**Pembina Counselling Centre** - the Client Assistance Program is at the heart of Pembina Counselling Centre's mission, ensuring that everyone can access the support they need, regardless of financial circumstances. Recognizing that counselling can be costly, the program is committed to making services available to those without insurance or who are facing financial difficulties. By removing barriers to care, it strives to provide vital support to all members of the community.

## CULTURE & BELONGING

Winkler Arts & Culture and Regional Connections host the **Newcomer Welcome Evening**, a celebration of connection and community. This event brings together long-time residents and newcomers for a night of meaningful interaction and information sharing, fostering a sense of belonging and inclusivity for everyone. It's an opportunity to build relationships and strengthen the fabric of our diverse community.

## ARTS & RECREATION

Salem Personal Care Home is enhancing our community by **creating a beautiful, accessible outdoor space around the Salem Home**. The addition of a concrete walking path, complemented by benches, planters, outdoor art, and space for memory trees, offers a peaceful environment for residents and visitors to enjoy.

## CIVIC & DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

Started in March 2024, the **"Ask the Mayor"** sessions are held on the first Tuesday of each month from 4-6pm, offering a welcoming space for residents to engage directly with community leadership. These casual coffee and conversation gatherings provide an open platform to share thoughts, discuss concerns, and gain insights into what's happening in the community, fostering stronger connections and a shared understanding between the mayor and residents.



# WINKLER COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



## ENVIRONMENT

The Gateway Resources Fund held at the Winkler Community Foundation supported Gateway Resources' sprinkler system upgrade in 2022. Gateway Resources provides valuable work experience for adults with intellectual disabilities, empowering them through meaningful employment. At the same time, the recycling program run by Gateway Resources contributes to a healthier environment by reducing landfill waste through the City of Winkler's recycling efforts, ensuring a sustainable future for everyone.



## COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Youth in Philanthropy (YIP), a foundation initiative held at our local high and junior high schools, empowers young people to lead community change by learning about local charities, engaging in community activities and financially supporting projects that are important to youth.



## EDUCATION & LEARNING

Each year, the Winkler Community Foundation awards more than \$100,000 in educational awards. Eligible individuals are:

- ages 16-35
- from Winkler and the area
- attending accredited institutions
- new or currently-enrolled students



## STANDARD OF LIVING

As a result of the 2018 Vital Signs report, the Mend the Gap Fund was created. This fund supports initiatives, programs, and services that alleviate poverty through innovative approaches affecting families and making a difference by "mending the gap" in the community of Winkler.

## HEALTH & WELLNESS

The Winkler Community Foundation granted \$162,382 to health-related projects from 2019 to 2024. The Dr. C.W. Wiebe Medical Fund, which supports medical equipment purchases in Winkler and the surrounding area, contributed \$50,000 to the MRI centre at Boundary Trails from 2004-2007, and has funded numerous projects at the C.W. Wiebe Medical Centre over the years.



## CULTURE & BELONGING

The Winkler Heritage Museum Fund held at the Winkler Community Foundation supports the Winkler Heritage Museum's operating costs. This museum exists to preserve and exhibit local history.



## ARTS & RECREATION

The Evan Thomas Memorial Fund held at the Winkler Community Foundation supports youth who might otherwise be unable to afford playing hockey, by covering their hockey registration fees. Families can apply through the Winkler Minor Hockey Association.



## CIVIC & DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

Every November, the Winkler Community Foundation takes part in the Endow Manitoba Giving Challenge, where donations are stretched for more community impact. In 2022 and 2023, the Winkler Community Foundation raised the most donations of any community foundation, thanks to local residents and businesses.





# Why Does Data Matter in a Community?

In today's world, claims and "facts" are often thrown around casually, but finding reliable evidence to back them up is not always straightforward. This can lead to confusion or even division within a community. However, when a community relies on data, it creates a **shared understanding** that everyone can **trust**.

One way to foster this unity is through this Vital Signs report – a report full of measurable indicators of a community's well-being. These are metrics that everyone can get behind. This shared knowledge helps build stronger connections among community members by providing a clear picture of what's actually happening. For example, tracking data on health, education, employment, or housing can reveal trends and challenges that may otherwise go unnoticed.

By focusing on evidence-based insights, a community becomes **more informed** and better equipped to make **decisions that benefit everyone**, especially when viewed through an equity lens. This means ensuring that policies and actions promote fairness and support **for all community members**, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

## So, why should you care?

Because **truth matters**. In a community where decisions are based on real data, political agendas are set aside, and the **voices of citizens** take center stage. This empowers individuals and leaders alike to take **meaningful action**. With accurate information, you can make choices that **improve the quality of life** for everyone in the community, driving positive change that is rooted in facts rather than assumptions.

# Find Your Passion & Take Action!

## Committed to building a safe and welcoming community?

Your children freely explore your community, building friendships and creating memories that will last a lifetime. Your community is more than a place to live. However, you know not everyone has this same experience. Your community is growing and you want to contribute to a sense of belonging for all.

Here are some things you can do today, to help build a safe and welcoming community:

- Introduce yourself and build relationships with those around you to foster a sense of trust and community. Seeing your neighbours builds a sense of social capital. Why not take it one step further by collaborating with your neighbours to plan a block party!
- Reach out to community outreach groups that are focused on providing neighbourhood support. Learn about their work and see how you can join them in their community support.
- Participate in programming and support businesses within your community. Communities feel safer when you see lots of people on the streets. Be one of those people who gets involved in community.
- Use social media to spread positive messages and promote community initiatives.
- Leave your front door light on at night! This will make your community brighter and increase perceptions of safety.
- Did you know good green space makes a community safer? Advocate for the protection and renewal of our tree canopy, ask for increased municipal spending on green space, and maintain your own yard.

## Dedicated to breaking down the stigma around mental health?

You struggled with anxiety and depression throughout much of your teenage years. And now, after seeking help and building a strong support system, you are passionate about using your own experience to break down the stigma surrounding mental health in your community.

Here are things you can do today to create a safe space where others can feel empowered to seek help without fear of judgment:

- Connect with school and volunteers to share your story with the students.
- Volunteer to organize a peer support group through a local organization offering mental health support services.
- Raise your voice and educate those around you about the realities of mental health.
- Write letters to the editors in local papers and post positive messages of support on social media.
- Make a donation to charities working in this area.

## Passionate about the environment?

You feel alive when your feet are in the grass and the wind in your hair. Being in nature fills you up and restores your passion. However, you feel a heavy weight on your shoulders when you think about climate change. How can your actions make a dent in such large and complex issues impacting the beautiful green spaces and clean fresh air you love to enjoy?

Here are some things you can do today, to support a healthy environment for the future:

- Write to your elected official. Share insights noted in this Vital Signs report and advocate for policy changes that protect our environment.
- Participate in local environmental efforts like clean-ups, tree-planting events, or sustainability projects.
- Contribute financially to organizations that are working to combat climate change, support water conservation, or enhance waste management.
- Offer your time and expertise (e.g., graphic design, event planning, social media) to help environmental groups spread their message and grow their impact.
- Share your passion for the outdoors with your community by mentoring or sharing your experiences with others.

## Motivated to reduce the impact of the rising cost of living?

You are a local business owner who has seen firsthand how the rising cost of living is affecting your customers and employees. You want to be a part of the solution and support your community.

Here are some things you can do today to help your community thrive by ensuring basic needs remain accessible, despite the economic challenges:

- Ask questions and learn more about the drivers and impacts of the rising cost of living in your community.
- Volunteer to help provide essential services like food, clothing, and shelter to individuals and families experiencing homelessness or economic hardship.
- Organize or contribute to events that raise money for organizations working to ensure essential services remain accessible.
- Share stories, statistics, and information about economic challenges in your community to inspire collective action and compassion.
- Collaborate with local businesses to create greater opportunity for community to access essentials.

## Enthusiastic about giving back to your community?

Your community has given you so much during the time you have called it home. Now you are excited to give back. You have been told that your enthusiasm for helping others is boundless! You believe in staying active and engaged keeps you young at heart.

Here are some things you can do today to make a positive impact on the lives of those around you:

- Volunteer your time and skills to local charities, schools, shelters, or community centres.
- Organize or participate in community events like potlucks, sports games, or neighborhood clean-ups to build stronger connections among neighbors.
- Donate to or participate in a local charity event, fundraiser, or community project to help address immediate needs.
- Consider leaving a gift to your favourite charity in your will or estate plan.
- Do something thoughtful for a neighbor, friend, or stranger, such as buying coffee for someone, leaving a kind note, or helping someone with their groceries.
- Share uplifting, kind, or encouraging content on social media to spread positivity and inspire others.

# Methodology & Sources

## Primary Data Collection

Guided by a dedicated volunteer committee, the primary data for this report was collected through multiple community engagement events and community surveys, including:

**Community Conversation:** A discussion with local leaders that introduced the Vital Signs project and gathered initial insights on priority issues.

**Roundtable Discussions:** Two small sessions with diverse stakeholders from sectors like education, health, business, and government to identify local issues. Affinity mapping and voting organized responses.

**Community Surveys:** See below.

**Reflection Sessions:** Five focus groups with residents to discuss preliminary findings and gather feedback, encouraging open dialogue on local concerns and aspirations.

## Secondary Data

Secondary data was gathered from reliable sources, including:

**Statistics Canada:** 2021 Census and other reports on economic, social, and demographic trends.

**Provincial and Regional Reports**

**Local Service Providers:** Data on housing, food insecurity, health services, and local amenities from local organizations and governments.



**Learn more...** Visit the Winkler Community Foundation website [winklercommunityfoundation.com/vitalsigns/](http://winklercommunityfoundation.com/vitalsigns/) or scan the QR code for:

- *The 2024 Vital Signs Report Snapshot*
- Statistical source listings
- Winkler's Vital Signs 2012 and 2018 reports



## Grade Scores

Each domain is scored on a scale from 1 (F) to 5 (A+), based on:

80%: Key Indicator Scores, evaluated against provincial or national benchmarks and adjusted for whether they are improving or deteriorating.

20%: 2024 Community survey satisfaction scores (values are curved and normalized).

## Acknowledging the Canadian Index of Wellbeing

We would like to acknowledge Dr. Bryan Smale, creator of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW). Housed at the University of Waterloo, the CIW was developed through extensive collaboration with experts across various fields, ensuring a robust, comprehensive and credible framework for measuring well-being in a Canadian context.

In 2023, Manitoba Blue Cross published *How Are Manitobans Really Doing? A Report Based on the Canadian Index of Wellbeing*, written by Dr. Smale and Dr. Gao, which applies the CIW framework to Manitoba. The well-being framework used in this Vital Signs project builds upon that work, particularly its balanced approach to looking at community well-being across eight inter-connected areas, ensuring that no single aspect of community life is viewed in isolation.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY PARTICIPATION

**Survey Length:** 67 Questions

**Average Completion time:** 21 minutes

**769 Total Responses:**  
643 complete surveys +  
126 partially complete

**Community Survey open to ages 18+:**  
543 complete surveys +  
111 partially complete

### Community Survey Takers:

**Relationship Status:** 76% married or common-law (note – surveys were intended to be for individual responses, but anecdotally, some surveys were filled out by one member of a couple)

**Gender:** 65% women, 35% men

**Age:** 40% ages 18-39,  
44% ages 40-64, 16% ages 65+

**Newcomers:** 22% have lived in the area less than 10 years

**Household Income:** 13% \$0-40,000,  
26% \$40-80,000, 14% \$80-100,000,  
34% \$100,000+, 13% unspecified

**Home Location:** 82% Winkler,  
18% Ward 1 RM Stanley

**Delivered Online:**  
May & June 2024

**Alternate Formats:**  
paper, large print

**Translated Survey Versions:**  
Provided by Regional Connections in Arabic, German, Russian, Spanish, & Ukrainian

**2024 Youth Survey (GVSD):**  
Grade 11 – 61 complete + 8 partial  
Grade 12 – 39 complete + 7 partial

# Our Sponsors

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## PLATINUM



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## GOLD



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## SILVER



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## BRONZE





## Message from the City of Winkler

The City of Winkler is pleased to support this incredibly beneficial Vital Signs project initiated by the Winkler Community Foundation. Previous Vital Signs reports have been instrumental in uncovering key changes and trends in our local data, allowing us to see needs and concerns and how we can make improvements. Vital Signs provides us with valuable insights that point us in a clear direction as we strive to create a vibrant and healthy community for all residents of Winkler.

## Message from Manitoba Blue Cross

Manitoba Blue Cross is a trusted health and wellness partner for Manitobans. To assess and address wellbeing needs, we commissioned the first-ever Manitoba Index of Wellbeing, an extension of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (University of Waterloo). This report provides insights into quality of life from 1994 to 2020. Released June 2024, it marks a key milestone in our wellness efforts. Through our partnership with Endow Manitoba, we remain committed to evidence-based, community-focused practices and supporting meaningful change across the province.



The Winkler Community Foundation invests in building endowment funds, providing ongoing funding to local non-profit and charitable organizations through grants, supports young people pursuing post-secondary education through education awards, and funding leadership initiatives for the long-term benefit of Winkler and surrounding area. We have granted over \$2.77M back into the community since it was established in 1988.

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