

COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Increasingly, we are seeing the communities that we serve grapple with complex health and social challenges. These challenges include: a lack of affordable housing, effects of addiction and drug overdose, complexities with reconciliation and achieving harmony with Indigenous peoples, ensuring local food availability and security, and addressing social isolation and diverse social needs. While health and social matters in communities have traditionally fallen outside of municipal jurisdiction, residents, social agencies, and senior levels of government are calling upon local governments to help address some of these challenges. As municipalities begin to problem-solve in this space, there is a recognition that individuals and organizations within the community have existing capacities and strengths that are key to addressing health and social challenges and fostering collective community well-being.

We call these **community assets**. Innovative and community-based health and social planning practices can harness these community assets to advance goals and address challenges related to community well-being, providing the highest quality of life for as many community members as possible. Furthermore, focusing on these areas of practice serve to address already existing health and social goals outlined in many local government vision, and strategic policy documents.

Municipalities can build from existing community assets to develop resiliency in each of the **Community Well-Being Focus Areas** listed to the right. On the other side of this sheet, we talk about how we see municipalities being able to use health and social planning to leverage community assets in each of these areas.

Please note these are not exhaustive lists and we're keen to hear your ideas too!



Where does your community's social capital lie?

What are your community's strongest assets?

Is there anything holding your community back right now?

Who are the community partners to help achieve these goals?

Where can your community use support for fresh ideas?

What are your community's biggest goals for well-being?

Socio-Economic Capacity Building

- Diverse employment opportunities
- Social enterprise and finance
- Social purchasing
- Poverty reduction



Physical and Mental Health and Wellness

- Mental health and addiction
- Lifestyle balance and stress management
- Access to recreation and cultural opportunities
- Social programs and services
- Healthy community design
- Health needs assessment and asset mapping



Identity, Culture & Social Connectivity

- Exploration of collective community identity, while respecting individuality
- Connection to culture, religion, and/or spirituality
- Traditional knowledge and practices
- Intergenerational knowledge transfer
- Immigration and settlement
- Sexuality and gender diversity and equity
- Inclusion and equity for all



Healthy Approaches to Climate Change & the Environment

- Wellbeing through access to green spaces and amenities
- Mitigating negative health & environmental impacts of development
- Managing natural and environmental assets for health
- Health benefits of mitigating and adapting to climate change



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Healthy Early Childhood Development & Education

- Youth engagement and involvement in community decision making
- Healthy school programming
- Healthy life skills teaching
- Abundant and diverse family supports
- Access to daycare and schooling



Food Availability & Security

- Access to healthy, appropriate food
- Local, regional, and industrial food systems
- Support of local food producers and initiatives



Healthy Infrastructure & Services

- Affordable housing and homelessness
- Universally accessible and inclusive design
- Age-friendly communities
- Community hub development
- Physical-social connectivity



We realize that our greatest contributions to the communities we live, work, and play in are acting as catalysts for community health, well-being, vibrancy and quality of life. Please get in touch with Urban Matters by speaking to a Community Catalyst on our team.

Our website (www.urbanmatters.ca) has all the information you need to get started!

