The State of Youth in Toronto

What Toronto's published record can — and cannot — tell us about its young people

The published record — the state of the city's young people, and the response, in one short read

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Compiled from published sources, November 5, 2026

01 The conditions · 02 The response · 03 The accountability gap

How to read this

HOW TO READ THIS

Every figure prints its age band, geography, and year — the band, place, and year its source used. Figures are never added together across different bands, places, or years.

Ratings — WORSE / MIXED / CAN'T TELL say what changed and how much weight the comparison can carry. Each carries a confidence note.

Figure numbers and source lines — every chart and table is numbered (Figure 1, Figure 2, …) and carries a source line directly beneath it.

An absence is a finding — where no figure is published at the study's standard, the study says so. Absence of public reporting is not absence of service or impact.

The City of Toronto last published an integrated report card on its children in the early 2000s. No Toronto-wide assessment of young people's condition — across income, housing, health, schooling, safety and work — has been published since.

A note on the title

The State of Youth in Toronto is an independent, published-source assessment of how Toronto's young people are doing, what governments publish about the response, and where the public record falls short. It rates seven areas of young people's lives — money, home, food, health, school, safety and work — using only figures governments and public bodies have themselves published, and it treats what is not published as a finding in its own right.

It is not a youth consultation report, an advocacy platform, or a wellbeing survey, and it makes no recommendations. It differs from Canada's federal *State of Youth Report* (2021), which is national and built from engagement with young people, and from the City of Toronto's own *Toronto Report Card on Children*, the integrated children's report card the City last published in the early 2000s. It complements the City's *Investing in Youth Outcomes* framework (2021): that framework guides how City programs measure themselves internally; this report asks what the published record allows the public to know.

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PART 01

The conditions

Toronto can't tell whether its young people are better off, because the numbers don't add up across systems. Where they do, most are moving the wrong way. The absence of published data is itself a finding.

PART 01 · THE CONDITIONS

The scorecard

581,210 residents aged 5 to 24 — Toronto, 2021 Census	**20.8%** of the city's population — Toronto, 2021 Census	**25.3%** of children aged 0 to 17 in low income — Toronto, 2022	**37.0%** of youth in grades 7 to 12 report fair or poor mental health — Toronto, 2023	**18.0%** unemployment, ages 15 to 24 — Toronto CMA, 2025	**10%** of people surveyed in the 2024 homelessness count (a sample of those counted) were aged 16 to 24 — Toronto, 2024

Money Children in low income, ages 0 to 17, Toronto (CFLIM-AT)	**16.8%** 2020	→	**25.3%** 2022 — 117,890 children	WORSE **Confidence: moderate.** Same measure both years; the 2020 starting point includes temporary pandemic income supports, which the source prints as a reason 2020 is not directly comparable.
Home People counted experiencing homelessness, all ages, Toronto (Street Needs Assessment)	**7,347 → 15,418** Apr 2021 → Oct 2024	→	**12,196** latest count, Oct 2025	CAN'T TELL **Confidence: none** on a trend. Single-night counts in different months and conditions — not a like-for-like trend; the 2024 count included 6,350 refugee claimants in shelters.
Food Children in food-insecure households, under 18, Toronto (PHO pooled)	**28.4%** 2019–2020, pooled	→	**32.0%** 2023–2024, pooled	WORSE **Confidence: low.** Pooled estimates are not a trend; no annual Toronto child rate is published. The one single-year rate — 18.5%, ages 1–17, 2019, TPH — is a different measure and is never joined to this row.

Health

Youth reporting fair or poor mental health, grades 7 to 12, Toronto (TPH)

27.1% 2019 → **37.0%** 2023

WORSE

Confidence: high. The same Toronto survey, the same question, four years apart.

School

Five-year graduation rate, Toronto District School Board

— no like-for-like earlier rate → **87.4%** cohort that began Grade 9 in 2019–20

CAN'T TELL

Confidence: none. Earlier rates exist in other publications, on different bases that do not match this record closely enough to support a comparison. The Catholic board stands at 91.5% and Ontario at 89.5%.

Safety

Shootings and firearm discharges · homicides, all ages, Toronto (TPS)

462 · 85 2024 → **263 · 45** 2025

MIXED

Confidence: high on the counts. **None** on whether young people shared in the improvement: victims' ages are not published for either count.

Work

Unemployment, ages 15 to 24, Toronto CMA (LFS)

12.3% 2019 → **18.0%** 2025

WORSE

Confidence: high. The same survey both years; its table was replaced in 2025 (series break in 2025) and the change is marked in the study.

THE RESPONSE

Spending is not the gap — SafeTO alone was funded at **$43 million** in 2025, and Toronto's Social Development figure works out to approximately $236 per resident aged 5 to 24 — an upper bound: the division's full gross budget, most of it not youth-specific, divided by the 2021 Census count of residents aged 5 to 24. What is missing is a shared account of results: each program reports in its own units — visits, spaces, calls, dollars — and no published total for young people exists.

Prepared from published sources only, and may be circulated on its own. The full record behind every figure — sources, methods, and the figures that could not be found — is in *The State of Youth in Toronto* (November 2026) and its Technical Appendix. Swabir Shariff · Toronto, Canada

Sources: 2021 Census of Population; Census Family Low Income Measure, After Tax (taxfiler data); City of Toronto Street Needs Assessment, 2021, 2024 and 2025; Public Health Ontario (Canadian Income Survey, pooled); Toronto Public Health student survey; TDSB and TCDSB Student Achievement Plans; Toronto Police Service; Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

PART 01 · THE CONDITIONS

The state of Toronto’s youth, in brief

Toronto counted **581,210 residents aged 5 to 24** in the 2021 Census — about one in five people in the city. Read line by line, this is what the published data says about how they are doing. Every figure is printed with the age band, place, and year its source used. The rating after each heading — WORSE, MIXED, or CAN'T TELL — says what changed and how much weight the comparison can carry.

Money — WORSE. 25.3% of Toronto children aged 0 to 17 were in low income in 2022, on the Census Family Low Income Measure (CFLIM-AT) — 117,890 children. Within that same measure, the rate rose from 16.8% in 2020 to 25.3% in 2022; the 2020 starting point includes temporary pandemic income supports, which the source prints as a reason 2020 is not directly comparable with adjacent years. The median income of Torontonians aged 15 to 24 who had income was $14,100 in 2024, down in real terms from $20,500 in 2020 (the 2020 income year included temporary pandemic transfers; the figures are for the Toronto CMA, in constant 2024 dollars).

Home — CAN'T TELL. The City's point-in-time counts found 7,347 people experiencing homelessness on a single night in April 2021, 15,418 on a single night in October 2024, and 12,196 on a single night in October 2025 — single-night counts in different seasons and conditions; not a like-for-like trend. The 2024 count included 6,350 refugee claimants accommodated in the shelter system as of the count date. Young people aged 16 to 24 were 10% of those surveyed in 2024.

Food — WORSE. A Toronto rate for children and youth was published once: 18.5% of children and youth aged 1 to 17, on 2019 data. Public Health Ontario now publishes Toronto child values only as pooled estimates: pooled estimates stood at 28.4% (2019–2020) and 32.0% (2023–2024); pooled estimates are not a trend. No annual Toronto child rate exists.

Health — WORSE. 37.0% of Toronto youth in grades 7 to 12 reported fair or poor mental health in 2023, up from 27.1% in 2019 — the same Toronto survey, the same question, four years apart.

School — CAN'T TELL. The five-year graduation rate was 87.4% at the Toronto District School Board and 91.5% at the Toronto Catholic board, against 89.5% for Ontario. Earlier rates exist in other publications, on different bases; none matches this record closely enough to compare, so no direction can be claimed.

Safety — MIXED (better on the counts; the youth share is not published). Toronto Police Service counted 263 shootings and firearm discharges in 2025, down from 462 in 2024, and 45 homicides, down from 85. But the published record contains no victim-age breakdown for either, so it cannot say how much of that improvement reached young people.

Work — WORSE. The Toronto CMA unemployment rate for ages 15 to 24 was 18.0% in 2025 (series break in 2025), against 12.3% in 2019. Ontario's NEET rate — young people not in employment, education or training — was 13% for ages 15 to 29 in 2025. No Toronto NEET series is published.

The response — more money, spent in silos. The problem is not an absence of spending. SafeTO alone was funded at $43 million in 2025. The problem is how the money is arranged: program by program,

level of government by level of government, each reporting in its own units — visits, registrations, spaces licensed — with no shared measure of what a young person actually receives, and no published total for youth at all. The ≈$236 per resident aged 5 to 24 sometimes quoted for Toronto is an upper bound: the division's full gross budget, most of it not youth-specific, divided by the 2021 Census count of residents aged 5 to 24 — read against other cities as orders of magnitude, not a ranking.

So the picture is this: on most of what can be measured twice, Toronto's young people are worse off than they were — and on the rest, the record cannot even say, because nobody publishes it in a form that adds up. What follows is that record, in three parts: the conditions, the response, and the accountability gap.

> *on most of what can be measured twice, Toronto's young people are worse off than they were — and on the rest, the record cannot even say, because nobody publishes it in a form that adds up.*

PART 01 · THE CONDITIONS

The conditions

Who they are. Toronto counted **581,210 residents aged 5 to 24** in the 2021 Census — 20.8% of the city's population, out of a total of 2,794,356. Counting from birth, 704,760 residents were aged 0 to 24, or 25.2% of the city. Children aged 0 to 14 numbered 384,300, or 13.8% of the population, down from 14.6% in 2016. Young people aged 15 to 24 numbered **320,460**, and the largest single band under 25 was ages 20 to 24, at **185,650**. Between the 2016 and 2021 censuses, the population under 25 fell by 33,645. Every figure in this paragraph comes from that one census, counted on Census Day, May 11, 2021. The city's total population of 2,794,356 was 2.3% higher than its 2016 Census count. The sources that follow publish their own age bands and their own geographies — some cover the city, some the wider Toronto census metropolitan area (CMA) — and each figure below keeps the band, place, and year its source used.

581,210 residents aged 5–24 — Toronto, 2021 Census	**25.3% · 117,890** children aged 0–17 in low income (CFLIM-AT) — Toronto, 2022	**15,418 vs 7,347** people counted homeless, Oct 23, 2024 vs Apr 21, 2021 — Toronto	**$1,456 vs $390** monthly bachelor rent vs Ontario Works shelter allowance — 2024

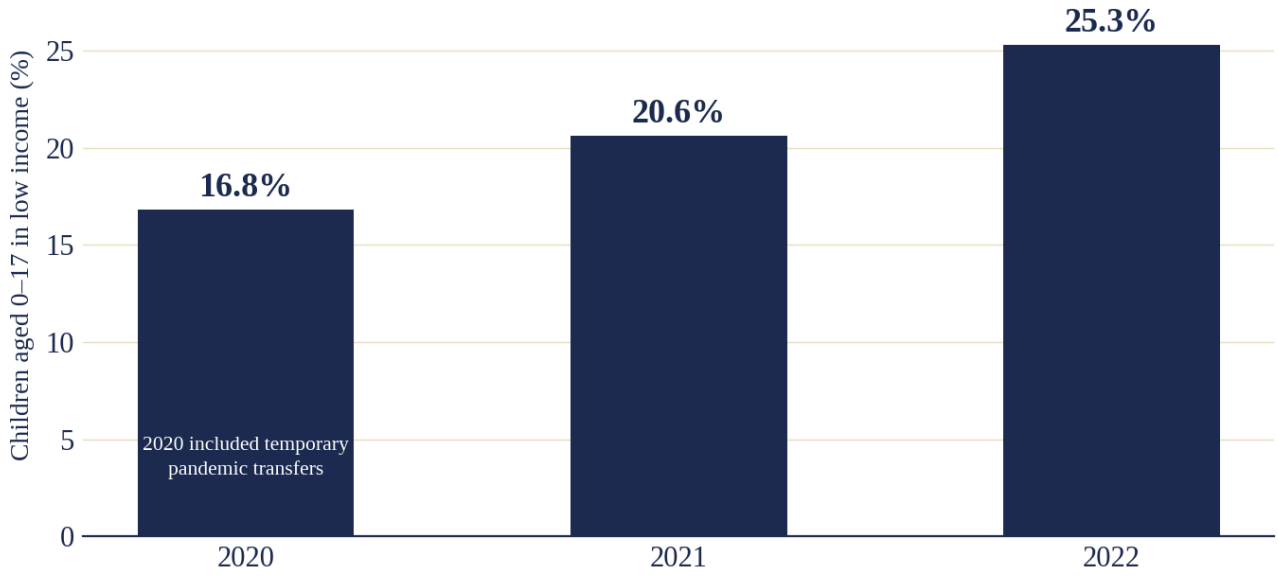
KEY FINDING

Three published measures give three different child low-income values for Toronto — 14.7% (LIM-AT, 2020), 25.3% (CFLIM-AT, 2022) and 10.0% (MBM, Toronto CMA, 2020). They are three measures side by side, not a trend; no one of them continues another.

Money. Toronto has no single child poverty number. Three published measures give three values, and each describes a different measure, population, geography, or year. On the Low Income Measure, After Tax (LIM-AT), 14.7% of Toronto children aged 0 to 17 lived in low-income households in the 2020 income year, as

reported in the 2021 Census; that year included temporary pandemic transfers, which the source prints as a reason 2020 is not directly comparable with adjacent years. On the Census Family Low Income Measure, After Tax (CFLIM-AT — the census-family version of the measure), 25.3% of children aged 0 to 17 were in low income in the 2022 tax year — 117,890 children — on taxfiler data rather than the census. On the Market Basket Measure (MBM), Canada's official poverty line, the rate was 10.0% in 2020, for all ages across the Toronto CMA (the city and surrounding area), not the city alone. These are three measures side by side, not a trend; no one of them continues another. Within its own series, the CFLIM-AT rate rose from 16.8% in 2020 to 20.6% in 2021 and 25.3% in 2022, and children in one-parent families had a CFLIM-AT rate of 50.6% in 2022.

Figure 1 — Child low income, Toronto, Census Family Low Income Measure, After Tax



Children aged 0 to 17 in low income, Toronto, one series only: the Census Family Low Income Measure, After Tax (taxfiler data). The Low Income Measure, After Tax (14.7%, 2020) and the Market Basket Measure (10.0%, 2020, Toronto CMA, all ages) are different measures and are not plotted here — three measures side by side, not a trend.

Source: Census Family Low Income Measure, After Tax (taxfiler data), 2020–2022.

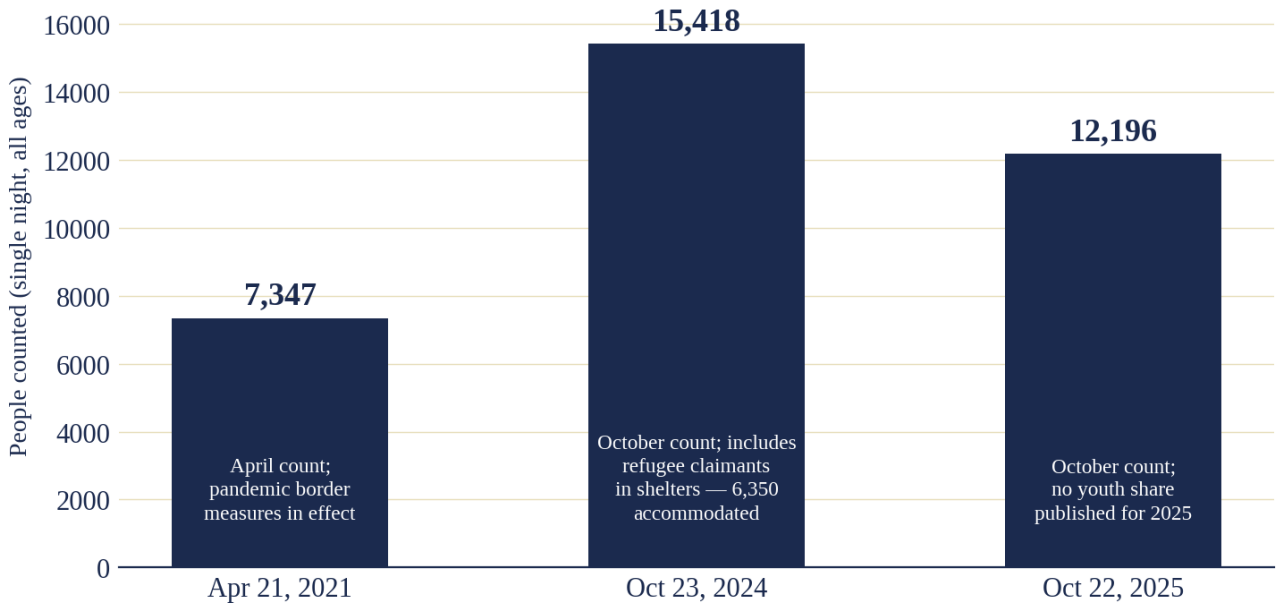
Below city level, and by equity group, the published record is uneven: the one-parent-family rate above (50.6%, 2022) is the deepest published split for child low income. No child-specific Market Basket Measure rate is published for the city or the CMA, and no youth core-housing-need rate is published. **Not published:** a child poverty rate for Toronto on the official (MBM) measure, and any neighbourhood-level child low-income series at this study's standard. Toronto's median total household income was $84,000 for the 2020 income year, the lowest median among the regions of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area in the City's backgrounder.

Young people's own incomes are published for the Toronto CMA, not the city. Among residents aged 15 to 24 who had income, the median total income was **$14,100** in 2024, in 2024 constant dollars, down in real terms from $20,500 in 2020 — the first year of a series that fell each year, starting from the income year that

included pandemic transfers. Median employment income for the same band was $12,800 in 2024. In Ontario, the general minimum wage is $17.95 per hour from October 1, 2026, and the student minimum wage for students under 18 is $16.90 per hour for the same period. The depth of low income is published by family type: in 2022, the gap between the CFLIM-AT line and the median after-tax income of low-income one-parent families with two children was $15,495. Student debt is published by province of study, not for Toronto: among Ontario bachelor's graduates of the class of 2020 who owed money for their education, the average debt at graduation was $30,800, and 59% of Ontario bachelor's graduates owed debt to some source.

Housing. Toronto's 2024 point-in-time count found **15,418 people** experiencing homelessness on October 23, 2024, more than double the 7,347 counted on April 21, 2021. Both counts are single-night counts from the City's Street Needs Assessment, and they come with the City's own cautions: the 2018 and 2021 counts were held in April and the 2024 count in October; the 2021 count was taken while pandemic border measures were in effect; and the 2024 count included a large number of refugee claimants in the shelter system, 6,350 accommodated as of the count date. On the 2024 count night, 12,304 people were in City-administered sites, 1,615 were outdoors, and 1,499 were in provincially administered institutions. The count does not include hidden homelessness, such as temporarily staying with friends or family. Youth aged 16 to 24 were 10% of people surveyed in the 2024 assessment, and the City estimates that more than 1,500 young people aged 16 to 24 experience homelessness on a given night in Toronto; the City does not publish the basis for this estimate. The 2025 count, held October 22, 2025, found 12,196 people, all ages; the City published no youth share for it.

Figure 2 — People counted experiencing homelessness, single-night counts



People counted experiencing homelessness on a single night, all ages, City of Toronto Street Needs Assessment. Counts only; no rate. The bars are not joined and are not a trend series: the counts were taken in different months and conditions, as annotated on the chart. Youth aged 16 to 24 were 10% of those surveyed in 2024; the City estimates that more than 1,500 young people aged 16 to 24 experience homelessness on a given night, and the City does not publish the basis for that estimate.

Source: City of Toronto, Street Needs Assessment 2021, 2024 and 2025.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Without a youth count on a comparable footing, no one in a city office can say whether youth homelessness is rising or falling — only that the overall count is in the tens of thousands.

Toronto had 25 youth shelters at the end of the third quarter of 2025. Average youth-shelter bed capacity was 699 beds across the first quarter of 2024 to the third quarter of 2025, and 57% of youth were reported as having been unable to access a shelter bed when they tried in the past year. Rents are published for the Toronto CMA: in October 2025, the average rent was $1,761 per month for a one-bedroom apartment and $2,045 for a two-bedroom, with a vacancy rate of 3.0% overall. A separate City-published series prints the average market rent for a bachelor unit in Toronto as **$1,456 per month** in 2024, against a maximum Ontario Works shelter allowance of **$390 per month** for a single person in the same year. Almost one in five Toronto households was in core housing need in 2021 — **215,225 households**, 19% of households examined — including 29% of renter households and 11% of owner households. In the Toronto CMA, 47% of young adults aged 20 to 34 lived in the same household as at least one parent in 2021.

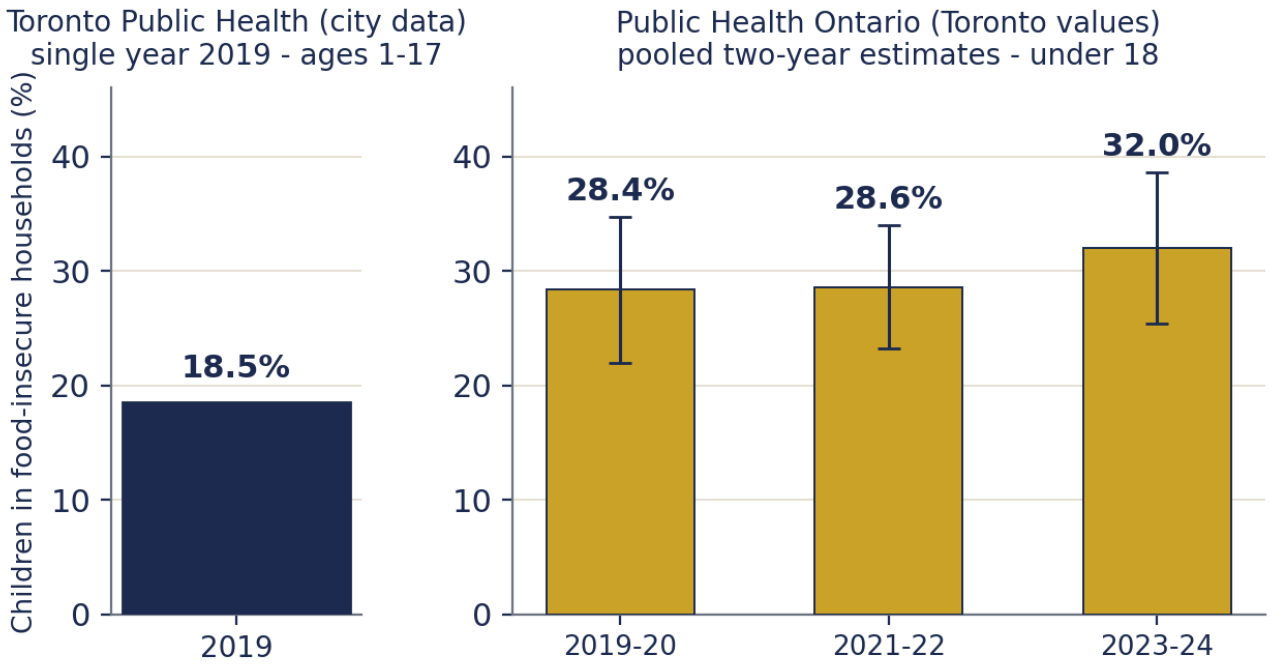
PART 01 · THE CONDITIONS

Body and mind

Food. About one in four Toronto households was food insecure in the most recent published city estimate: **24.9%** of households, over 753,000 people, in the Who's Hungry 2024 report, which cites Statistics Canada's Canadian Income Survey as analysed by PROOF at the University of Toronto. The successor report, Who's Hungry 2025, prints the updated value as 24.7% of Toronto households in 2024. Both rates cover all households and all ages; neither report publishes a Toronto rate for children or youth specifically.

A Toronto rate for children and youth was published once. Toronto Public Health's Population Health Profile (February 2023) prints that 18.5% of Toronto children and youth aged 1 to 17 experienced household food insecurity in the past year, on 2019 data; the figure counts individuals, not households, and includes marginal, moderate, and severe insecurity. Public Health Ontario now publishes Toronto child values only as pooled multi-year estimates, from the Canadian Income Survey: 28.4% for 2019–2020, 28.6% for 2021–2022, and 32.0% for 2023–2024 as two-year combined estimates, and 33.4% for 2023–2025 as a three-year rolling estimate. No annual Toronto child value is published for any single year. The two sources use different surveys and different reference periods, so their figures are not one series and do not show a trend.

Figure 3 — Children and youth in food-insecure households, Toronto



Toronto children and youth living in food-insecure households, in two panels because the two sources measure differently and are not one series. Left — Toronto Public Health (2023): 18.5% for 2019, a single year, ages 1–17. Right — Public Health Ontario (2026): children under 18, published only as pooled two-year estimates — 28.4% (2019–2020), 28.6% (2021–2022), 32.0% (2023–2024); whiskers are the published 95% confidence intervals. No annual Toronto child rate is published for any recent year.
Source: Toronto Public Health (2023); Public Health Ontario (2026), Canadian Income Survey.

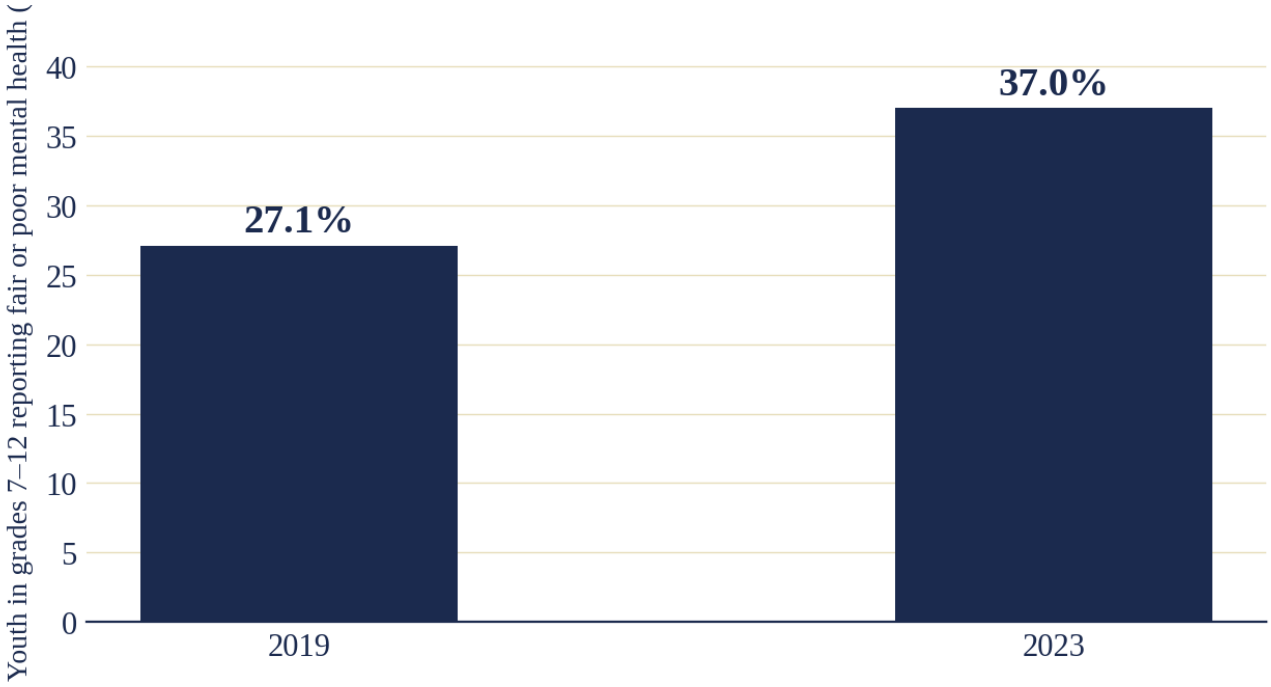
Two sources, two different measures, plotted apart on purpose: the single-year figure on the left and the pooled estimates on the right are not one trend, and the chart does not join them.

Toronto food banks recorded **4,124,313 client visits** in the fiscal year April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025, across the Daily Bread and North York Harvest member agency network — an **18% increase** over the previous year's 3,488,351 visits. Visits count attendances, not unique individuals. Children were **25% of Toronto food bank clients** in 2024–25. The Student Nutrition Program is a coverage record, not a prevalence record: in 2024–25, 819 student nutrition programs receiving municipal funding were located in 620 school communities, and approximately 73% of Toronto's public schools had a community-based student nutrition program. By Phase 1 of the program's expansion (Winter 2025), 686 school communities received funding, which Toronto Public Health states includes reaching 81% of Toronto's public schools.

37.0%	**32.0%**	**4,124,313**	**105 days**
fair or poor mental health, grades 7–12 — Toronto, 2023 (27.1% in 2019)	child food insecurity, PHO pooled — Toronto, under 18, 2023–2024	food bank client visits — Toronto, Apr 1, 2024–Mar 31, 2025	average wait for intensive treatment — Ontario, 2023/24 (in the Technical Appendix)

Mental health. The Toronto series is Toronto Public Health's student survey. Toronto Public Health reports that **37.0%** of Toronto youth in grades 7 to 12 reported fair or poor mental health in 2023, up from 27.1% in 2019. In the same Toronto series, 18.0% of youth in grades 7 to 12 reported in 2023 that they seriously contemplated suicide in the past year, against 16.7% in 2019, a change the source describes as stable.

Figure 4 — Fair or poor mental health, Toronto youth, grades 7–12



Toronto youth in grades 7 to 12 reporting fair or poor mental health, Toronto Public Health student survey. The Ontario CAMH series is a different publisher and a different population, is not plotted here, and appears in the Technical Appendix.

Source: Toronto Public Health, student survey, 2019 and 2023.

The Ontario-wide and national series — CAMH's Ontario student survey, the Ontario opioid figures for ages 15–24, and Ontario treatment waits — appear in the Technical Appendix.

Health care. The clinical record is thinner for Toronto youth specifically, and several of its series are not youth-only. Toronto's rate of emergency department visits for intentional self-harm was **100.3 per 100,000** in 2022, up from 86.9 per 100,000 in 2013 — a series for people aged 10 years and older, not restricted to youth, and no youth-specific Toronto rate is published. Toronto Public Health publishes opioid-toxicity deaths for all ages only: **523 deaths in Toronto in 2023**. No Toronto-specific wait time for child and youth mental health treatment is published. Among Toronto youth in grades 7 to 12, past-year substance use in 2023 was 29.4% for alcohol, described as stable against 31.7% in 2019; 16.4% for cannabis, against 14.6% in 2019; and 2.6% for tobacco in both 2023 and 2019.

Getting around. Children aged 12 and under ride the TTC free, a fare in place since March 1, 2015. Youth aged 13 to 19 pay a concession single fare of $2.35 on a PRESTO card set to the Youth fare type, or $2.40 in cash, against an adult fare of $3.30 on PRESTO. Since September 1, 2026, riders in all fare categories, including youth aged 13–19, stop paying after 47 paid fares in a calendar month under monthly fare capping. The City's Fair Pass Transit Discount Program, the income-based fare discount, is published for Toronto residents aged 20 to 64 years only; no youth eligibility line is published for the program, and Toronto has no operating TTC U-Pass program. On road safety, the City's Vision Zero reporting publishes no killed-or-seriously-injured figure for any age band under 20. In 2025, 39 people were killed on Toronto roads, all ages, and 649 School Safety Zones were completed by the end of 2025. On air exposure, Toronto Public Health's

traffic-related air pollution work records that **50%** of Toronto's child care centres and **43% of Toronto's schools** are located within at least one of its mapped exposure zones. Those are site-location shares — the share of buildings that fall inside a modelled zone — not measurements of any individual child's exposure.

> *The Student Nutrition Program is a coverage record, not a prevalence record*

PART 01 · THE CONDITIONS

School and safety

263	45	87.4%	129,000
shootings and firearm discharges — Toronto, 2025 (462 in 2024)	homicides — Toronto, 2025 (85 in 2024)	five-year graduation rate — TDSB	teen visits (accesses — a returning teen counts again), TPL Youth Hubs — Toronto, Jan–Aug 2025

KEY FINDING

The counts improved sharply in 2025 — 263 shootings and firearm discharges, down from 462 in 2024, and 45 homicides, down from 85 — and the published record contains no victim-age breakdown for either, so it cannot say how much of that improvement reached young people.

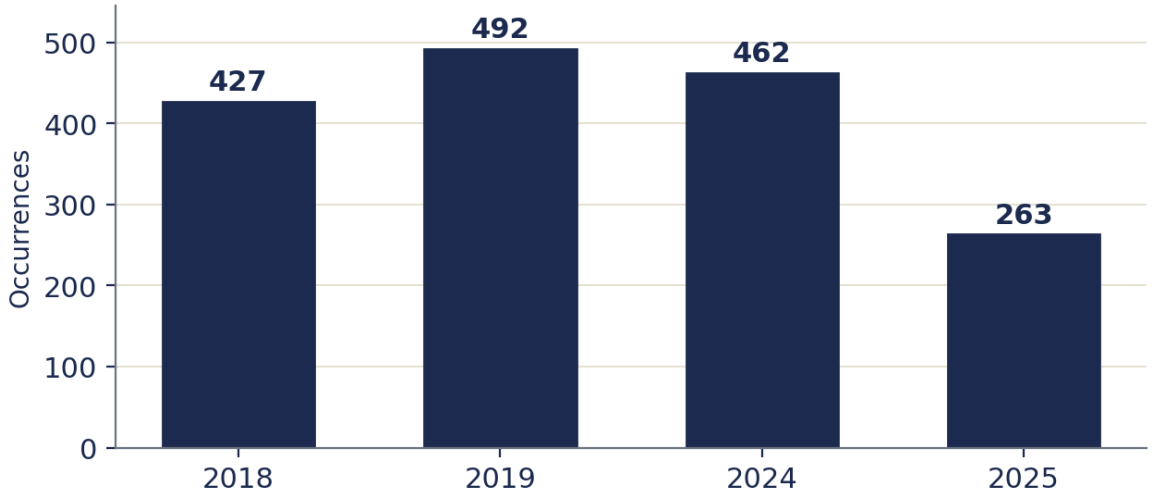
School. In the latest Student Achievement Plans, the five-year graduation rate was **87.4%** at the Toronto District School Board and **91.5% at the Toronto Catholic District School Board**, against **89.5% for Ontario**. The five-year rate is the share of students graduating with an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) within five years of starting Grade 9; those figures are for the cohort that began Grade 9 in 2019–20, measured to 2023–24. The four-year rate counts graduation within four years of starting Grade 9, and for the cohort that began in 2020–21 it was 81.8% at TDSB and 88.4% at TCDSB, against 84.9% for Ontario, as of August 31, 2024. The two rates describe different cohorts. The board boundaries match the City of Toronto, but the figures are enrolment populations, not the city's resident population: some Toronto students attend the French-language boards or private schools, and some board students live outside the city.

Progress through school shows in the credit figures. By the end of Grade 10, the share of students earning 16 or more credits was 73% at TDSB and 85% at TCDSB in 2023–24, against 80% in Ontario. Suspensions run lower in the Toronto boards than across the province: the suspension rate counts students in Grades 4–12 suspended at least once in the data year, and it was 2.13% at TDSB in 2023–24, against 3.84% in Ontario, and 2.86% at TCDSB in 2022–23. Grade 6 results from the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) are the share of students meeting or exceeding the provincial standard: reading 84% and writing 83% at TDSB, and reading 86% and writing 84% at TCDSB, against 86% and 85% for Ontario. Ontario ended Grade 9 streaming from September 2021, so from 2021–22 the academic/applied split in Grade 9 mathematics no longer exists as an enrolment category. What happens after graduation is thinner in the record: the most recent published TDSB-linked transition analysis covers ten Grade 9 cohorts, 2006–2015 starters, each followed five

years (n = 156,580), and of graduates in those cohorts a board-wide average of 16% did not make a direct transition to postsecondary education. The same report prints that 24.5% of graduating students completed no Grade 12 University-preparation course; of those students, 23.1% transitioned to college and 70.9% did not apply to postsecondary at all. Apprenticeship transitions are not measured in this dataset, and no Toronto-level postsecondary participation rate is published.

Violence. Toronto Police Service counted **263 shootings and firearm discharges** in the City of Toronto in calendar year 2025, down in count from 462 in 2024 and below the 492 recorded in 2019, the highest total in the 2015–2025 series. The 2025 total consisted of 95 shootings and 168 firearm discharges, with **101 people non-fatally injured** and **20 people killed**. TPS counted **45 homicides** in 2025 — 20 by shooting, 14 by stabbing, and 11 recorded as other types — against 85 in 2024 and 98 in 2018. The study publishes these figures as counts only and makes no statement about why they changed.

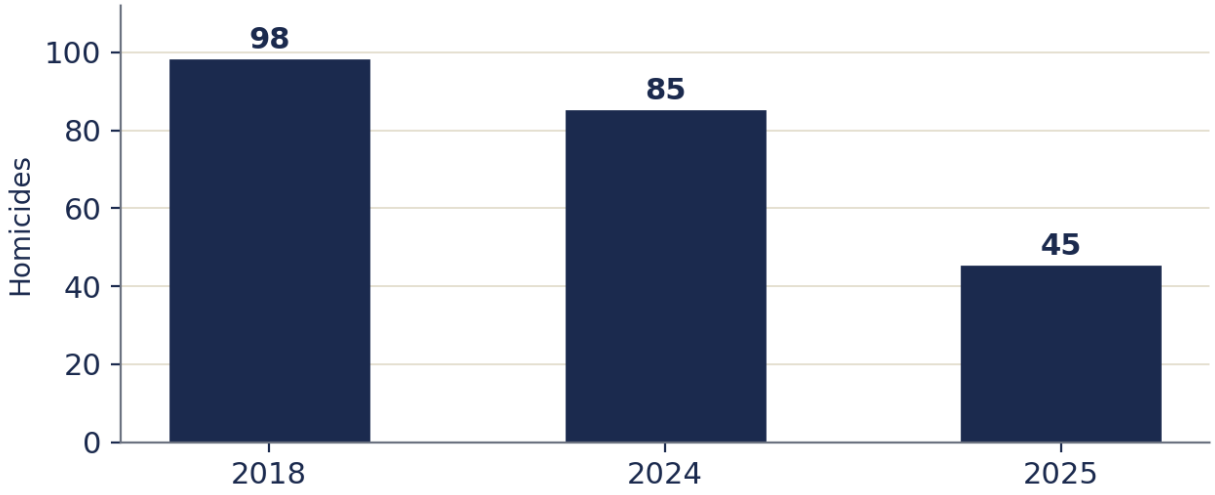
Figure 5 — Shootings and firearm discharges, City of Toronto



Shootings and firearm discharges, total occurrences, City of Toronto, calendar years (Toronto Police Service, 2026). Counts only — the study publishes no rate and no statement about why the counts changed.

Source: Toronto Police Service, 2026.

Figure 6 — Homicides, City of Toronto



Homicides, City of Toronto, calendar years (Toronto Police Service, 2026). Counts only.

Source: Toronto Police Service, 2026.

The age picture inside the violence data is partial, and its two blocks are never combined in this study. Derived from TPS open data, 1,818 persons aged under 18 were recorded as persons arrested and charged in Toronto in 2024, 5.7% of accused persons of all ages; the count was 1,746 in 2019 and 1,698 in 2025. Under the firearm-related subtype, 166 persons aged under 18 were arrested and charged in 2024, and under the murder subtype, 4; a person charged under more than one category or subtype appears in each, so the rows overlap and must not be summed. In the separate victims dataset, which records identified victims of crimes against the person aged 12 to 17, the count was 2,951 in 2024, dividing by subtype into assault 1,412, sexual violation 704, robbery 435, and other 400. That dataset contains no firearm subtype and no homicide subtype, so it cannot be used as a shooting-victim or homicide-victim series. What the record does not contain is a victim-age breakdown for shootings or homicides: the TPS shootings dataset has no victim-age field and no accused-age field, and the homicides dataset's field list contains no age field for victims and no field for accused persons at all. No TPS-published table of homicide victims or accused by age, and no TPS-published table of shooting victims by age, was located. That absence is part of the record.

Justice. *Youth justice — the Ontario and Canada series on charges, diversion, courts and custody — appears in the Technical Appendix. No Toronto city-level series is published at any stage of the system.*

Belonging. *Belonging — Youth Hub accesses, school connectedness and sense of belonging — appears in the Technical Appendix.*

> *That absence is part of the record.*

PART 01 · THE CONDITIONS

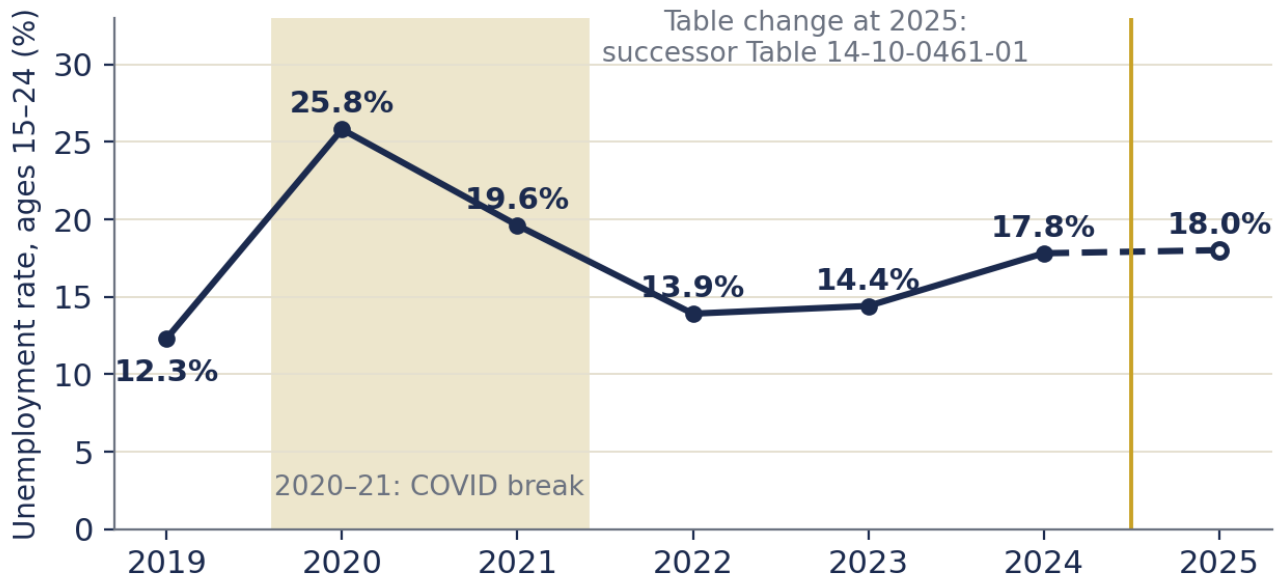
Work

18.0%	13%	10,000
unemployment, ages 15–24 — Toronto CMA, 2025	NEET rate, ages 15–29 — Ontario, 2025 (no Toronto series published)	additional youth to be hired by summer 2026 — City Council motion goal

Jobs. **18.0%** of Toronto CMA's labour force aged 15–24 was unemployed in 2025, against 12.3% in 2019. The employment rate — the share of the population aged 15–24 that is employed — was **44.8% in 2025**, the participation rate **54.7%**, and the population itself **937,900**.

These are Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey annual averages for Toronto CMA, ages 15–24, both sexes. The CMA is the city plus surrounding suburban municipalities, so these are CMA figures, not figures for the central city alone. Values for 2019–2024 come from Table 14-10-0385-01; the 2025 values come from its successor, Table 14-10-0461-01, which carries revised population controls. The two tables' rates for overlapping years reconcile within 0.1–0.2 percentage points, but their population levels differ — the successor table prints 961,600 for the 2024 population, against 1,008,400 in the archived table — and the two are not mixed without saying so.

Figure 7 — Unemployment rate, Toronto CMA, ages 15–24



Unemployment rate, Toronto CMA, ages 15–24, Labour Force Survey annual averages: 2019–2024 from the archived Table 14-10-0385-01 (Statistics Canada, 2025b); 2025 from the successor Table 14-10-0461-01 (Statistics Canada, 2026c), plotted as a dashed segment after the marked table change. 2020–21 shaded: the COVID break, marked, not smoothed.

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Tables 14-10-0385-01 and 14-10-0461-01.

The survey table behind this series was replaced in 2025 (marked); the rate barely moved, but the population counts behind it were revised.

The survey table behind this series was replaced in 2025, and the chart marks the change: 2019–2024 values are from the archived table, the 2025 value from its successor, which carries revised population controls.

The series runs: unemployment 12.3% in 2019, 25.8% in 2020 and 19.6% in 2021 — years the study marks as a break and does not smooth — then 13.9% in 2022, 14.4% in 2023, 17.8% in 2024 and 18.0% in 2025. The employment rate was 50.1% in 2019, fell to 40.1% in 2020, and stood at 44.2% in 2024 and 44.8% in 2025. In the five years before the break, unemployment fell from 15.1% in 2015 to 12.3% in 2019, and the employment rate rose from 48.0% to 50.1%. The population behind the rates moved within the archived table too, from 917,900 in 2023 to 1,008,400 in 2024. The CMA table publishes ages 15–24 only; splits into 15–19 and 20–24 are published at Ontario and Canada level, in a different table.

Not in school or work. **13%** of Ontarians aged 15–29 were not in employment, education or training in 2025. The Canada rate was **12%**.

The NEET rate measures the share of a youth population that is in none of employment, education, or training in the survey reference period. Statistics Canada's standard NEET population here is ages 15–29 — an older band than the 15–24 band above. The series (Table 37-10-0196-01) is published as whole percents: 11% for both Canada and Ontario in 2019; 14% for Canada in both 2020 and 2021, and 14% then 15% for Ontario, in the years marked as a break; from 2022 to 2025 the Canada rate ranged from 11% to 12% and the Ontario rate from 10% to 13%. Ontario's 13% in 2025 is the highest Ontario value of the post-break years shown.

A second measure, NEETEST — NEET measured over a full calendar year from linked administrative data — counts youth who were NEET for a full calendar year, excluding unpaid caregiving. For Canada, ages 20–29, the NEETEST rate was 7.6% in 2022, against a snapshot NEET rate of 12.5% the same year; the article behind it puts NEETEST between 7% and 8% throughout 2017–2022, while the snapshot NEET rate was usually 13% to 14% over those years outside the pandemic. It is a different measure, not a continuation of the series above. No Toronto-level NEET series is published: the table appears at Canada and province level only.

The commitments. **10,000** additional equity-deserving youth, ages 15–24, hired by summer 2026 — that is the goal a City Council motion carried in December 2024, as published by the City of Toronto.

The motion, MM24.2, proposed a Toronto Youth Employment Program strategy with that goal, and was referred to committee with "the target of up to 10,000 additional summer jobs for young people by 2026." A later staff report, EC25.7, "Reducing Barriers to Youth Employment," was adopted by Council on December 16–17, 2025; it directs that the goal of creating new youth employment opportunities be included in the Youth Employment Table's terms of reference, directs the Table to set youth-employment-opportunity targets, and requires annual progress reporting beginning May 5, 2026. The City also publishes that more than 16,000 youth are employed across the City system each year — stated in a City news release dated November 25, 2025, and in the EC25.7 summary for ages 15–29, a different band from the motion's 15–24. The documents do not state whether a young person hired under two programs is counted once or twice; the column's counting basis is not published.

Separately, and labelled as what it is: the commitment to create 15,000 new youth jobs — "Create 15,000 new youth jobs through the Toronto Youth Employment Strategy" — is a campaign commitment, published in

Mayor Olivia Chow's 2026 re-election campaign materials in October 2026, following a campaign announcement on October 15, 2026 — a campaign commitment, October 2026; no City costing published. The campaign text states no completion date and no breakdown of job type — full-time, part-time, summer, or placement. No City of Toronto document, timeframe, or costing for the 15,000 figure is published in the sources recorded.

One warning the study carries: a "2,120 youth hired in 2023" figure in City budget notes is a division-wide measure for Social Development, Finance and Administration, across Social Development youth programs. It is not a Toronto Youth Job Corps figure, and the study does not attribute it to that program, whose published age band in the study's record is 15–30, for youth who are out of school and out of work.

> *It is a different measure, not a continuation of the series above.*

PART 02

The response

PART 02 · THE RESPONSE

The published response

Three levels of government publish a response to the conditions in this study — in their own units, on their own year bases, and with their own verbs. City figures are calendar years; Ontario and federal figures are fiscal years running April 1 to March 31. One finding runs through all three: the published totals stop one level above youth. Toronto publishes no youth total.

$43 million SafeTO funding — Toronto, 2025	**≈$236 vs ≈$1,113** per resident aged 5–24 — Toronto (upper bound) vs New York	**40,943** licensed before- and after-school spaces — Toronto, Dec 2025	**≈$29–35 million/yr** the after-school ledger, modelled total (published components $17.3–22.3M) — Toronto	**≈1,800** guaranteed places (ARC registered places, ages 6–12) — Toronto, 2025

KEY FINDING

Toronto publishes no youth total.

Figure 8 — The published response, by level of government and the unit each program reports in

Read the last column: each program reports in a different unit — dollars, visits, calls, spaces — so the rows cannot be added up, and no row reports whether a young person's life improved.

LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT	PROGRAM — AND THE FIGURE IT PUBLISHES	WHAT IT REPORTS — THE UNIT
City of Toronto	**SafeTO** — $43M (2025)	DOLLARS ALLOCATED
	Community Partnership and Investment Program (CPIP) grants — $33.4M (2026; all services — no youth slice published)	DOLLARS ALLOCATED
	Youth Hubs (Toronto Public Library) — 129,000 teen visits (Jan–Aug 2025; visits, not unique teens — a returning teen counts again)	VISITS
	Toronto Community Crisis Service — 17,000+ calls (2025)	CALLS
Ontario	**Before/after-school licensing** — 40,943 spaces (Dec 2025)	SPACES LICENSED
	Youth Opportunities Fund — no Toronto total published	NOT PUBLISHED
	Ontario After School Program — Toronto share not published	NOT PUBLISHED
Canada	**Youth Employment and Skills Strategy** — no Toronto figure published	NOT PUBLISHED
	Canada Summer Jobs — no Toronto figure published	NOT PUBLISHED

Where the money overlaps: SafeTO's $5M youth-violence component sits inside the Social Development budget that also carries the CPIP grants, so those two rows share money and cannot be added. The full program table is printed in the Technical Appendix.

No row publishes whether a young person's life improved.

Source: program figures as printed in the text; the full program table is printed in the Technical Appendix.

The City. SafeTO, the City's community safety and well-being plan, was funded at **$43 million** in calendar 2025 and **$49 million in calendar 2026**, nominal. Each total includes a $5 million component for youth violence prevention in that year — inside the total, not in addition to it.

Social Development, the division that runs SafeTO and the City's main community grants, had a gross budget of **$157.3 million** in calendar 2026. Inside it, the Community Safety & Well-Being service line was $50.7 million and the Community Partnership and Investment Program — the division's all-services grants total — was **$33.4 million**. The division publishes no youth or after-school slice of that grants program, and the service line is not a youth-only line.

Toronto Public Library's Youth Hubs — staffed drop-in spaces for teenagers — numbered 31 in calendar 2025 and recorded 129,000 teen visits in January–August 2025, alongside 2,330 programs offered and 17,700 program participants. Visits are the published unit: a teenager who comes back is counted again. No total cost for all 31 hubs is published; a modelled figure of about $9.2 million per year, built from a published expansion cost of about $296,000 per hub per year, is labelled in the study as modelled, not as a budget.

The Toronto Community Crisis Service, a non-police mobile crisis response for people aged 16 and older, coordinated by Social Development and delivered by community anchor partners, operating city-wide since July 8, 2024, received more than 17,000 calls in calendar 2025, resulting in over 14,000 dispatches. Its cumulative record from March 2022 to December 31, 2025 was more than 41,000 calls responded to, over 34,000 teams dispatched, over 9,500 referrals, and more than 1,600 individuals (people, not events) connected to case management. It has no standalone published budget; its spending sits inside the service line above. The Toronto Youth Equity Strategy, adopted in 2014 as a five-year strategy with 110 actions for youth aged 13–29, was last accounted for in a January 2020 briefing note — $103.3 million invested over calendar 2015–2019. No standalone reporting was found after that date.

Ontario. Toronto had **40,943 licensed before- and after-school spaces** in December 2025. That is licensed capacity — spaces licensed to exist. It is not registrations and not children enrolled; Ontario publishes no enrolment figure, and no Ontario public budget figure for delivering these programs in Toronto.

The Youth Opportunities Fund, funded by the province and administered by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, carries an Ontario allocation of **$16.8 million per year**. In fiscal 2024–25, $13.4 million was awarded to 38 projects. Allocated and awarded are different published concepts; the two figures are not summed, and the fund publishes no Toronto total.

The Black Youth Action Plan was announced in March 2017 as $47 million over four years, to increase access to supports for 10,800 Black children, youth, and families. For fiscal 2025–26, the only stream figure published is $16.5 million for the Economic Empowerment program, supporting 6 initiatives comprising more than 40 community-based programs. It is one stream in one year, not the plan's total, and no Toronto share is published for it. This is the one program in the published response aimed at a named equity group; no Toronto-level figure for it is published. The Ontario After School Program runs on **$14.6 million per year** province-wide, within $43.9 million over three years, reaching about 13,000 children and youth per year province-wide. Toronto's share — budget, sites, participants — appears nowhere in the published record.

Canada. The Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS), led by Employment and Social Development Canada with 11 other federal departments, agencies and Crown corporations, serves youth aged 15–30. ESDC's own YESS Program activity had planned spending of **$149.910 million** in fiscal 2025–26, with a target of 5,240 youth served by ESDC; delivery partners overall expect to serve approximately 20,000 youth that year. The $149.910 million is one department's portion of one activity, not a whole-of-government total. Total federal funding allocated since the strategy's start on April 1, 2003 is $10,410.36 million — a cumulative figure, not an annual budget. Budget 2025 proposes $307.9 million over two years starting in fiscal 2026–27, labelled in the study as a proposal. No Toronto allocation or participant total for YESS is published.

Canada Summer Jobs, a program under YESS, provides wage subsidies to employers hiring youth aged 15–30. In summer 2025 it recorded more than 75,000 jobs created, Canada-wide. Its budget for fiscal 2025–26 is published on two separate bases, never added: $200.5 million under Budget 2024 to maintain 70,000 job opportunities, plus a $25 million reallocation for up to 6,000 more — 76,000 jobs in that release's own total — and, separately, planned spending of $323.301 million in the departmental plan, with a target of 70,000 youth served. Budget 2025 proposes $594.7 million over two years to support around 100,000 summer jobs in summer 2026. No Toronto total for Canada Summer Jobs is published.

PART 02 · THE RESPONSE

Toronto in the field

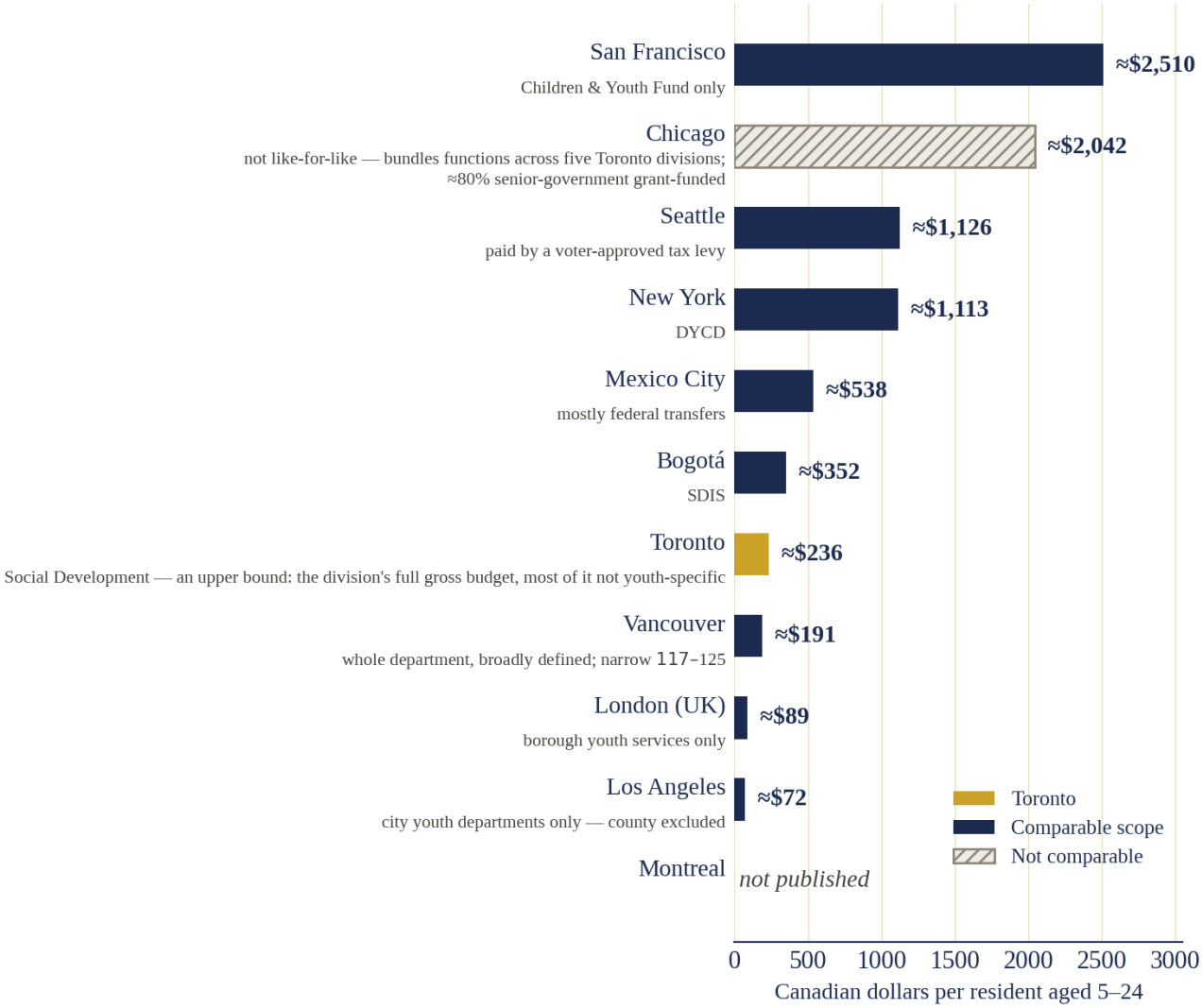
> *Toronto publishes no youth total.*

Toronto's **≈$236 per resident aged 5–24** is an upper bound: the division's full gross budget, most of it not youth-specific, divided by the 2021 Census count of residents aged 5 to 24.

The numerator is the Social Development gross budget of $137.3 million; the denominator is 581,210 residents aged 5–24, City of Toronto, 2021 Census. A later-year budget divided by a 2021 count held constant makes this an upper-bound style figure — the denominator is not a 2025 population count — and the study prints it with that caveat. The division behind it is ≈89–95% City own-source money, and the figure is 0.73% of the City of Toronto operating budget.

Every city in the field is measured the same way: its published youth-serving department or function budget, divided by its residents aged 5–24, converted at US$1 = C$1.40 and £1 = C$1.88 (November 5, 2026) where a figure crosses a border. New York's figure is **≈$1,113 per resident** (Department of Youth and Community Development adopted budget, US$1,514.1M, fiscal 2026; 91.9% City tax levy), on a denominator of 1,904,234 residents aged 5–24. Vancouver's is **≈$191 broad**, or $117–$125 narrow (Social Policy function, $22.262M broad; 116,335 residents aged 5–24, 2021 Census). Los Angeles records ≈$72 — city tier only, since the County runs most social services there. Seattle records ≈$1,126 and San Francisco ≈$2,510 for its Children & Youth Fund only. London (UK) records ≈$89 gross, on a narrower line than the other rows. Bogotá records ≈$352 and Mexico City ≈$538, the second printed with a federal-transfer caveat.

Figure 9 — Published youth budget per resident aged 5–24, Toronto in the field



Published youth-department or function budget per resident aged 5–24, Canadian dollars; Each bar is that department's total published budget from all funding sources combined — city, senior-government and dedicated-levy money together — not municipal own-source dollars only; the funding mix differs by city and is tabled per city in Chapter 20. denominators: residents aged 5–24 (Toronto 581,210, 2021 Census). FX: US$1 = C$1.40, £1 = C$1.88 (November 5, 2026). Chicago hatched — approximately 80% grant-funded, not like-for-like. Montreal: not published. Toronto's figure is an upper bound: the division's full gross budget, most of it not youth-specific. Full table and caveats: Chapter 20 of the Technical Appendix (Study research library, 2026).

Source: published departmental and function budgets as cited in Chapter 20 of the Technical Appendix; 2021 Census denominators.

> The bars are not measured the same way: each city counts a different bundle of services, so read them as orders of magnitude, not a league table.

Chicago's figure, **≈$2,042**, is not like-for-like: its department bundles functions spread across five Toronto divisions and is ≈80% senior-government grant-funded, so it is printed for completeness and not compared

with the other rows. Montreal's figure is not published — its social-development department's budget is not published separately, so no figure can be computed.

The funding source travels with the level. The cities at or above New York's level on comparable scope — Seattle and San Francisco — fund the commitment through dedicated revenue: a voter-approved levy, a charter-mandated set-aside. New York, Toronto and Vancouver fund through annual general-fund appropriation, which re-competes every year. Chicago's scale rests on senior-government grants, and its fiscal 2026 proposed departmental budget fell 32.5% as pandemic grants expired.

The after-school ledger, kept on the same basis, is smaller than any of these totals. Strictly published, like-for-like components total $22.3 million per year — or $17.3 million, because no City document states whether the Summer Safety Plan's $5 million and SafeTO's $5 million youth-violence-prevention component are the same $5 million counted once or two counted separately; the study prints both and presents neither as resolved. Two modelled components sit apart from the published tier: Youth Hubs at approximately $9.2 million per year, and the Toronto share of the Ontario After School Program at $2.2–$3.7 million per year, modelled because no Toronto share is published. With them, the modelled total is approximately **$29–35 million per year**. Of the provision counted in the ledger, about 1,800 places are guaranteed places — the After-School Recreation and Care registered places in 2025, for ages 6–12. Licensed capacity and visits are not converted into places, and are not added to that figure.

PART 02 · THE RESPONSE

The City’s own count

The response, as published, can also be tested against the City's own attempts to count it. Twice — in 2021 and again in 2025 — the City has inventoried its own youth programs, and both documents were read in full for this study. What they contain, and what they leave out, shows how the City itself sees its youth effort.

The 2021 inventory. The Youth Program Inventory, published in June 2021 as part of the Youth Service Review, *Investing in Youth Outcomes*, lists **47 programs and program categories** for young people aged **12 to 29**, across eight divisions, agencies and corporations, from Parks, Forestry and Recreation to the Toronto Police Service. For 46 of the 47 it gives a reach figure — participants served per year — but the figures rest on mixed bases: some count 2019, some 2020, some 2021; some are estimates; some count visits and others contacts, so they cannot be added into a single reach total. Money is another matter. A full reading of the document finds no budget figure in it for any program. Results are absent in the same way: programs are filed under the outcome areas of the Youth Outcomes Framework, but the inventory carries no outcome or results field. It is also a snapshot of one moment — program statuses as of June 1, 2021, mid-pandemic — and by the review's own design it covers only programs the City delivers directly or in partnership, so the grants field sits outside it entirely.

The 2025 inventory. Four years later the City counted again, this time jobs only. The Youth Jobs Inventory, adopted with *Reducing Barriers to Youth Employment* in December 2025, lists **40 youth employment programs** across ten organizations, and its one reach column records more than **16,000** young people

employed in 2025. The documents do not state whether a young person hired under two programs is counted once or twice; the column's counting basis is not published. The pattern repeats: no budget column and no dollar figure in the attachment, no target ages program by program, and no field for outcomes, retention or completion. The staff report carrying it names the underlying problem in its own words — "limited and inconsistent data collection" makes it "difficult to track outcomes, identify who is being left out, and scale what is working." One element is new. Council, by amendment, directed Social Development's Executive Director to report to the Economic and Community Development Committee on the progress and outcomes of the Youth Employment Table on **May 5, 2026**, and annually after that: a standing duty to report outcomes, set by Council itself. The first report under that duty has since arrived, and it can be read against the duty's own words. It came as item 2026.EC29.10, dated **May 26, 2026** — three weeks after the date Council set — bundled with a second subject, the Diversity Youth Fellowship Program, and the committee received it for information on June 9, 2026. For the Table, it reports a **projected 2,800** new opportunities identified across the City and its partners, and counts of activity from January to May 2026: **11** career and job-fair events engaging **1,085** young people, providing **250** job opportunities. No numeric target set by the Table appears in the item's published summary, and no outcomes series — no placements achieved, no retention, no wages — appears in the summary or in the report's case-study attachment. (The report body and its framework attachment could not be retrieved for this study; the absence is stated for the published summary and attachments read.) The first test of the new duty produced a projection and a count of events.

City inventory	Programs counted	Budgets published	Outcomes published
Youth Program Inventory (2021)	47	None	None
Youth Jobs Inventory (2025)	40	None	None

Read the two rows side by side: each inventory counts the programs carefully, then stops at the same two fields — what the programs cost, and what they changed.

The framework. The Youth Outcomes Framework, adopted with the 2021 guide, was built to close the outcomes gap: shared outcome areas and survey-based measures that City youth programs would choose from and report against. Five years on, the published record shows the machinery and not its output — the mentions that exist describe how the framework works, and none reports results from it: no program-by-program measures, no aggregated percentages, no list of the programs applying it. Figures in circulation that credit the framework with application across 23 programs in six divisions, with 2,811 young people providing survey feedback, could not be verified in any published City document.

Outcomes across the register. For this study, the City's youth effort was enumerated program by program — roughly sixty programs and funding streams across the divisions, Toronto Public Library and Toronto Community Housing. Published outcome measures — evidence that a program changed something for the young people in it, rather than a count of money spent or people reached — exist for five of them: the Community Healing Project; the library's Leading to Reading; the Scarborough youth subset of FOCUS Toronto; Toronto Community Housing's Pre-Apprenticeship; and the Toronto Youth Job Corps, whose contract carries targets and a published history. The rest publish budgets, counts, or neither. The full register is printed in the Technical Appendix.

One floor, not a total. The grants program does yield one youth figure from the City's own categories. In the Community Funding Unit's 2024 reporting, the lines the City itself labels youth — its youth services category, its youth grant streams and its youth-led crisis-response projects — sum to **$6,140,520**, or 21.7 per cent of that unit's 2024 allocations. That is a floor for one year of one funding universe. It is not a youth total, and it cannot grow into one: the published recipient lists record organization, ward and amount, with no field for purpose or age, so youth-serving work funded inside all-ages categories stays invisible in them. A total would require the lists to say what the money was for. They do not.

Neither inventory was produced for this study, and neither was built to test it. Each is the City organizing its own youth effort for its own purposes — and each reproduces, inside the City's own paperwork, the pattern the published response shows from outside: programs counted, reach counted in units that cannot be combined, and the money and the outcomes missing. The gap is not an artefact of looking from outside. It sits in the instruments the City wrote for itself.

PART 03

The accountability gap

PART 03 · THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP

What the record does not contain

Victims by age
NOT PUBLISHED

The Toronto Police Service publishes no count of shooting victims by age, and no count of homicide victims by age; its Homicides dataset carries no age field.

A Toronto youth justice series
NOT PUBLISHED

No city-level series for charges, diversion, or custody is published at any stage of the system.

An annual Toronto food-insecurity rate
NOT PUBLISHED

Published once: 18.5% of children and youth aged 1 to 17 in 2019. Public Health Ontario publishes Toronto children-under-18 values only as pooled estimates (32.0% for 2023–2024).

A child poverty rate for Toronto
NOT PUBLISHED

No child-specific Market Basket Measure rate is published for the city or the CMA; no youth core-housing-need rate either (published figure is all-household, 19%, 2021).

A Toronto NEET series
NOT PUBLISHED

None exists at city or CMA level; no Toronto CMA split of the youth labour force into ages 15–19 and 20–24; no Toronto total for Canada Summer Jobs.

The 15,000 jobs paper trail
NOT PUBLISHED

No primary City source: no City release, budget document, or costing publishes it; verifiable only as an October 2026 campaign commitment.

Youth-level response detail
NOT PUBLISHED

No youth slice of CPIP ($33.4M, 2026); no standalone Toronto Community Crisis Service budget; OASP Toronto share and YOF Toronto aggregate not published; Before/After School enrolment not published — licensed capacity (40,943 spaces, December 2025) is the published figure.

Road deaths and injuries under 20
NOT PUBLISHED

The City's Vision Zero reporting publishes no killed-or-seriously-injured figure for any age band under 20.

WHAT THE DATA DOESN'T TELL US

Absence of public reporting is not absence of service or impact. These tiles record what is not published — they say nothing about whether the work is happening. A program can be running, and helping, and still leave no public record a reader can check.

PART 03 · THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP

How this study was compiled

This study is compiled from published sources only. Every figure in it was verified in a primary published document, opened during compilation, and is printed with the age band, geography, and year its source used. Where sources disagree, the disagreement is shown rather than resolved silently. Where a publisher changed what it counts — a survey table replaced, a call-count universe widened — the break is marked on the series, never smoothed. Where no figure is published at that standard, the study says so, and treats the absence as a finding. Figures in different units, age bands, or year bases are never added together. The study makes no recommendations. The complete technical record behind this edition — the full source chapters, the methods appendix, and the full references — is published with it as *The State of Youth in Toronto: Technical Appendix*.

The author is the founder and executive director of The Good Guides, a youth non-profit in Scarborough.

In their own words

From where we sit in Scarborough, the gap in this record is not abstract. The young people we work with are not waiting to be consulted — given real authority, they run things: they plan, they decide, they carry the work, with mentors who look like them and come from their own neighbourhoods standing behind them, not in front of them. Nobody is a guest in their own community, and nobody is a passenger.

What the published record cannot do is meet them there. A young person in Scarborough moves through programs funded by different divisions, different levels of government, different organizations — and no one, anywhere, adds it up. Not what was spent on her. Not whether any of it worked. We see the pieces every day. The pieces are real, and some of them are good. But a system that cannot describe its own effort cannot claim to know whether the young people inside it are better off — and on the ground, they can tell the difference.

PART 03 · THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP

What I take from this record

I started The Good Guides because I watched services that were supposed to help people I grew up with — my friends, my brother — never reach them. Years later, putting this record together, I found the same problem at city scale, in print: the help exists in pieces, the pieces don't connect, and nobody publishes whether the whole of it is working.

That is what I take from this record. It is not that Toronto does nothing for its young people — the spending is real, and some of it is good. It is that Toronto cannot say, from its own published numbers, whether its young people are better off than they were five years ago. Where the numbers do add up, most are moving the wrong way. Where they don't add up, that is not a technical problem. A city that gives young people a seat at the table but keeps the keys — to the budgets, the data, the decisions — has not actually shared anything.

Young people don't need to be counted as guests in their own city. They need the whole house: real authority, real support behind them, and a public record honest enough to say whether any of it worked. Counting is the least of it. We should start there.

PART 03 · THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP

About the author

Swabir Shariff is the founder and executive director of The Good Guides, a Toronto non-profit he founded in 2020 that has mentored more than 10,000 young people across Scarborough. He advises institutions on youth, mentoring and violence prevention, and was named one of the Queen Elizabeth II Commonwealth Trust's 100 Young Leaders for 2026. This document is his personal work, published independently.

Suggested citation: Shariff, S. (2026). *The State of Youth in Toronto: What Toronto's published record can — and cannot — tell us about its young people*. Working paper. Toronto, Canada.

> *Where no figure is published at that standard, the study says so, and treats the absence as a finding.*