

## The Equity Gap - Expanded Content and Context Information

A number of issues rose to the top of the equity conversation especially the decrease in security (employment, housing and food), and the need to remove barriers that prevent individuals, families and children from participating fully in the community.

### **Precarious employment**

A 2013 report on precarious employment (e.g. insecure work through temp agencies, on contract or freelance or low-wage jobs) found that this type of employment is widely distributed among social and income categories. The report also found that employment insecurity affects household well-being mainly in low- and middle-income households and has a stronger impact on people in low-income households. In Halton Region, 18 per cent of adults are precariously employed; 6.7 per cent are in temporary employment and 11.3 per cent are self-employed with no employees.<sup>1</sup>

### **Adequate wages**

Low wages reduce access to the tools needed to move out of poverty and achieve wellness. Full-time work at a living wage allows individuals to enjoy a decent quality of life, raise a family, and enjoy recreation, culture, entertainment, and participate fully in their community. The living wage for a family of four in Halton Region has been calculated at \$17.05 an hour with both parents working full-time (37.5 hours a week). For a single individual working full-time, the living wage was determined to be \$19.45 an hour and \$18.69 an hour for a single parent employed full-time.<sup>2</sup>

### **Employment opportunities**

According to the Halton Region Employment Survey, there were 85,541 jobs in Oakville in 2014, representing a three per cent increase over 2013. Overall, about 82 per cent of jobs were in the service-based sectors; 18 per cent were in the goods-producing sector. The highest numbers of jobs reported were in the manufacturing sector (12,189 jobs) and retail trade (11,003 jobs).

The Halton youth unemployment rate (15-24) was 18.7 per cent in 2011, with males showing a higher unemployment rate (20.3 per cent) than females (17 per cent).<sup>3</sup>

### **Affordable, accessible transportation**

Oakville Transit reports that 70 per cent of its riders requires bus service to get around including students, low-income residents and non-drivers (older adults or people with mobility challenges or disabilities). The “seniors-ride-free-on-Mondays” program has been very successful, increasing senior ridership on Mondays over normal weekday levels. Halton Multicultural Council reports that the program has also helped reduce the isolation of older newcomers.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: *It's More than Poverty: Employment Precarity and Household Well-being*, A report by PEPSO, United Way Toronto and McMaster University, February 2013

<sup>2</sup> Source: Calculating a Living Wage for Halton Discussion Paper, March 2013, Community Development Halton, Poverty Free Halton

<sup>3</sup> Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey; Social Profile of Halton 2014, Community Development Halton