



Strategic Plan 2016-2019

Research Theme #3: Youth

Toronto is the sixth most Youthful City in the world according to the [2015 Youthful Cities Index](#). The index ranks the world's top 100 cities from the perspective of 9,000 surveyed youth across categories deemed important for life, work and play. New York, London, and Berlin placed 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, respectively.

Despite the top ten ranking, some youth in Toronto continue to struggle, as outlined in [Toronto's Vital Signs 2015 Report](#). In 2014:

- The share of the Toronto population who are youth (15-24) was 12.92%
- 8 in 10 Toronto youth felt a strong sense of belonging to their local community
- The youth crime rate continued to decrease

Yet

- The mental health of Toronto's youth (12-19) declined
- On any given night, there were approximately 2,000 homeless youth in the city
- Toronto's youth unemployment rate neared 22%. Many youth were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). Some youth faced more barriers to employment, education, and training than others, including those in Canada less than five years and those living in poverty.

Unemployment Rates in Toronto	2012	2013	2014
1. Unemployment rate (annual average)	9.6%	8.8%	9.5%
2. Youth (15-24 year-olds) unemployment rate (annual average)	20.4%	18.1%	21.65%
3. Recent immigrant youth (15-24 year-olds in Canada less than 5 years) unemployment rate (annual average)	31.4%	28.1%	24.1%

City Initiatives

The City of Toronto is addressing youth issues through:

- The [Toronto Youth Equity Strategy \(TYES\)](#), which is committed to developing and delivering City programs to support equitable access and outcomes for marginalized youth. The strategy identifies 28 key issues and 110 actions that the City has committed to fulfilling. The City is currently working on Phase Two: [Youth Vulnerable to Gender-Based Violence](#), which includes the Most Vulnerable People Youth Policy Table. Youth under 30, with lived experience of violence, crime and/or the criminal justice system, provide input on policies, programs and practices at the City of Toronto.
- [TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy](#) to improve access to high quality programs for youth and work with the private and public sectors to create effective paths to good careers for low-income youth.
- [Toronto Youth Cabinet](#): the official youth advisory body to the City of Toronto.
- [Youth Asset Mapping Project](#) to help Torontonians discover and access services for youth in Toronto.
- [Youth Employment Partnerships](#): a neighbourhood-based youth employment network that offers free job placement and staffing services to organizations throughout Toronto.

Toronto Public Library supports the City's youth initiatives by:

- Opening two additional [Youth Hubs](#) at the Cedarbrae and York Woods branches; Youth Hubs have been open since 2010 at the Centennial and Sanderson branches
- Offering Youth Advisory Groups (YAGs) at 47 branches; YAG members provide a formal youth voice to recommend changes or enhancements to library policies, programs and services that best serve the interests of youth and their community.
- Continuing the Storybook Parents Program in prisons and jails, which began in 2011 to reduce the trauma children face with parental imprisonment and help imprisoned parents to maintain family contact
- Celebrating teen writing and visual art in the annual [Young Voices](#) magazine and the [Young Voices Conference](#)

Question: What other programs or services should the Library develop for youth?

Let us know what you think at: strategicplanconsultation@torontopubliclibrary.ca

Further Reading & Information:

[Hidden in Our Midst: Homeless Newcomer Youth in Toronto – Uncovering the Supports to Prevent and Reduce Homelessness](#)

Youth homelessness is an increasing concern across Canada, with young people under age 24 making up the fastest growing segment of Canada's homeless population. This is the first comprehensive report to explore the cross-section of youth homelessness and newcomer status in Toronto, and to identify existing service gaps.

[City of Toronto Youth Portal](#)

Learn more about youth development programs, including those focused on employment.

[TPL Teens](#)

What's happening for youth at Toronto Public Library.

[Stepping Up: A Strategic Framework to Help Ontario's Youth Succeed](#)

A roadmap for Ontario that strengthens the government's commitment to youth through 20 outcomes across 7 themes: Health & Wellness; Strong, Supportive Friends & Families; Education, Training & Apprenticeships; Employment & Entrepreneurship; Diversity, Social inclusion & Safety; Civic Engagement & Youth Leadership; Coordinated & Youth-Friendly Communities.