

This research brief is part of an information package regarding disability statistics in York Region from the 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability. In addition to this brief, a PowerPoint presentation and an infographic are available to assist in conveying this information to your partners.

Accessible formats and communication supports are available upon request.

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Research Brief: Disability in York Region

Introduction

In 2022, the York Region population reached approximately 1.173 million residents, reinforcing its position as one of Canada's most vibrant and diverse communities. This research brief examines York Region's population in private households aged 15 and older whose daily activities were limited due to a long-term (six months or more) disability. People living in collective dwellings, such as long-term care homes, were excluded from survey participation.

Based on the [2022 Canadian Survey on Disability \(CSD\)](#), almost one in five residents in York Region had one or more disabilities. The prevalence of disability in York Region has risen to 21.3% (206,250)¹ from 17.5% (162,600) in 2017.

Why This Data Matters

The 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability provides an overview of York Region's disability landscape and the barriers experienced by people with disabilities. The data can act as a useful resource to inform accessible planning for programs, services and facilities serving York Region residents and visitors.

This report emphasizes the importance of continuing initiatives to enhance accessibility. By using this data, York Region can continue creating a community that welcomes and includes individuals of all abilities, ensuring everyone has the chance to fully engage in daily life.

Key Findings

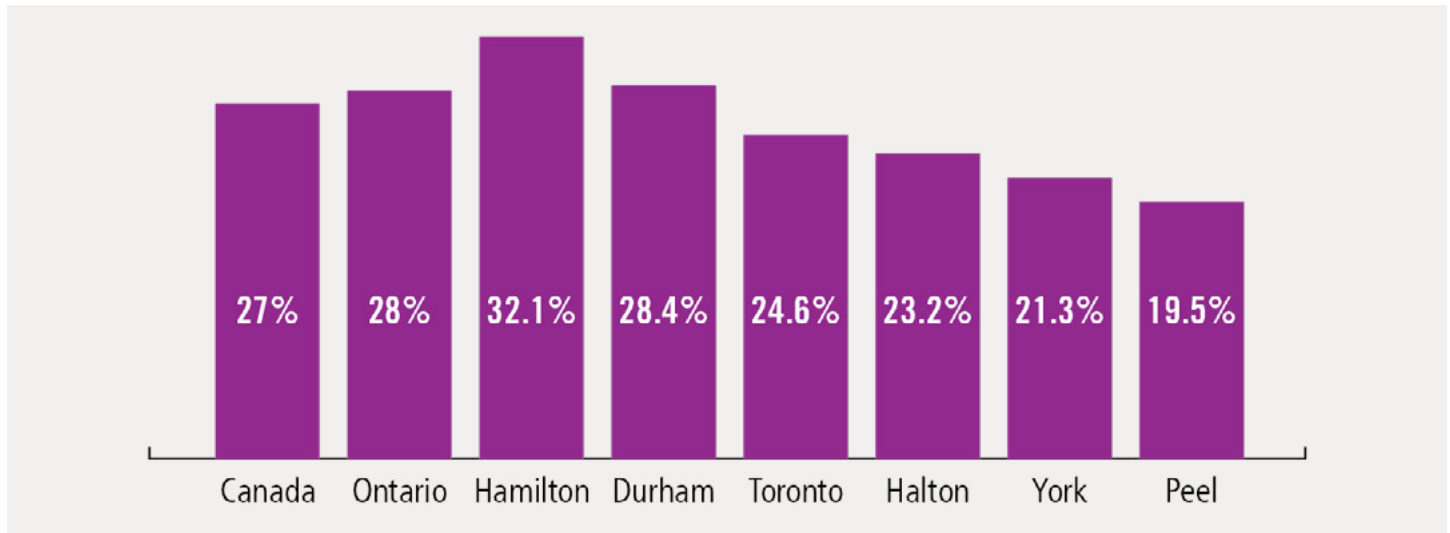
- In 2022, 21.3% (or 206,250) of York Region residents 15 years and over had one or more disabilities
- Between 2017 and 2022, the prevalence of disabilities in York Region increased to 21.3% (206,250) from 17.5% (162,600)
- The disability rate increased for both men+ and women+ between 2017 and 2022, with women+ seeing a larger rise to 24.0% from 18.5%, compared to men+ increasing to 18.9% from 16.3%
- The proportion of people with disabilities in the 65 and over age groups continue to be significantly higher than in younger age groups, with 43.5% of those aged 65 and over reporting a disability in 2022, compared to 16.1% of those aged 15 to 64
- Despite an improvement in employment rates for people with disabilities (rising to 63% in 2022 from 57% in 2017), there remains a substantial gap compared to those without disabilities, whose employment rate is 79%
- In 2022, new data on disability severity showed 60% of persons with disabilities in York Region had "milder" disabilities (classified as having a mild or moderate disability) and 39% had "more severe" disabilities (classified as having a severe or very severe disability)

Regional Trends

In 2022, the prevalence of disability in York Region was 21.3%, the second lowest in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), and below the provincial and national levels. Based on Figure 1:

- Canada has a disability rate of 27.0%
- Ontario has a disability rate of 28.0%
- Hamilton has the highest disability rate in the GTHA
- Durham Region has a disability rate of 28.4%
- Toronto has a disability rate of 24.6%
- Halton Region reports a disability rate of 23.2%
- Peel Region has the lowest disability rate in the GTHA, at 19.5%

Figure 1 - Disability rate, GTHA, Ontario and Canada, 2022



York Region’s relatively lower disability rate can be due to various factors, including economic or population health. While York Region’s rate remains below the GTHA average, the increase since 2017 highlights the need for continued attention to accessibility and service provisions for residents with disabilities.

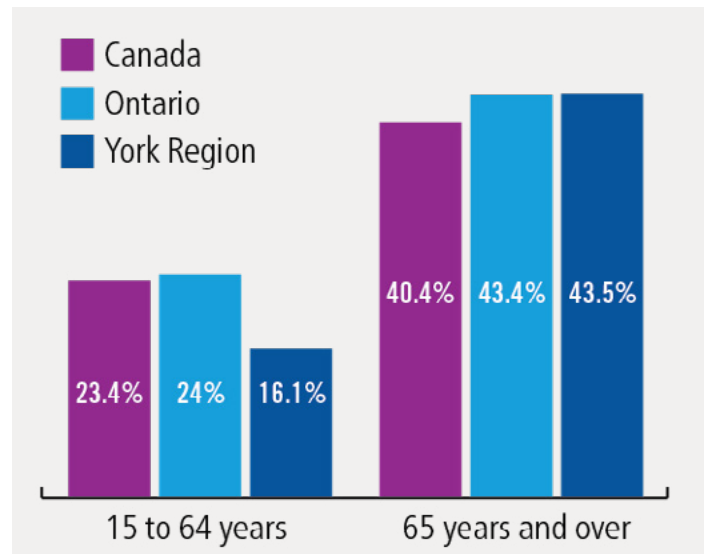
Age

Both the population aged 15 to 64, and 65 and older, experienced an increase in the prevalence of disability from 2017 to 2022.

In 2022, 16.1% of the population aged 15 to 64 had a disability, marking a 3.4% increase from 2017 when the prevalence was 12.7%. Among seniors, the prevalence of disability was nearly 43.5% in 2022, representing a 2.5% increase from 2017 when the rate was 41%.

In York Region, the prevalence of disability among adults was lower than in Ontario and Canada, refer to Figure 2. However, this was not the case for seniors with disabilities. The prevalence of disability among seniors aged 65 and over in York Region was 43.5%, similar to Ontario’s level of 43.4% and higher than Canada’s 40.4%.

Figure 2 - Prevalence of disability by age group



Gender²

In 2022, the prevalence of disabilities in York Region was higher among women+ than men+, following the same pattern from 2017.

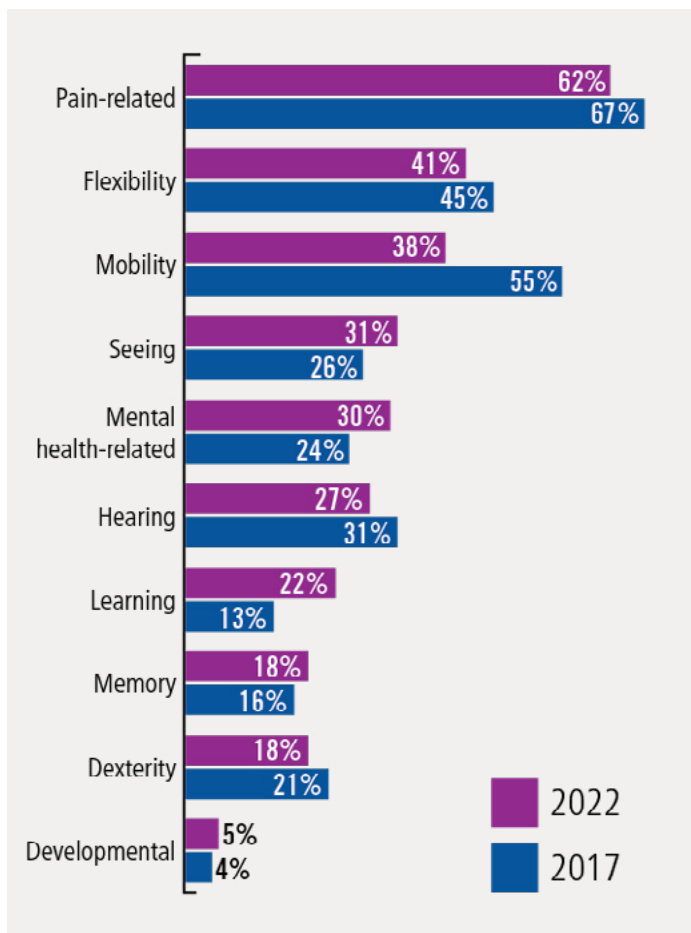
In 2017, there were 16.3% (73,050) of the population who identify as men+ with a disability, while in 2022 this number increased to 18.9% (93,500). In 2017, there were 18.5% (89,550) of the population who identify as women+ with a disability, while in 2022 this number increased to 24.0% (112,750). There has been a 2.6% increase in men+ with disabilities, and a 5.5% increase in women+ with disabilities between 2017 to 2022.

Disability Types

In 2022, the most prevalent disability types among York Region residents aged 15 years and over remain consistent with the previous survey cycle (2017), with pain-related (62%), flexibility (41%) and mobility disabilities (38%) being the most common.

The prevalence of learning, mental health-related and seeing disabilities increased significantly from 2017 to 2022. Learning disabilities increased by 9%. Mental-health related disabilities increased by 6%. Seeing disabilities increase by 5%. However, there has been a decrease in disability types from 2017 to 2022 in pain-related, flexibility, mobility, hearing and dexterity-related disabilities. These disability types affect residents across different groups and residents can experience more than one type of disability.

Figure 3 - Disability type, 15 years and over, 2017-2022



Disability Severity

The Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) provided statistics on the severity of disability among York Region residents in 2022. Four severity categories of disability are identified by the survey: mild, moderate, severe and very severe.

Among York Region residents with disabilities in 2022:

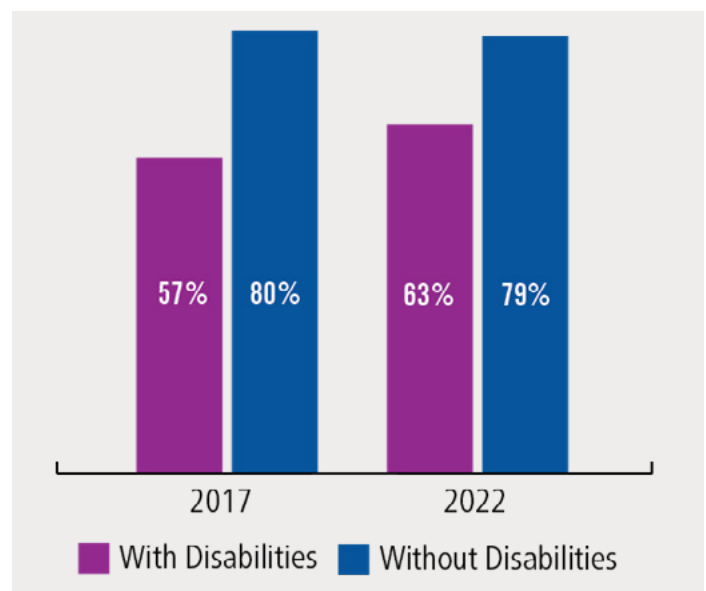
- 42% report having a mild disability
- 18% report a moderate disability
- 19% report a severe disability
- 20% report a very severe disability

The impact of disabilities on residents' daily lives can be better understood due to the new data. The data highlights the importance of providing barrier-free, inclusive supports to meet the diverse needs of residents with disabilities. While a considerable portion of residents report having mild disabilities, a significant percentage experience severe or very severe limitations, indicating a need for more extensive care, services, and accessible environments to support residents across all levels of disability severity.

Employment

In 2022, 63% of York Region residents aged 25 to 64 with disabilities were employed, an increase from 57% in 2017. However, people with disabilities continue to have lower employment rates compared to those without disabilities, whose employment rate is 79%, a slight decrease from 80% in 2017, refer to figure 4.

Figure 4 - Employment status of residents with and without disabilities, York Region, 2017-2022



The employment rate for York Region’s individuals with disabilities aged 25 to 64 increased by 7% from 2017 to 2022, narrowing the gap between the employment rates of individuals with and without disabilities from 23% in 2017 to 16% in 2022.

Despite improvement, the ongoing gap in employment between people with and without disabilities indicates a need for further action to provide accessible employment opportunities and supports in York Region.

Ethno-cultural Diversity

In 2022, a significant number of individuals with disabilities in York Region were either born outside of Canada or self-identified as members of racialized communities.

Among York Region residents with disabilities aged 15 and over, 42% (87,550) belong to a racialized community. This reflects the diverse composition of York Region and highlights the importance of culturally responsive services and supports.

In terms of immigration status, 57% (118,500) of York Region residents with disabilities were immigrants. This reinforces the need for programs tailored to meet the unique challenges faced by immigrants with disabilities, such as language supports, access to healthcare and employment opportunities.

The data on racial and immigrant populations with disabilities highlights the importance of ensuring that York Region’s programs and policies address the intersectionality of disability, race, and immigration status to foster inclusion and equity for all residents.

Education

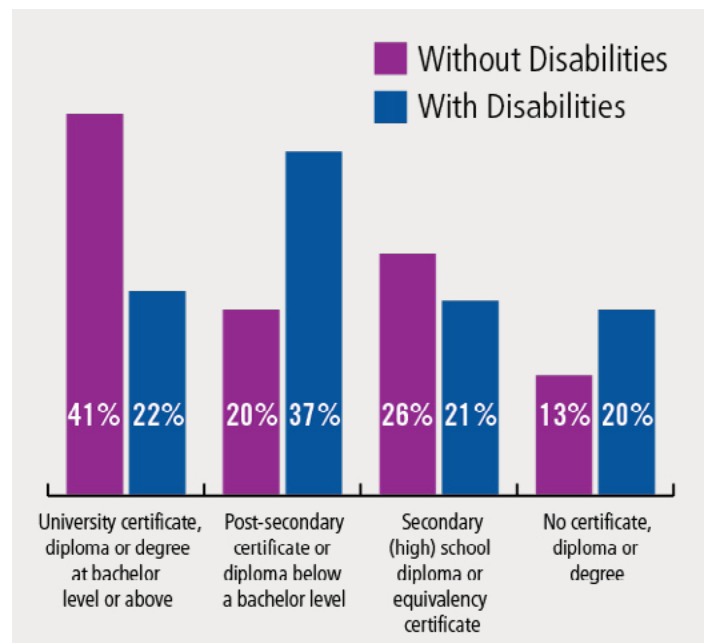
Various barriers and challenges experienced by persons with disabilities may impact their education level. In general, people with disabilities are more likely to have post-secondary certificate or diploma below a bachelor level as their highest level of education.

In York Region, 20% of people with disabilities reported not having a high school certificate, compared to 13% for those without disabilities. 21% of people with disabilities reported having a secondary (high) school diploma or equivalency certificate compared to 26% for people without disabilities. Individuals with disabilities (37%) are more likely than those without (20%) to have completed postsecondary education

below the university level, following the national trend. Additionally, 22% of people with disabilities completed postsecondary education at a university compared to 41% of people without disabilities.

Figure 5 highlights the education level of people with disabilities in York Region. While there has been progress in some areas, the gap in higher education between those with and without disabilities remains. Addressing the barriers that contribute to this trend will be key to improving employment prospects and overall inclusion for residents with disabilities.

Figure 5 - Highest level of education of persons with and without a disability, York Region, 2022



Strong, caring, safe communities

As York Region’s population continues to grow and age, the number of residents with disabilities is expected to rise further. The insights provided by the 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability offer valuable opportunities for evidence-based planning and program development to meet the evolving needs of York Region’s diverse population.

By addressing the barriers faced by people with disabilities, York Region can continue to build strong, caring and safe communities. This data reinforces the importance of ensuring that all people can participate fully in everyday life.

Endnotes

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022.

For more information about the 2022 CSD, please visit the Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022: [Concepts and Methods Guide](#).

1 Number in brackets represents the number of people

2 This report uses a two-category gender variable to enable historical comparisons, and to protect the confidentiality of non-binary individuals due to the small size of this population in Canada. The category "Women+" includes women and some non-binary persons, while the category "Men+" includes men and some non-binary persons. Given the small size of the non-binary population, data aggregation to a two-category gender variable is most of the time necessary to protect the confidentiality of the responses provided.