



# 2024 CyberTowns Report



Prepared by the Canadian Cybersecurity Network

June 2024



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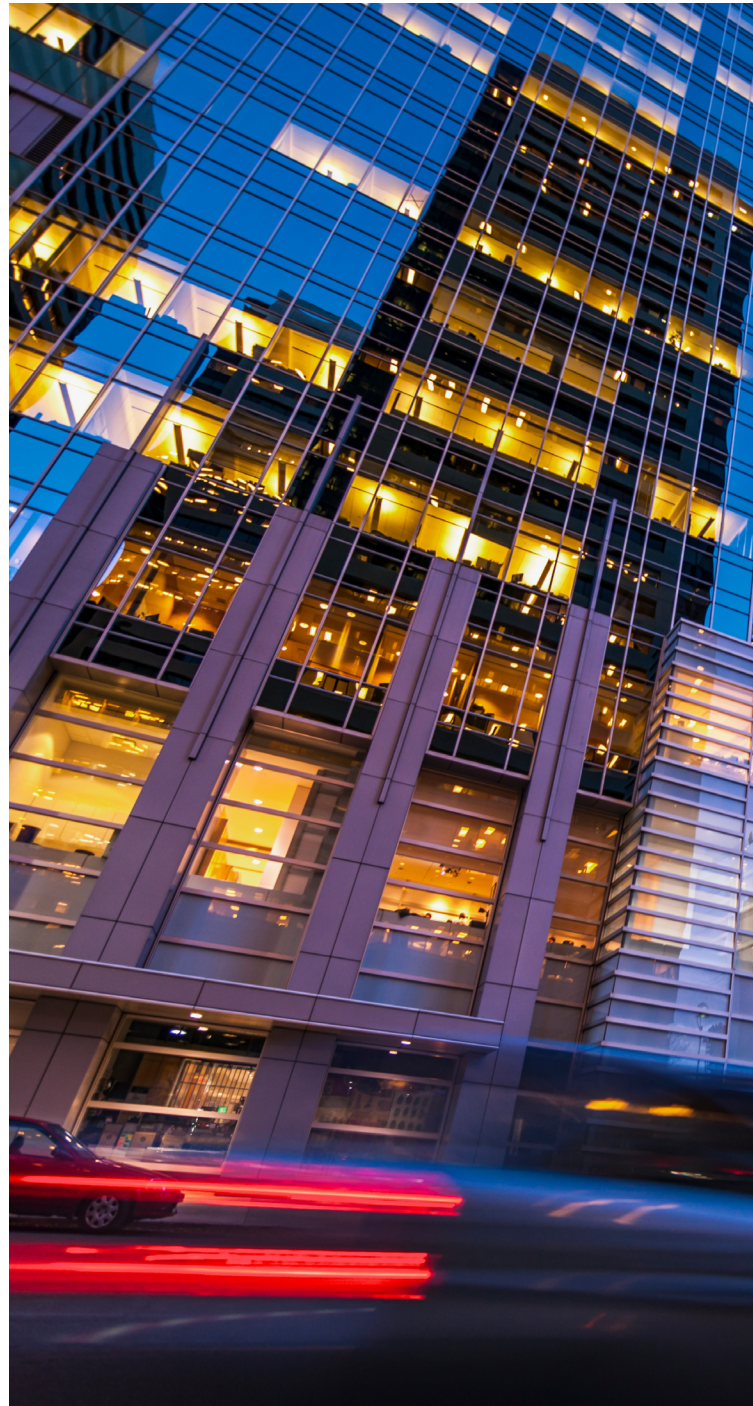
# CYBERSECURITY IN CANADA

The Canadian cybersecurity market size is estimated at USD 12.96 billion in 2024, and is expected to reach USD 21.83 billion by 2029, growing at a CAGR of 10.99% during the forecast period (2024-2029).

The market is evolving with the increasing digitalization trends in different sectors of private and public domains. New reforms to safeguard the data and operations due to increasing cyber-attacks are shaping the market, encouraging more companies to offer cybersecurity-as-a-service.

The frequency of cyber-attacks has increased in the past few years, given the evolving global economic and geopolitical conditions. For instance, Sophos State of Ransomware Report 2021 shows that around 39% of Canadian firms dealt with ransomware in 2021. The report also highlighted that 65% of the survey respondents, who were unaffected by the attacks, expect a ransomware attack in the future. Such conditions create high demand for cybersecurity in the country. However, the market suffers from the lack of skilled professionals for cybersecurity in Canada, or does it?

Disagreement exists as to lack of cybersecurity talent or the lack of the right trained talent. The Cybersecurity Network is very focused on trying to make cybersecurity a trade moving forward, so that resources in universities, colleges and various programs are getting the opportunity to develop real life work skills and experience while completing their studies. Companies will therefore be able





to benefit from additional trained and ready resources. Today, too many educated and or trained cybersecurity resources are in non cybersecurity roles due to companies requiring significantly trained resources. But who can blame them when cyber attacks are on the rise, training time is very limited and most trained cybersecurity resources are not a fit for the current market challenges. Creating an education/workforce/employer fit is critical to help address this major problem. It's not only a business problem, it's a major national security challenge.

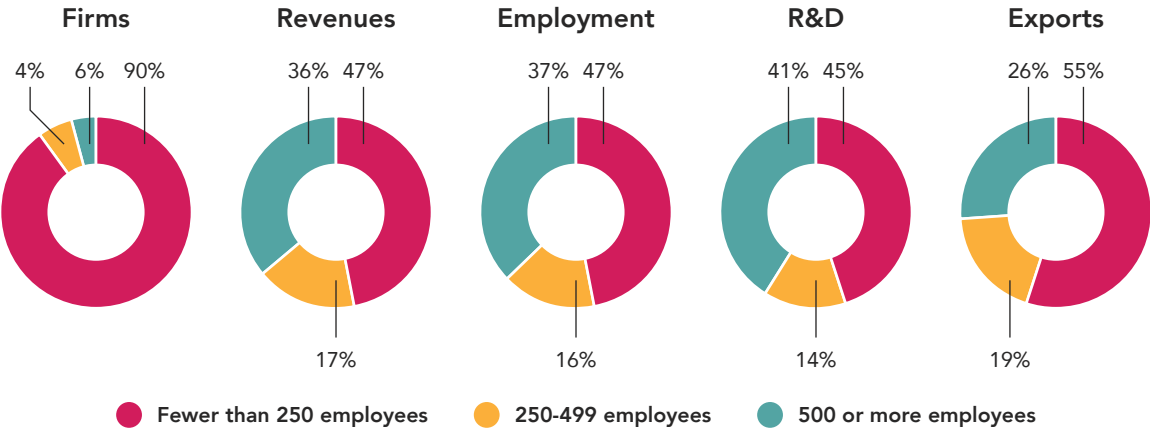


It's clear from this study that the Canadian cybersecurity talent market is in a state of change with a lot of experienced talent nearing retirement, while a new generation struggles to find entry level roles and opportunities to learn. On top of that a large group of new Canadians are struggling to find services and support in their communities to begin their careers.

Canada is blessed to have an abundance of technology talent but continues to struggle to mobilize it for economic gain and therefore risks losing it to competing countries with a more aggressive economic strategy. Our study focuses on the best cities in Canada for cybersecurity talent but we are in a global economy and we compete against every community out there and some are doing an amazing job of building great communities for cyber talent. We need to lead and not follow as we move forward or else our talent will continue to leave for greener pastures. In future reports and in the work CCN is doing we will address this very significant threat. Conventional wars focused on airplanes, tanks, ships, etc. but cyber wars require properly trained and equipped talent. If the talent is no longer in Canada but works in the United States or somewhere else, your cyber army is not competitive.

Canada must accelerate cybersecurity talent integration by collaborating and cooperating across the country.

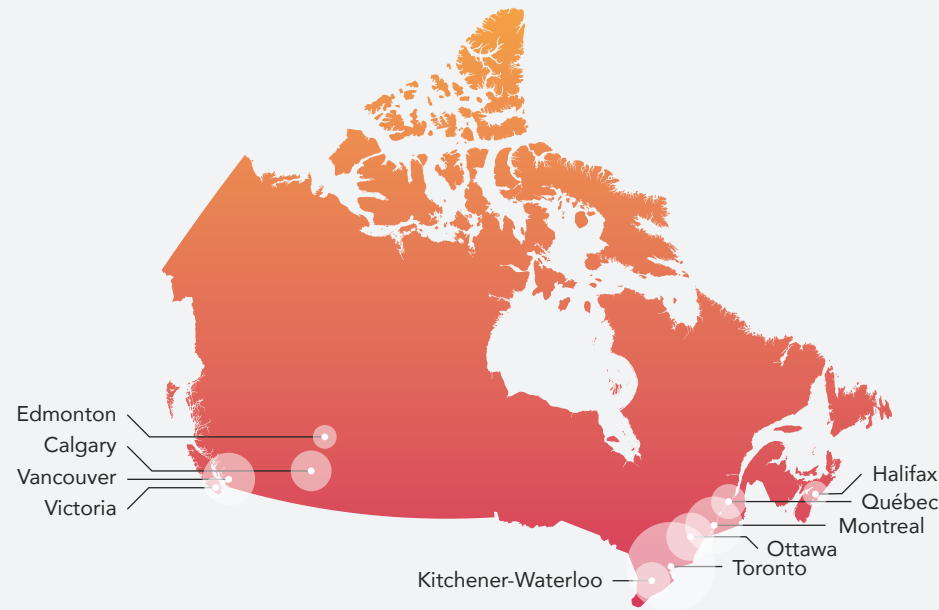
In Canada firms with fewer than 250 employees accounted for 90% of cybersecurity businesses and 45% or more of revenues, employees, R&D, and exports. See the chart below that breaks down even further.



Source: State of Canada's Cybersecurity Industry 2022 Innovation Science and Economic Development Canada

Small medium businesses continue to be the lifeblood of cybersecurity and innovation in Canada. Making sure SMEs are supported, given access to funding opportunities and to accelerate patent development in Canada is key to the future of Canadian cybersecurity and many other technologically advanced areas like quantum and AI. Then developing and keeping the intellectual property in this country is the other challenge we all need to focus on.

## LARGEST CYBERSECURITY TALENT HUBS BY POPULATION





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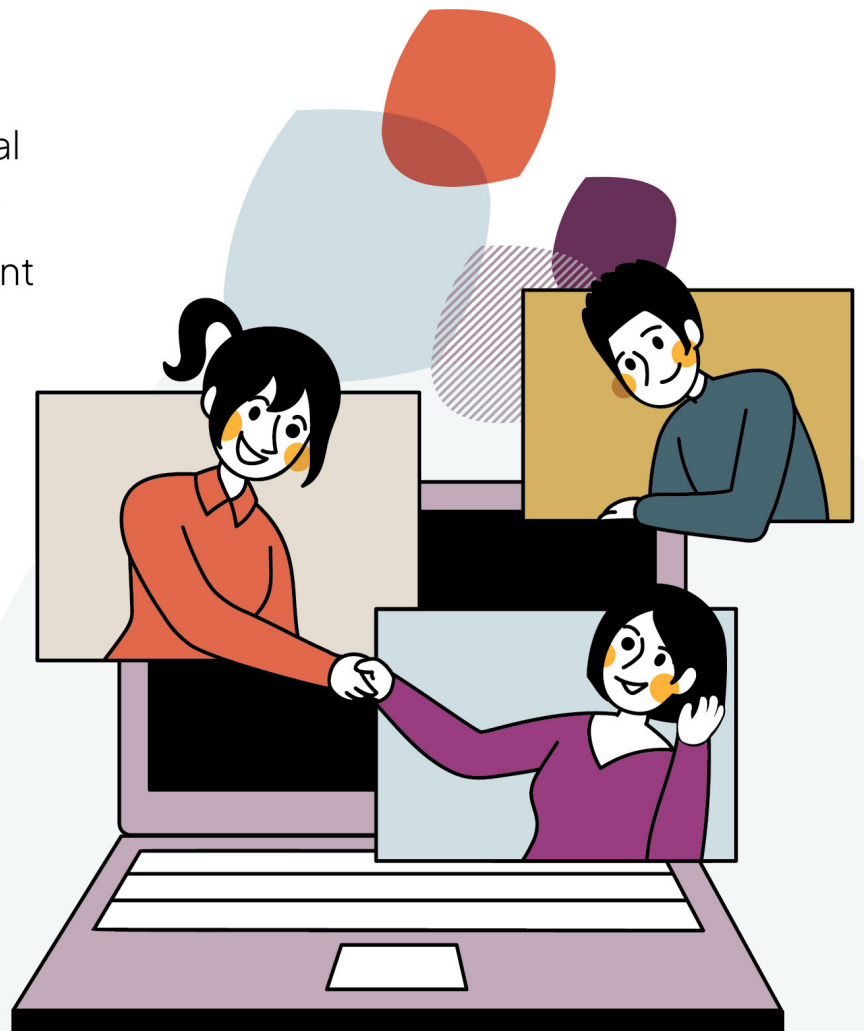


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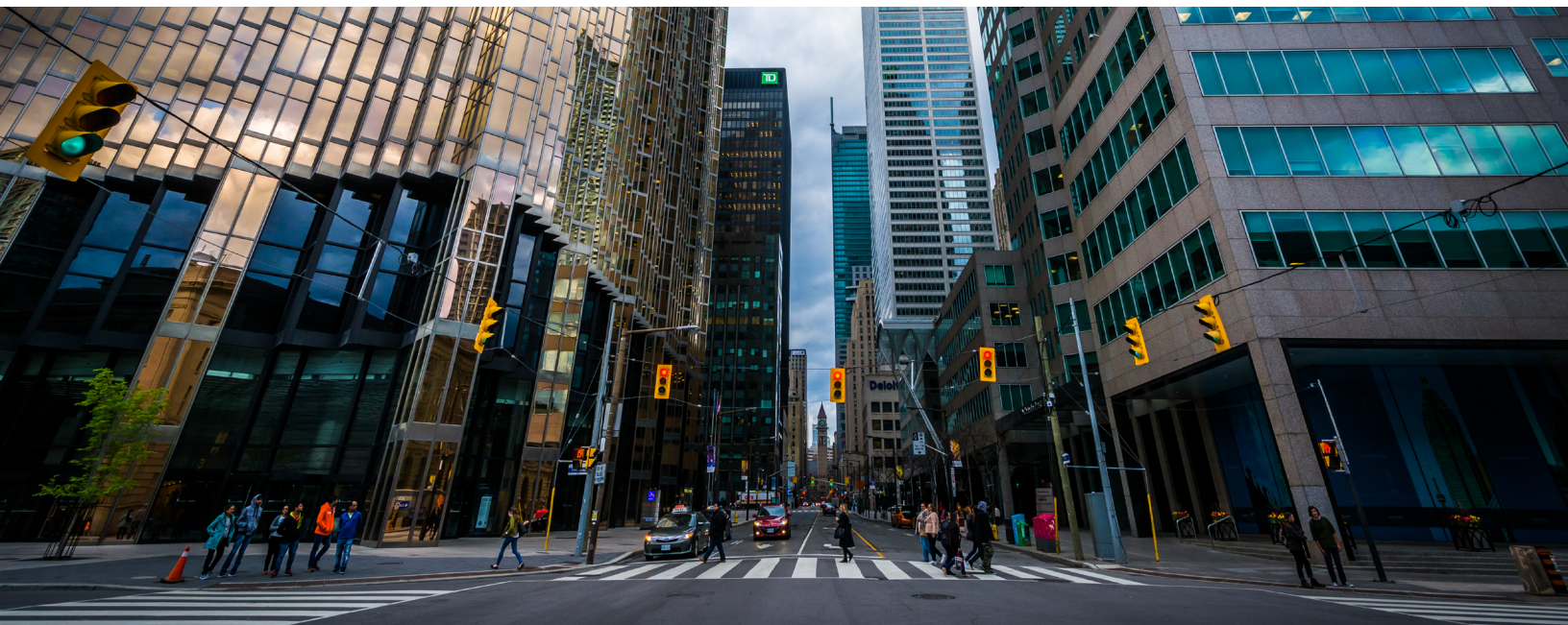
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# WHAT IS CYBERTOWNS?

CyberTowns is an annual program run by the Canadian Cybersecurity Network, Canada's largest cybersecurity member network. The program looks to identify the best communities to start and thrive a cybersecurity/IT related career. A 6-month online survey was undertaken across Canada with cybersecurity and IT members, as well as a review of key available statistical data to come up with cities across Canada that stand out.

The most critical data infrastructure in Canada is located in Canadian communities, everything from our hospitals, food distribution, transportation systems, educational institutions and financial institutions. As you will see cybersecurity talent is growing in each of these cities making communities that were not previously seen as technology centers become hotbeds for growth and opportunity.

Unlike other cybersecurity or IT best places to live reports, CyberTowns is not a popularity or a who's the biggest type of report. The study benchmark was to evaluate communities where the population was a minimum of 100K in population and consistent and comparable data was available via Statistics Canada and other reliable sources.



# SURVEY METHODOLOGY

CyberTowns takes its total score from 60% of core Statistics Canada and a few other national reports and 40% from the CCN member survey for a final national score.

Statistical filters used from the most recent Statistics Canada (2021) data were:

1. Affordability
2. Population growth
3. Taxes
4. Crime
5. Weather
6. Health
7. Amenities
8. Career opportunities/Compensation
9. Community
10. Internet access

Our CCN survey on our website was run from September 2023 till April 15th, 2024 and received 1851 submissions. Our survey mimicked the overall survey other than population growth, which was removed, and we added a compensation question which asked participants “How satisfied are you with your overall compensation?” Survey results were then averaged out based on the number of submissions received to ensure parity across all survey results.

# THE KEY ISSUES

## IMPACTING CANADIAN CYBERSECURITY AND TECHNOLOGY TALENT

### A. High taxation

Canada's tax policies play a significant role in influencing the retention of cybersecurity and technology talent within the country. Here are a few reasons why Canadian taxes are making it harder to retain talent:

1. **High personal income taxes:** Canada has progressive tax rates, meaning that higher earners are taxed at a higher rate. High-income individuals, such as cybersecurity and technology professionals, may find themselves paying significant portions of their income in taxes, reducing the incentive to stay in Canada when they could potentially earn more elsewhere.
2. **Limited tax incentives for tech professionals:** Unlike some other countries, Canada offers limited tax incentives specifically tailored to technology professionals. Incentives such as tax breaks for research and development (R&D) activities or tax credits for investments in innovative technologies could help retain talent by making it more financially attractive to stay in Canada.
3. **Competitive global market:** The cybersecurity and technology sectors are highly competitive on a global scale. Other countries may offer more favorable tax regimes, including lower personal income taxes or special tax incentives for tech professionals, making them more attractive destinations for talent.
4. **Cost of living vs. tax burden:** Even if taxes in Canada aren't necessarily higher than in other countries, the overall cost of living, including housing, healthcare, and education expenses, can be significant. When coupled with relatively high taxes, it makes Canada less competitive in retaining talent compared to other countries with lower costs of living and comparable tax burdens. Calgary and Edmonton are good examples of turning the tables somewhat on this burden.
5. **Complexity of tax system:** Canada's tax system, like that of many developed countries, can be complex. Navigating the various tax rules and regulations, especially for individuals with high incomes or complex financial situations, can be burdensome and may create additional challenges for professionals considering staying in Canada.

Addressing these challenges could involve a combination of tax reforms, targeted incentives for the technology sector, and efforts to reduce the overall cost of living to make Canada more competitive in retaining cybersecurity and technology talent.





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## Less career opportunities

Talent wants to be challenged and have as many career opportunities as they can to grow as individuals. Therefore, the availability of career opportunities and research and development (R&D) opportunities in cybersecurity and technology fields can significantly impact the retention of talent in Canada. Let's look at why this is the case:

1. **Limited career growth:** If Canada offers fewer cybersecurity career opportunities compared to other countries, professionals may feel constrained in their career growth and development. This lack of upward mobility can lead talented individuals to seek opportunities elsewhere, where they perceive greater potential for advancement and fulfillment.
1. **Brain drain:** When there are limited R&D opportunities in Canada, particularly in emerging and cutting-edge technology areas like cybersecurity, talented individuals may be more inclined to leave the country in search of environments where they can contribute to innovative projects and be at the forefront of technological advancements.
2. **Attraction of tech hubs:** Major technology hubs around the world, such as Silicon Valley in the United States or cities like London and Berlin in Europe, often offer abundant career and R&D opportunities in cybersecurity and related fields. The allure of these hubs, with their vibrant ecosystems of start-ups, established companies, and research institutions, can be strong, drawing talent away from Canada.
3. **Competitive landscape:** In a globalized economy, countries are constantly competing to attract and retain talent. If Canada lags in providing attractive career and R&D opportunities, it risks losing its talent pool to countries and regions that invest more heavily in fostering innovation and creating conducive environments for professionals in the cybersecurity and technology sectors.
4. **Career opportunities with higher salaries:** It's a fact; the tech industry in the US, including cybersecurity, offers higher salaries compared to Canada. This financial incentive can be a significant factor for professionals seeking to maximize their earning potential. Especially early on in an individual's career, the opportunity to make more is very attractive, especially when you take in lower taxes and more career and R&D experience. US companies also tend to have higher valuations and more attractive stock option packages and amenities.

To address these challenges, Canada could focus on initiatives to stimulate R&D investment, foster collaboration between academia and industry, support the growth of technology clusters and start-ups, and create pathways for career advancement and skill development within the cybersecurity and technology fields. These efforts would not only help retain existing talent but also attract new talent to Canada's workforce.

## B. Restrictive policy and regulatory environment

The policy and regulatory environment can have a significant impact on retaining cybersecurity and tech talent in several ways:

1. **Immigration policies:** Although Canada is doing well at bringing in more technology talent. Canadian entrepreneurs and businesses have been asking for a long time for Canada to embrace a specific NOC code for cybersecurity talent to make the process easier.
2. **Intellectual property rights protection:** Strong intellectual property rights protection is essential for tech companies, particularly in cybersecurity, where proprietary technologies and innovations are valuable assets. Canada's inadequate protection of intellectual property rights discourages companies from investing in research and development and is prompting talent to seek opportunities in countries with better IP protection.
3. **Data privacy and security regulations:** Cybersecurity professionals are particularly sensitive to data privacy and security regulations. Stringent regulations that impose heavy compliance burdens or restrict the flow of data can impact the operations of tech companies and may influence talent to seek employment in countries with more favorable regulatory environments.
4. **Government support and investment:** Government policies that support research, development, and innovation in cybersecurity and technology can help retain talent by creating opportunities for professionals to work on cutting-edge projects and collaborate with leading academic and industry partners. Adequate funding for research grants, incentives for technology start-ups, and support for tech education and training programs can all contribute to retaining talent. These efforts must be collaborative and ensure that the benefits and gains are shared collectively.

Overall, a favorable policy and regulatory environment that promotes innovation, protects intellectual property, fosters talent mobility, and supports the growth of the tech industry is crucial for retaining cybersecurity and tech talent in Canada.

## C. Job placements

The Canadian Cybersecurity Network (CCN) has been saying this for a while now, but businesses are on the edge dealing with cybersecurity challenges, teetering between complicating attacks, underfunding, stress and more. When they are recruiting for talent, the majority are looking for cyber ready resources with three to five years' experience minimum. Training on the job requires 8-12 months minimum and there is a lack of available resources to accomplish this in most companies. students coming out of cybersecurity programs cannot find COOP, internship placements and or even full-time work frequently. Canada needs to put in place a national cybersecurity trade program where governments (federal, provincial) work together to fund or partially fund work placements during school, so students can be ready to hit the ground running. Responsibilities need to be shared across all participants.

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# Toronto



## OVERVIEW

Toronto is Canada's largest city and a world leader in business, finance, technology, entertainment, and culture. Its large population of immigrants from all over the globe has also made Toronto one of the most multicultural cities in the world ([www.toronto.ca](http://www.toronto.ca)). Toronto is not only Canada's most populated city but also has the largest cybersecurity and technology talent base in Canada.

The downtown core anchored by the iconic CN Tower, is a hub of business, entertainment, and culture. Here, the Financial District showcases towering skyscrapers, while the Entertainment District comes alive with theaters, restaurants, and nightlife.

### Ranking at a glance

Affordability	Rank 41	Health	Rank 1
Population growth	Rank 13	Amenities	Rank 1
Taxes	Rank 13	Career opportunities	Rank 1
Crime	Rank 9	Community	Rank 3
Weather	Rank 1	Internet access	Rank 6





## Affordability – Rank 41

In the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), the housing affordability crisis extends beyond economic concerns, profoundly affecting the lives and satisfaction of its residents. This situation has evolved into a major challenge, influencing various aspects of life, and leading to a decline in overall contentment. Rising housing costs and the resulting unaffordability are not only subjects of economic debate but are also critical social issues with far-reaching consequences for community cohesion and sustainability.

In the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), housing unaffordability is a significant concern, with one of the highest rates in Canada. A household is deemed to be living unaffordably if it spends more than 30% of its income on housing. This applies to 29% of all households in the GTA and 23% of residents. Among these households, 59% allocate between 30% and 50% of their income to housing, while 41% spend 50% or more. The challenge for Toronto is to keep resources in Toronto when other communities and US companies come headhunting talent with higher salaries and much lower taxes.



## Population growth – Rank 13

Toronto continues to grow at a fairly fast pace compared to other locations in Canada making it a desirable place to live and work. Although growth impacts service levels and decreases affordability, growth also creates more business and job opportunities for the community.



## Taxes – Rank 13

Provincial and community taxes in Toronto are reasonably compared to other national averages. Not as low as communities in Alberta but competitive enough as it relates to housing and local taxation.



## Crime – Rank 9

In 2018, Toronto police reported an overall crime rate of 3,428 incidents per 100,000 population, 38% lower than most other communities in Canada.

Over the past decade (2008 to 2018), police-reported crime declined by 15% in Toronto, while a similar decline was seen in Ontario (-16%) and Canada (-17%).

The severity of crime in Toronto increased by 8% between 2017 and 2018, mostly due to an increase in homicide and fraud. The large majority (72%) of Toronto residents thought crime levels in their neighbourhood were lower than the rest of Canada, significantly lower than in Canada's provinces (74%).



Toronto offers the largest variety of cybersecurity and advanced technology roles in Canada, with a growing AI and quantum talent base as well.”



### **Weather – Rank 1**

Surprisingly Toronto was ranked number one for weather, ahead of Vancouver and Victoria and other cities where the weather might be milder overall, but rain dampens spirits maybe a little more.

In general terms, Toronto’s weather broadly follows patterns for each of the four seasons: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter. Spring is a rainy season in Toronto with daytime temperatures rising as summer approaches while nights remain cool. The average temperature during the day is about 12°C in March, April, and early May. Summer in Toronto is at its warmest in July and August, with daytime temperatures averaging above 20°C and frequently rising above 30°C. Fall, or autumn, begins in September with mild temperatures falling steadily until the snowy winter season begins in December. Winter is Toronto’s coldest season, with temperatures usually below 0°C and snow falling frequently. January and February are the coldest months where temperatures can drop below -25°C. ([www.toronto.ca](http://www.toronto.ca))



### **Health – Rank 1**

Toronto is blessed with over thirty hospitals. Many of them are also medical research facilities and teaching schools affiliated with the University of Toronto. Most hospitals are grouped under administrative networks that serve neighbourhoods and communities and share several medical services. The largest of the networks is University Health Network, which governs four of Canada’s largest research hospitals located across Downtown Toronto.

Some hospitals in Toronto operate independently, attracting large funding and public donations due to historic brand value and overall clinical standards. Some of the key hospitals are Hospital for Sick Children, Princess Margaret Cancer Center, Mount Sinai Hospital, Michael Garron Hospital amongst many others.

One troubling statistic for Toronto to pay careful attention to is that new research shows the number of Toronto residents without a family doctor has ballooned to more than 400,000 as of March of last year.



## Amenities – Rank 1

Toronto is blessed with a wide variety of amenities. The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) public transit system operates a subway and streetcar system and an extensive bus network. The TTC also has integrated services with easy access to other transit systems like GO Transit, Metrolinx, and other city systems like My Way transit.

Toronto boasts an impressive array of outdoor spaces and parks, providing residents with opportunities to escape the urban hustle. Some of the most popular outdoor spaces include High Park, the Toronto Islands, Trinity Bellwood's Park, and a revitalized Toronto waterfront with bike trails for cyclist, pedestrians, and joggers.

Toronto is a thriving economic hub with a diverse range of industries contributing to its robust economy. The financial sector stands out prominently, with the city hosting the headquarters of major banks and financial institutions. The Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX) is one of the world's largest stock exchanges, playing a crucial role in global finance. The technology and innovation sector are booming in Toronto, earning it the nickname "Silicon Valley North." The city has become a hotspot for tech start-ups, attracting talent and investment.

The film and television industry are another cornerstone of Toronto's economy. Known as Hollywood North, the city has a robust production scene, with numerous studios and soundstages. Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) attracts global attention, solidifying the city's reputation as a major player in the film industry.

Toronto has a thriving arts scene with an array of art galleries, museums, live music and concert venues, cultural experiences, and festivals and events. Some notable free or low-cost annual events include: Winterlicious, Toronto Newcomer Day festivities, Doors Open, Na-Me-Res Pow Wow & Indigenous Arts Festival, Summerlicious, Nuit Balance, Cavalcade of Lights, Canada Day, and New Year's Eve celebrations, plus many more events. Toronto has 10 city run museums that offer opportunities to connect with diverse stories. These museums now have free general admission days. Other key arts and entertainment spaces the city has to offer includes: the Royal Ontario Museum, the Art Gallery of Ontario, St. Lawrence Market, the CN Tower, and Ripley's Aquarium.



## Career opportunities – Rank 1

Toronto offers the largest variety of cybersecurity and advanced technology roles in Canada, with a growing AI and quantum talent base as well. Compensation is at the top of the Canadian leaders, although still far back as compared to US compensation.



## Community – Rank 3

In the Greater Toronto area there are many community and government services available which can be found using the site “[211central.ca](https://211central.ca)”. The many services available include Vaccination and Transportation Assistance, Evictions Assistance, Food Banks, Food Delivery Options, Helplines, Housing Support, Indigenous Services, Mental Health Supports, Public Showers/ Restrooms, and Ready-to-Eat/ Take Away Meals ([211central.ca](https://211central.ca)).

Toronto has a vast amount of grassroots networks to support those in need on social media platforms (e.g., Facebook) where you can find neighbourhood specific groups to get free stuff, find community fridges and free food, repair items, share neighbourhood watch and safety updates, and diverse and inclusive groups to make friends for various beliefs, interests, languages, etc.

Additionally, Toronto has a variety of IT and cybersecurity community groups, some of which include: CyberToronto, Toronto Area Security Klatch (TASK), CSNP Toronto Cybersecurity Meetup, ISC2 Toronto Chapter, Data Connectors, BSides Toronto, DEFCON Toronto, LCL Toronto, and Civic Tech Toronto.



## Internet access – Rank 6

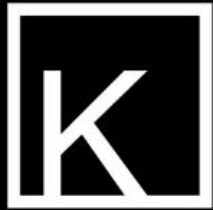
Toronto has a huge variety of competing internet services offering different levels of access. Costs although high when considered at a global level are quite reasonable at the Canadian level.



## OBSERVATIONS

Toronto rightfully deserves its top end ranking due to its high mix of services, amenities, job, and career opportunities but it must try to manage rising costs, affordability, and integration of newcomers to the cybersecurity and tech community who are often faced with difficult challenges related to job entry requirements. The newer generation based on our observations is sometimes making the decision to work in other more affordable destinations as they embark on their careers, so Toronto must be conscious that the younger population will make future decisions based on career, affordability and lifestyle more than the current generation who had the luxury and benefit in many cases of being able to afford a home more easily.





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# 2 Edmonton



## OVERVIEW

Edmonton is the capital city of the Canadian province of Alberta. The city anchors the northern end of what Statistics Canada defines as the “Calgary–Edmonton Corridor”, a region spanning between Edmonton and the city of Calgary, Alberta’s largest city, which includes the many smaller municipalities between the two. As of 2021, Edmonton had a city population of 1,010,899 and a metropolitan population of 1,418,118, making it the fifth-largest city and sixth-largest metropolitan area in Canada. Edmonton is both the northernmost city and metropolitan area in North America to have a population of over one million. A resident of Edmonton is known as an Edmontonian. source: [Wikipedia](#)

### Ranking at a glance

Affordability	Rank 18	Health	Rank 4
Population growth	Rank 5	Amenities	Rank 2
Taxes	Rank 2	Career opportunities	Rank 6
Crime	Rank 40	Community	Rank 13
Weather	Rank 37	Internet access	Rank 4



### **Affordability – Rank 18**

The low cost of owning a home makes Edmonton a desirable destination, says the latest housing market report from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). The average price of a house in Edmonton remains relatively affordable when compared to other Canadian cities. With taxes being low and no PST or HST, Edmontonians have more disposable income than most Canadians.



### **Population growth – Rank 5**

Edmonton and Alberta's thriving economy makes it one of Canada's fastest growing communities. According to a recent study, Edmonton's start-up ecosystem value has increased by 236 per cent since 2020.



### **Taxes – Rank 2**

With the second lowest taxes in the country, Edmonton is very attractive to cybersecurity and tech talent, making it a community to keep an eye on as it continues to grow. Its strength also lies in its closeness to Calgary. A 3-hour drive or a 56-minute flight.



### **Crime – Rank 40**

In this area, Edmonton slips down to 40th on our list. This is an area where improvement could have marked impact on the CyberTowns ranking as well as the community's ability to bring in and keep more talent. Although there are efforts under way to improve this, Edmonton still has quite a way to go.



### **Weather – Rank 37**

Unsurprisingly Edmonton was ranked low for its weather. Edmonton is one of the sunniest cities in Canada, getting up to 17 hours of sunlight a day in the summer. The city is known for having cold winters. Its average daily temperatures range from a low of -10.4 °C (13.3 °F) in January to a summer peak of 23 °C (73.4 °F) in July. With average maximum of 27 °C (80.6 °F) in July, and minimum of -14.8 °C (5.4 °F) in January. Temperatures can exceed 30.0 °C (86.0 °F) for an average of four to five days anytime from late April to mid-September and fall below -20.0 °C (-4.0 °F) for an average of 24.6 days. source: [Wikipedia](#).



### **Health – Rank 4**

Edmonton is one of Western Canada's foremost health care centres, with over 10 per cent of its employed labour force working in the industry. The city has several specialized hospitals and leading research institutes, including: the Stollery Children's Hospital, Glenrose Rehabilitation Centre, and the Mazankowski Alberta Health Institute.



With the second lowest taxes in the country, Edmonton is very attractive to cybersecurity and tech talent, making it a community to keep an eye on as it continues to grow.”

Edmonton also launched the Health City Initiative as a new strategy to propel Edmonton as a leader in health-care innovation. With a common vision, the work in Edmonton is being accelerated to the marketplace with the goal of attracting and retaining top talent, funding, and partnerships. A great example of this is the IT Clamp, created right there in Edmonton.



### Amenities – Rank 2

Edmonton offers it all from kid-friendly outings to free outdoor experiences, immersive museums to inspiring galleries, and more. Hit the trails of the North Saskatchewan River Valley an outdoor paradise, take a deep dive into Alberta’s history at the Royal Alberta Museum, then hit one of the world’s largest shopping malls, the West Edmonton Mall. Step back in time at Fort Edmonton Park, visit bison at Elk Island National Park, and finish the day cheering on the Edmonton Oilers. Visit the Art Gallery of Alberta or the University of Alberta Botanic Garden.

Take a daytrip to Metis Crossing and discover how the Métis lived as trappers or check out Telus World of Science which has an amazing display for those who always want to keep learning about our universe. Muttart Conservatory for those who are plant obsessed. Or the Edmonton Valley Zoo for the animal obsessed. Commonwealth Stadium is always good for a variety of sport entertainment. The Citadel Theatre for different cultural events and the Francis Winspear Centre showcases diverse international performances. Edmonton truly is a city with a lot to offer.



### Career opportunities – Rank 6

Edmonton is coming into its own due to the communities’ efforts to grow technology and innovation across many sectors. Due to its lower corporate and personal taxes, Edmonton is attracting investments and talent that are energizing new sectors of business. Its proximity to Calgary and to Vancouver and the US west coast is also playing a part in its awakening.



## Community – Rank 13

The cybersecurity and IT community in Edmonton is viewed as very strong and growing with more infrastructure being put in place every day.

In Edmonton there are many community and government services available which can be found using the “311 contact centre”. Alberta Supports can help individuals access more than 30 programs and 120 services for seniors, people with disabilities, job seekers, parents and families, homelessness, financial assistance, abuse, and family violence prevention.

Additionally, Edmonton has a variety of IT and cybersecurity community groups, some of which include: OWASP, BSides Edmonton, ISACA, Cybera and other groups include CIPS, CCN, CyberAlberta and many more.



## Internet access – Rank 4

Based on recent Statistics Canada data and our CCN survey Edmonton is rated very high for the quality, variety, and general cost of internet services.

## OBSERVATIONS

Edmonton is on its way up as a technology community with low overall costs, lots of start-up and funding opportunities and access to more and more talent relocating there. If the Government of Alberta, the city of Edmonton and Calgary can work together to strongly integrate their strengths and work on making the Edmonton/Calgary link even stronger the opportunity for growth is significant. The key is to balance out the needs of business, academia, costs, healthcare, and global growth into a cohesive system as they look to emulate and surpass innovation taking place in larger centres. Trying to keep a lid on crime by offering more social and reintegration services as well as community support could lead to significant talent attraction gains.







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# Calgary



## OVERVIEW

The city of Calgary sits on fertile land where two rivers meet, just an hour away from the Rocky Mountains which can be viewed from the city. Calgary is the third largest municipality in Canada, serving 1.3 million people. Some interesting facts according to the City of Calgary website: Calgary has the highest personal income per capita of Canada's major cities, the highest head office concentration in Canada, the second lowest cost of living in the country, and the highest GDP per capita of major Canadian cities. Calgarians are young with an average age of 37, diverse – the city is home to 41% visible minorities. Government is driving a friendly and entrepreneurial spirit with affordable downtown office space, they aim to cut red tape, enable innovation, and nurture a growing start-up and small business economy, equipped with an educated and high-tech workforce.

### Ranking at a glance

Affordability	Rank 23	Health	Rank 4
Population growth	Rank 9	Amenities	Rank 3
Taxes	Rank 1	Career opportunities	Rank 4
Crime	Rank 32	Community	Rank 12
Weather	Rank 41	Internet access	Rank 12



## Affordability – Rank 23

Calgary's affordability is rapidly evolving. Workers earn some of the highest wages in Canada, and Alberta has no provincial sales tax. But increasing shelter costs are challenging the affordability – in 2024 the cost of living has gone up with a low supply and demand at a high. That said Calgary has the lowest cost of living of the top five Canadian cities – Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver – included in Mercer's 2023 Cost of Living Index.

However, shelter costs, including home prices and the cost to rent are at a historical high in the city. When it comes to purchasing a home, like other Canadian cities there are 2 ownership structures – freehold and condominium. Freehold properties are typically single-family homes. Condos are typically apartments and townhomes. Condos are less expensive to buy, however it's important to note condo fees are charged in addition to a mortgage and range anywhere from \$200/month up to \$1000/month.

According to [realtor.ca](https://www.realtor.ca) most condos for purchase fall between \$300K-\$600K to buy, while most homes fall between \$600-\$800K. However, these numbers change depending on the source referenced. Regardless, shelter costs will be one of the top considerations when considering the affordability of Calgary.



## Population growth – Rank 9

Calgary is growing fast. At the time of the last Canada way survey, Calgary was number 9 but we can assume that is gone up since then with the economy revitalizing over the last couple of years.



## Taxes – Rank 1

One advantage to living in Calgary is there is no provincial sales tax (PST) paid in Alberta. Gas prices at the pump are typically lower than other provinces, and property taxes range but overall remain reasonable. To get an understanding of some of the costs to live in Calgary the following were considered:

### Taxes:

- Provincial Sales Tax (PST): 0%
- Federal Sales Tax (GST): 5%
- Property Tax Range: \$2000/year – \$3000/year depending on home value.

### Home Purchase Costs :

- Average cost of a home: \$554,500
- Median cost of a home: \$688,500
- Average Rent: \$1896/month
- Average Mortgage: \$2540/month

Cost of living is trending upwards due to population growth, but overall cost of living is still competitive compared to other large cities in Canada.



## Crime – Rank 32

Calgary remains a relatively safe city for a city of its size, but crime, including violent crime, does occur. Comparing to larger Canadian cities there are pockets of areas that feel less safe, but overall safety is a factor. Some conflicting reports on crime are published. According to Stats Canada the crime rate has dropped in Calgary since the year 2000. However the Calgary Police Service reported that 2023 saw 12% more violent crime than the 5-year average



## Weather – Rank 41

The weather can be an area of concern for those living in Calgary, as those living there will often say “if you don’t like the weather, wait 5 minutes.” Although there is a lot of sunshine in Calgary (an average of 2396 hours of bright sun each year).

Calgary and surrounding areas are fed by glacier water and precipitation through the year. Drought is a risk and greatly depends on the rainfall and snowpack during the year. Periodic water restrictions and fire risk have become more common in Calgary.

Winters are cold, with at least 1-4 weeks of temperatures that dip below -25 degrees, and summers can be moderate to hot, with some weeks of temperatures over +25 degrees.



## Health – Rank 4

Calgary currently has 5 major hospitals including a children’s hospital. In addition, it has 5 urgent care facilities in Calgary and its surrounding areas. The Tom Baker Cancer center is a world-class facility for cancer treatments, research, and support for patients.

Overall Calgarians enjoy access to healthcare, along with a major medical school at the University of Calgary and a sound nursing program.



## Amenities – Rank 3

Calgary is a city with endless amenities. Theatre, sports complexes, museums, schools, and the great outdoors. Some standout attractions include The Calgary Zoo, Science Center, Saddledome arena, Spruce Meadows (horse jumping), the Calgary Climbing Center, Calgary Olympic Park, Studio Bell (music center), Military Museum and new Central Library.

Most Calgarians appreciate seasonal activities like skiing, tobogganing, snowshoeing in the winter and river floats, days at a beach, outdoor pools in the summer. Calgary offers a variety of seasonal activities year-round.

Banff and Kananaskis are a 1-hour drive from the city and offer skiing in the winter and hiking in the summer. There are mountain lakes with sandy



beaches for hot summer days and Calgary hosts a long river pathway system that support a community of cyclists, runners, and walking.



### **Career opportunities – Rank 4**

Calgary is a booming technology/cybersecurity center with many tech companies established there. With Fortinet recently having made a commitment to build a large R&D center in Calgary things are looking even better. Big companies tend to attract other technology and tech companies, unfortunately in some cases from the US looking to access our lower paid talented workers. The job market is very healthy here and its proximity to the US West Coast and Edmonton and Vancouver are major pluses.



### **Community – Rank 12**

Calgary feels like a big city that still feels like it's got a small-town heart. There is a friendliness when you walk around the streets, and an energy and vibrant lifestyle. During the summers people flock to the outdoor areas and during winters they curl up by the fire or enjoy the mountains. It used to be rare to be born and raised in Calgary, but that has changed over the years, with many long-term residences seeing the beauty of the city and staying to raise families.

Calgary has a strong cybersecurity community with groups like ISACA Engage, Bside Calgary, CyberAlberta and many other groups and events residing there.



### **Internet access – Rank 12**

Internet prices and quality in Calgary are decently priced for the size of the community but of course high compared to other countries. Of course, not paying many taxes other Canadians pay on services helps make a difference here.



## **OBSERVATIONS**

Calgary as a cybersecurity center is exploding with high growth, making it a community to keep our eyes on. Fortinet's recent plans of expansion into Calgary is a sign of things to come. Large company footprints bring significant opportunities for smaller firms to join the community to leverage off the benefits.

Like Edmonton, Calgary should focus on more collaboration between itself and Edmonton leveraging every synergy possible to grow market and solutions. Keeping a lid on crime will also provide lasting attraction and retention benefits.





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# 4 Winnipeg



## OVERVIEW

Winnipeg is the capital of Manitoba and the economic centre of the region. With a population of approximately 750,000 it is the largest city in the province and sixth largest in Canada. It is home to many corporate head offices and government agencies with specific emphasis on the finance / insurance, aerospace, agriculture, biotech, and transportation sectors.

Winnipeg is located one hour south of Lake Winnipeg (the 11th largest freshwater lake in the world) at the convergence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers. This unique geographic feature has made it a meeting place for indigenous groups for thousands of years – with some evidence of settlements dating back at least 6,000 years.

Outdoor activities play an important part of life in Winnipeg – both in the winter and summer. Winnipeg is in close driving distance to many cottage and camping locations along Lake Winnipeg, Lake Manitoba, and throughout the Whitesell Provincial Park, Nopaming Provincial Park, Riding Mountain National Park, and Lake of the Woods in Ontario.

## Ranking at a glance

Affordability	Rank 13	Health	Rank 5
Population growth	Rank 11	Amenities	Rank 4
Taxes	Rank 4	Career opportunities	Rank 11
Crime	Rank 39	Community	Rank 10
Weather	Rank 5	Internet access	Rank 5



## Affordability – Rank 13

For one of Canada's largest cities, Winnipeg has an exceptionally low cost of living with local rental prices more than 45% lower than Toronto and 51% lower than Vancouver.

In Winnipeg, the average monthly rent of a one-bedroom apartment outside of the city centre is \$1,135. The average monthly rent of a three-bedroom apartment outside of the city centre is \$1,748.

Overall cost of living in Winnipeg (excluding rent) is 12.5% lower than Vancouver and 7.8% lower than Toronto.



## Population growth – Rank 11

Winnipeg's 2024 population is now estimated at 849,251. In 1950, the population of Winnipeg was 344,583. Winnipeg has grown by 8,143 in the last year, which represents a 0.97% annual change. Not spectacular but also not slowing. We expect with improved focus on making the community even more liveable and attractive to the technology community, we should see this improve.



## Taxes – Rank 4

Overall taxes and tax rates in Winnipeg are below national averages and it comes out strong against other larger cities. Property taxes in Manitoba are higher than average.



## Crime – Rank 39

Winnipeg's crime is higher than most cities in this report and therefore an area for improvement if it wants to attract more tech talent and their families. Winnipeg's police-reported crime rate per 100,000 people is 10,694 vs the Canadian average of 5,668.



## Weather – Rank 39

Overall, weather is not seen as the best by CCN members and the general public. Although summers in Manitoba are warm with average daytime temperatures in July near 26C. Winters are cold with evening lows of -21C in January. Winnipeg ranks among the sunniest cities in Canada with an average of 316 sunny days a year.

People who live in Winnipeg tend to embrace it with community members enjoying the following winter activities many different winter activities to keep themselves busy.



Winnipeg is a major surprise in this report, but a great one. Not normally viewed as a technology hub, our cybersecurity report says otherwise.”



### **Health – Rank 5**

Winnipeg is blessed by quite a solid number of hospital and urgent care facilities, and walk-in clinics. Emergency rooms can be found in various areas around the city and include Health Sciences Centre St. Boniface Hospital Grace Hospital, Victoria General Hospital Children’s Hospital and Seven Oaks General Hospital Concordia Hospital. While Urgent Care services are found at: Victoria General Hospital, Grace Hospital, The Minor Injury, and Illness Clinic Urgent Care Centre and the Pan Am Sports Injury Clinic as well as many other health clinics and services.

Recent funding announcements from the recently elected NDP government shows signs that they are dedicated to improving health care for all Manitobans by investing in the retention of existing medical professionals and attracting new staff members.



### **Amenities – Rank 4**

Winnipeg is home to the University of Manitoba, University of Winnipeg, Université de Saint-Boniface, and Red River College Polytechnique. Winnipeg boasts not only options for English language public schools, but also French Immersion, Hebrew Immersion, and Ukrainian Immersion.

Winnipeg is home to many museums including The Children’s Museum, The Manitoba Museum, and The Canadian Museum for Human Rights. Entertainment includes the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Manitoba Opera, Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, Prairie Theatre Exchange, and the world-renowned Royal Winnipeg Ballet.

Summer is full-on festival season in Winnipeg and across the province. Thousands of people enjoy The TD Winnipeg International Jazz Festival, The Folk Festival, Folklorama, the Morden Corn and Apple Festival, the Manitoba Stampede, The Gimli Film Festival, The Icelandic Festival of Manitoba, Winnipeg International Children’s Festival, and the Fringe Festival. These are only a sampling of the numerous festivals taking place in the community.



Winnipeg also has professional and semi-professional sports teams such as the Winnipeg Jets, The Blue Bombers, Goldeyes' Baseball, Valour FC, and the Winnipeg Sea Bears basketball.

Winnipeg continues to amaze with many other great events and amenities too numerous to go into detail about in this report.



### **Career opportunities – Rank 11**

Winnipeg came out strong in the job opportunity category for a city not known through Canada as a cybersecurity technology hub, but we here at CCN see that changing with Winnipeg punching beyond its weight in most categories and starting to develop a more entrepreneurial culture. This is a huge opportunity for Winnipeg.



### **Community – Rank 10**

Winnipeggers, and Manitobans as a whole, have a community spirit that is special to those living on the prairies. There is a strong history of volunteering and a willingness to pitch in and help one another. We are an increasingly diverse population, with a strong and growing indigenous population.

The Manitoba Center for Cyber Security, ISACA Winnipeg, The Women Cyber Security Society (WCS2) and The Long Con (previously BSIDES) are communities who support cybersecurity in Winnipeg. The Western Canada Information Security Conference takes place there in mid-May.



### **Internet – Rank 5**

Internet is less costly and provides more bandwidth than other major cities. There also tends to be a variety of suppliers offering solutions.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

Winnipeg is a major surprise in this report, but a great one. Not normally viewed as a technology hub, our cybersecurity report says otherwise. Cybersecurity is alive and growing strong in this community in large part due to its affordability and access to great services and amenities. The opportunity to keep attracting top talent is high and developing the right approach to market the community will help pave the way. The City needs to continue to work on reducing crime and putting in place rehabilitation services which will make it an even better choice for talent and their families to make it their home.





# Top 10 cybersecurity communities



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# 5

# Ottawa

## OVERVIEW

Ottawa is the capital city and political center of Canada. It is in the southern portion of the province of Ontario, with a land area of 2788.2kilometre square and a population of 1,017,449 as at 2021, Ottawa comes in as the fourth largest metropolitan area in Canada.

Originally a trading and lumbering community that grew into a town of regional significance, Ottawa was named the capital of the Province of Canada in 1857 and retained that status when Canada became a dominion within the British Commonwealth in 1867. Because of its location on the boundary between English-speaking Ontario and French-speaking Quebec and its position as national capital, Ottawa is one of the most bilingual cities in the country.

With the highest-educated workforce in Canada, Ottawa has more engineers, scientists, and PhDs per capita than any other city in the country.

The key industries in Ottawa are IT, Biotechnology and Life sciences sectors, Professional services, Public service, Tourism.



## Ranking at a glance

Affordability	Rank 28	Health	Rank 7
Population growth	Rank 15	Amenities	Rank 5
Taxes	Rank 17	Career opportunities	Rank 3
Crime	Rank 12	Community	Rank 18
Weather	Rank 27	Internet access	Rank 16



## Affordability – Rank 28

The [Ratehub.ca](https://ratehub.ca) report (2023) says an Ottawa resident needs to make \$122,440 per year to afford a home in 2023, compared to \$114,070 in 2022. While housing costs have been increasing in recent years, they remain more affordable than in cities like Toronto and Vancouver.

According to the Ottawa Real Estate Board, the average price of a residential property in Ottawa was approximately \$650,000 in 2021. This is lower than the average prices seen in Toronto and Vancouver. The city ranks in the middle of the pack of 10 cities for the income needed to buy a home. Vancouver, Toronto, Victoria, and Hamilton require higher incomes than Ottawa, while Calgary, Montreal, Halifax, Edmonton, and Winnipeg require lower incomes.

Rental prices in Ottawa are generally more affordable compared to other major cities. According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Ottawa was around \$1,500 per month in 2021.

Ottawa's cost of living is lower than that of cities like Toronto and Vancouver. While expenses such as groceries, transportation, and entertainment can vary depending on individual lifestyles, they are generally more affordable in Ottawa. According to various cost of living indexes, Ottawa typically ranks lower in terms of overall affordability compared to other major Canadian cities.

Median household incomes in Ottawa are higher than the national average.



## Population growth – Rank 15

The metro area population of Ottawa-Gatineau in 2022 was 1,423,000, a 1.07% increase from 2021. Ottawa ranks in the upper middle of most of the cities in this survey as it relates to population growth.



## Taxes – Rank 17

The average cost of living in Ottawa is \$3,936 per month for a single person who rents. This figure considers various factors, including housing, transportation, groceries, and entertainment expenses.

Statistics corroborated by data from Areavibes, indicates that the cost of living in Ottawa is 8% lower than the national average. Housing costs, in particular, are notably lower, representing 35% less than the national average. Interestingly, while general taxes in Ottawa are 33% higher than the national index, income taxes are 40% lower compared to other locations.





Ottawa's strong community spirit, coupled with its extensive support networks and services, fosters a sense of belonging and resilience among its residents, make it a welcoming and supportive place to call home."



### **Crime – Rank 12**

Ottawa at a national level of this report sits well when it comes to overall crime, but Ottawa must keep an eye on the increases that are now being seen. According to the Ottawa Police Service 2022 annual report, requests for service increased nearly four per cent in 2022 compared to 2021, reaching 370,000 total. That increase means Ottawa police received 8,600 more calls through the dispatch system and 4,700 more reports online.

Reported criminal offences in the city increased by 19 per cent in 2022 compared to 2021, resulting in 43,000 total reported crimes. That number excludes traffic offences.



### **Weather – Rank 27**

Ottawa experiences a diverse range of weather throughout the year, characterized by distinct seasons. Winters tend to be cold and snowy, with temperatures often dropping below freezing and ample snowfall (average -10°C to -15°C). This can lead to occasional snowstorms and icy conditions on roads and sidewalks.

Spring brings milder temperatures and the melting of snow, accompanied by occasional rain showers. Summers in Ottawa are generally warm and sunny, with temperatures typically ranging from mild to hot (average 20°C to 27°C). However, humidity levels can sometimes make the heat feel more intense.

Fall is characterized by cooler temperatures and colorful foliage as the leaves change colors before winter sets in. Overall, Ottawa's climate is considered continental, with noticeable variations in temperature and weather patterns throughout the year.





## Health – Rank 7

According to data from Living in Ottawa, Ottawa's healthcare infrastructure is robust, boasting several major hospitals and specialized institutions. The Ottawa Hospital, recognized as one of Canada's largest teaching and research hospitals, offers a wide array of services ranging from emergency care to advanced treatments in areas such as cancer, cardiac care, and women's health. Another notable institution is the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO), dedicated to pediatric healthcare and providing comprehensive services for children and adolescents up to the age of 18.

Additionally, Ottawa features a network of community health centers, such as the Centretown Community Health Centre, aimed at delivering accessible healthcare services to diverse populations. These centers offer a range of services including mental health support, family medicine, and health promotion programs, contributing to the overall well-being of the community.

Public health initiatives are a priority in Ottawa, overseen by Ottawa Public Health, which focuses on improving and safeguarding community health through prevention, promotion, and protection strategies. Recent statistics highlight an increasing emphasis on mental health support and preventative care, mirroring global health trends. Ottawa's healthcare system benefits from a blend of public and private funding, ensuring a balance between accessibility and quality of care for residents.



## Amenities – Rank 5

Being a capital city and being close to the Quebec border provides Ottawa with an advantage when it comes to amenities and services for its population. Ottawa boasts numerous family-friendly neighborhoods, each with its own distinct amenities catered to different preferences. Whether you value top-notch education, expansive green areas, recreational amenities, or convenient access to shopping centers, there's a neighborhood in Ottawa perfectly suited to your family's lifestyle.

The city is blessed with many specialty stores, and libraries with the Ottawa Public Library (OPL) serving as the main network. OPL provides access to a vast collection of books, digital resources, and educational programs across its numerous branches throughout the city.

Ottawa is home to several universities with standout programs in cybersecurity and IT, including Carleton University and the University of Ottawa. Both institutions offer renowned faculties and research centers focused on technology-related fields. Algonquin College is a bustling college which offers many tech and cybersecurity courses. Ottawa also offers a wider array of elementary and high school options depending on needs.

The city boasts numerous museums showcasing art, history, and culture. Key attractions include the National Gallery of Canada, the Canadian Museum of History, and the Canadian War Museum, offering enriching experiences for visitors of all ages. Ottawa's vibrant arts scene includes various theaters and performing arts venues, such as the National Arts Centre (NAC) and the Ottawa Little Theatre, hosting a diverse range of theatrical productions, concerts, and cultural performances.

Throughout the year, Ottawa hosts a multitude of community events and festivals celebrating arts, culture, food, and music. Notable events include Winterlude, Ottawa International Jazz Festival, and Canada Day celebrations on Parliament Hill. Ottawa also offers ample opportunities for sports enthusiasts, with facilities for hockey, soccer, basketball, and more. Residents can also enjoy professional sports events, including Ottawa Senators hockey games and Ottawa Redblacks football matches.

Nature lovers appreciate Ottawa's abundant outdoor spaces, including parks, trails, and waterfront areas. Gatineau Park, Rideau Canal, and Major's Hill Park are popular destinations for outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, and picnicking.



### **Career opportunities – Rank 3**

In Ottawa, Canada, the cybersecurity and IT job market is vibrant and diverse, offering opportunities across various sectors, including government, technology, finance, healthcare, and education. Ottawa is home to numerous organizations, both large and small, that are actively seeking skilled professionals to enhance their cybersecurity defenses and manage their IT infrastructure effectively.

Major employers are the Government of Canada including such agencies as the Canadian Centre for Cyber, Communications Security Establishment (CSE), and Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) offer quite a few cybersecurity positions. Some of the larger technology companies are BlackBerry, Shopify, QNX Software Systems, Field Effect and many more.

With a diverse economy Ottawa, has a lot of cybersecurity opportunities in its financial institutions, healthcare organizations and educational institutions.

Overall, Ottawa offers a diverse range of opportunities in the cybersecurity and IT fields, catering to individuals with various skills and interests.



## Community – Rank 18

Ottawa is renowned for its strong sense of community and the myriad of support systems available to its residents.

Ottawa offers a range of social services to support individuals and families in need. These services include assistance with housing, food security, mental health support, and addiction treatment. It also offers a lot of volunteer opportunities for those seeking to give back to the community.

Many support Networks such as unemployment, domestic violence, or providing care for health issues. These networks include peer support groups, counseling services, and crisis hotlines, offering a lifeline to those in need of help. Additionally there are numerous accessibility services, cultural and linguistic support and of course emergency services.

Overall, Ottawa's strong community spirit, coupled with its extensive support networks and services, fosters a sense of belonging and resilience among its residents, making it a welcoming and supportive place to call home.



## Internet – Rank 16

Internet is expensive but mostly reliable with good levels of bandwidth. There also tends to be a variety of suppliers offering solutions.



## OBSERVATIONS

Ottawa has always been a very strong technology center, with amazing research and development resources having sprung from BNR/ Nortel and the many companies that came from it and Mitel and many others. The challenge for Ottawa is twofold; first it must find a way to collaborate more effectively across the community from east to west, south to north and yes to Gatineau, Quebec. Ottawa has everything to be one of the strongest cybersecurity communities in Canada, but it's divided, politically, economically, and ideologically. This makes it very hard to build community, to build common goals and approaches. Secondly, Ottawa must bridge the gap with new arrivals in cybersecurity and technology who are challenged to integrate into the community for a variety of reason. Although this will require more in-depth analysis, it likely comes in part to the lack of collaboration discussed above. Ottawa can get there but the path is not an easy one.





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# 6 Vancouver

## OVERVIEW

Vancouver, is a gem between the mountains and the sea, blending urban sophistication with natural beauty. It's a vibrant multicultural hub where diverse communities coexist harmoniously. From the bustling downtown core with its skyscrapers and eclectic neighborhoods like Gastown and Yaletown, it has its charm and character. The city is renowned for its thriving arts scene, with theaters, galleries, and music venues dotting the landscape. Plus, there's no shortage of outdoor adventures—hiking in the nearby mountains, kayaking in False Creek, or cycling along the seawall. And let's not forget about the food scene; Vancouver's culinary offerings are as diverse as its residents, with everything from world-class sushi to trendy food trucks.

Vancouver has emerged as a major tech hub in North America, with a thriving start-up scene and presence of big tech companies. The city's proximity to Silicon Valley, combined with its livability, has made it an attractive destination for tech talent.



## Ranking at a glance

Affordability	Rank 47	Health	Rank 2
Population growth	Rank 2	Amenities	Rank 2
Taxes	Rank 6	Career opportunities	Rank 6
Crime	Rank 18	Community	Rank 2
Weather	Rank 12	Internet access	Rank 33



## Affordability – Rank 47

Vancouver is a very expensive community to live in. In Canada, the share of income needed to own a home is just over 63 per cent while in Vancouver, it is more than 106 per cent, which is significantly higher than other major cities. The average price of a home in Vancouver was just over \$1.3 million. A 1-bedroom apartment in Vancouver, costs about \$2,680 on average, while a 2-bedroom apartment is \$4,063.

The high cost of living is creating a lot of social problems in Vancouver and the city and province are working hard to try to tackle this difficult issue.



## Population growth – Rank 2

Metro Vancouver is about to hit 3 million residents in the coming months, but Vancouver proper has an estimated population of 737,216 in 2024, up from 722,014 in 2023. Slowing now from the last Statistics Canada census but still growing at .98% rate from the previous year. The high growth has definitely impacted services and Vancouver has to continue to plan for continued high growth which will stretch its capacities both from a transportation and services perspective.



## Taxes – Rank 6

Surprisingly when you take all taxes into effect, Vancouver taxes are some of the lowest in the country. This is mostly due to lower property taxes on homes as compared to major cities in Canada. That comes with higher home prices as discussed above. Residents do pay the highest price in Canada for gas due to higher taxes, but overall Vancouverites are in a decent position in this area of evaluation.



## Crime – Rank 18

Vancouver is ranked better for crime than most large cities. It's definitely had its struggles with crime in the last few years as homelessness has gone up. If we look at Vancouver's Crime Severity Index (CSI) Vancouver's violent CSI decreased 3.6 per cent since 2013 (109.9), the national violent CSI increased 32.0 per cent from 2013 (74.0) to 2022 (97.7).

The non-violent CSI includes all police-reported property violations and other Criminal Code violations including traffic offences, drug violations and all federal statutes. Vancouver's 2022 non-violent CSI was 87.2, down 3.7 per cent from 2021 (90.5). While the national average increased six per cent over the past decade (from 66.9 to 70.9), Vancouver's non-violent CSI value decreased 15.2 per cent during the same period.



Vancouver's strength lies in its supportive community, where neighborly spirit, diverse resources, and cultural enrichment foster a sense of belonging."



### **Weather – Rank 12**

Vancouver's weather is famously mild and temperate, characterized by its proximity to the Pacific Ocean and mountainous surroundings. The city experiences four seasons: relatively mild winters, pleasant springs and autumns, and warm summers.

Winter temperatures in Vancouver typically range from around 0°C to 10°C (32°F to 50°F), with occasional periods of rain and snowfall, although snow accumulation is relatively rare in the city center. Vancouver is known for receiving a lot of rain which is more common during winter, with Vancouver receiving most precipitation between October and March. With over 1,200 millimeters of rain annually, Vancouver is the rainiest city of our survey.

Spring and autumn are typically mild and comfortable, with temperatures ranging from 10°C to 20°C (50°F to 68°F).

These seasons are characterized by blooming cherry blossoms in spring and vibrant foliage in autumn, making them particularly scenic times to visit the city. Summer in Vancouver is warm and sunny, with temperatures averaging between 20°C and 25°C (68°F to 77°F). However, occasional heatwaves can push temperatures higher, resulting in periods of extreme heat. The city's proximity to the ocean helps moderate temperatures, relieving the heat during the summer months.



### **Health – Rank 2**

Vancouver's healthcare system is robust, with various hospitals, specialty centers, and medical services to meet residents' needs. Notable hospitals include Vancouver General Hospital (VGH), known for its comprehensive care, including trauma and organ transplants, and St. Paul's Hospital, renowned for cardiac care. BC Children's Hospital offers leading pediatric care. The BC Cancer Agency provides advanced cancer treatment and research. The community views healthcare positively, appreciating high-quality care, but acknowledges challenges like wait times.

The University of British Columbia's Faculty of Medicine offers top-tier medical education. Nurses benefit from specialized training programs. Helplines like the BC Mental Health Support Line (1-800-SUICIDE) and HealthLink BC (8-1-1) provide vital support for mental health and general health inquiries, respectively. These resources contribute to Vancouver's overall health and well-being.



## Amenities – Rank 2

Vancouver boasts a wealth of amenities contributing to its vibrant and dynamic community. From famous stores to cultural institutions, outdoor adventures, and educational opportunities, there's something for everyone to enjoy:

**Specialty Stores:** From boutique fashion outlets in Yaletown to artisanal markets on Granville Island, residents can access unique shopping experiences.

**Libraries:** The Vancouver Public Library (VPL) system comprises multiple branches throughout the city, offering extensive collections, digital resources, and community programming for all ages.

**Universities:** The University of British Columbia (UBC) stands out as a leading cybersecurity and IT education institution, offering innovative programs and research opportunities. Simon Fraser University (SFU), the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT), VCC, and some USA-based satellite campuses, NYIT, NEU and FDU etc also provide specialized training in technology-related fields.

**Schools:** Vancouver boasts a range of public and private schools offering high-quality education at all levels, from elementary to secondary. Several schools emphasize STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education to prepare students for future careers in IT and cybersecurity.

**Museums and Cultural Institutions:** The city is home to world-class museums, including the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, the Vancouver Art Gallery, and the Science World at Telus World of Science. These institutions showcase diverse cultural heritage and provide engaging educational experiences.

**Theater and Performing Arts:** Vancouver's vibrant art scene includes numerous theaters, performance venues, and cultural festivals. The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival, and Vancouver Fringe Festival are just a few highlights.



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**Community Events:** Vancouver hosts various community events throughout the year, from neighborhood street festivals to multicultural celebrations and outdoor markets. These events foster community spirit and provide opportunities for residents to connect and engage with one another.

**Sports and Outdoor Activities:** Outdoor enthusiasts will find plenty to enjoy in Vancouver, with access to hiking trails, cycling paths, and water sports at the waterfront, coal harbor, etc, along the city's scenic coastline. The nearby mountains offer skiing and snowboarding in the winter months, while parks and green spaces provide opportunities for leisure and recreation year-round. Vancouver also has the following professional sports teams: Vancouver Canucks, Vancouver Whitecaps and the BC Lions football team.

Overall, Vancouver's amenities contribute to its reputation as a livable and culturally rich city, offering residents a high quality of life and many opportunities for learning, recreation, and community engagement.



## Career opportunities – Rank 6

In Vancouver, the cybersecurity and IT job market thrives, offering various opportunities across various sectors. Known employers in the region include established tech companies, innovative startups, government agencies, and educational institutions.

You'll find a mix of technical positions, sales and operations roles, educational roles, legal positions, and more. Technical roles may include cybersecurity analysts, network security engineers, software developers, system administrators, and data analysts. Sales and operations positions might involve account management, business development, project management, and IT operations management. Educational roles could encompass teaching positions at universities, colleges, and specialized training institutions, as well as instructional design and curriculum development roles. Legal positions might include cybersecurity law specialists, compliance officers, and privacy consultants.

Key employers in Vancouver's cybersecurity and IT sector include companies like Microsoft, Amazon, Telus, Fortinet, GeoComply, Absolute Software, PwC, KPMG, D3 Security, and Mirai Security, to name a few. With Vancouver's reputation as a tech hub and its commitment to innovation and sustainability, the opportunities for cybersecurity and IT professionals continue to grow. There also a growing AI and Quantum industry sector which provides a great opportunity for cybersecurity resources to explore.





## Community – Rank 2

Vancouver's strength lies in its supportive community, where neighborly spirit, diverse resources, and cultural enrichment foster a sense of belonging. From community centers to non-profit organizations, residents can access many resources addressing housing, employment, mental health, and education needs. Cultural festivals and multicultural programs celebrate diversity, while accessible services ensure inclusivity for all. Environmental stewardship initiatives underscore the community's commitment to sustainability, while supportive networks provide companionship and connection. Vancouverites find strength in unity, coming together to create a nurturing environment where everyone can thrive.

Vancouver has an amazing cybersecurity community with an extremely strong foundation with ISACA Vancouver which is a powerhouse in the community, bridging young entrants to cybersecurity with a strong veteran mentoring community. BSIDES Vancouver, OWASP and the Vancouver International Privacy & Security Summit which continues to be a strong attraction for the community in Vancouver.

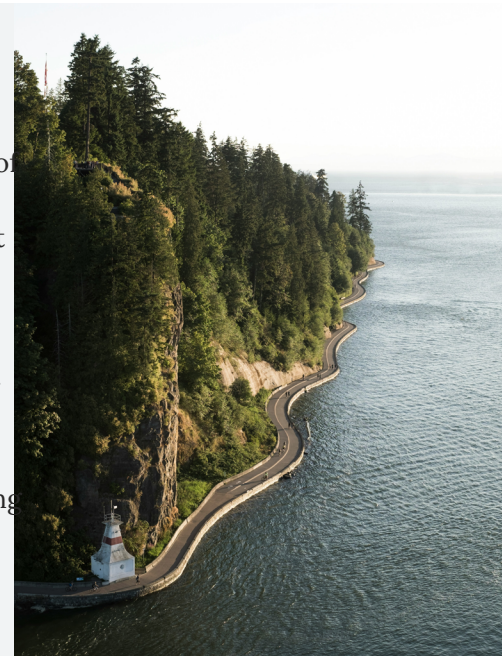


## Internet – Rank 33

Costs for internet in Vancouver are high comparatively to other major Canadian centers. Vancouver does offer high bandwidth and high quality.

## OBSERVATIONS

Vancouver is a strong cybersecurity community with access to lots of talent and offering a very liveable community with lots of amenities and cultural diversity. Its proximity to the strong US western market is a major plus. Keeping the city affordable is the major concern. Demographic changes taking place; both culturally and from an age range perspective is driving cybersecurity and IT talent to communities where they can grow family and roots and save for their future. Vancouver may face a brain drain as an aging cybersecurity population who bought in to Vancouver years ago retire. The other major challenge for Vancouver is finding a way to deal with increasing economic disparity and crime.



# 7

# Nepean

## OVERVIEW

Nepean, is a suburb of Ottawa and was amalgamated with the city in 2001, becoming one of its constituent communities. Nepean was originally established as a township in 1792 and later incorporated as a city in 1978.

The area of Nepean is quite diverse, featuring both urban and suburban areas. It's known for its residential neighborhoods, parks, and recreational facilities. It has a rich history, with landmarks like the Nepean Museum showcasing its past.

Nepean was historically a hub for government offices, particularly in the fields of technology and defense. It was home to companies such as Nortel Networks, which was a major player in the telecommunications industry. The area has undergone significant development over the years, with an increasing focus on modern urban planning and infrastructure.

Today, Nepean is part of Ottawa, which is not only the capital city of Canada but also a vibrant hub of culture, education, and commerce. It continues to be an attractive place to live, with a high quality of life and access to various amenities and services. It's proximity to Kanata and Ottawa make it a great place to live and work in cybersecurity.



## Ranking at a glance

Affordability	Rank 24	Health	Rank 8
Population growth	Rank 5	Amenities	Rank 5
Taxes	Rank 18	Career opportunities	Rank 18
Crime	Rank 23	Community	Rank 22
Weather	Rank 38	Internet access	Rank 17





### **Affordability – Rank 24**

Nepean is in the middle of affordability in our survey. Home prices in Nepean average \$903,786 for a detached two level home. While a detached bungalow is \$721,431, a townhouse is \$578,339 and a condominium is \$388,616.

Average rent in Nepean and area is \$1,965 a month.



### **Population growth – Rank 5**

Nepean's population is continuing to grow at a higher rate than most communities being nestled in between Ottawa and Kanata, allows Nepean to benefit from growth in both those communities. The focus on increasing liveability and green spaces seems to be paying dividends.



### **Taxes – Rank 18**

Taxes like Ottawa are identical and property taxes are high comparatively to most communities in Canada therefore ranking Nepean in the same area as Ottawa. Ontario also includes PST and GST.



### **Crime – Rank 23**

Nepean had a fairly high crime rate with over 2800 crimes per 100,000 in population. Rates of theft (the combined rate of motor vehicle theft, major and minor theft and shoplifting of \$5,000 or under), breaking and entering and robbery increased in 2022, after declining during the start of the pandemic in 2020, according to Statistics Canada. Motor vehicle theft had the greatest impact on the increase in the overall (Crime Severity Index) in 2022, followed by robbery, breaking and entering, minor theft and shoplifting.”



### **Weather – Rank 38**

Nepean has four seasons and a semi-continental climate, with a warm, humid summers and very cold winters. Winters in Nepean can be severe. Snow depths of greater than 1 cm are seen on about 120 days each year compared with about 65 days in Toronto. Much greater depths of snow are also found in Ottawa than Toronto. Temperatures can range from -2 celsius to -14 celsius in winter.



### **Health – Rank 8**

Nepean being part of the Greater Ottawa metropolitan area benefits from the same hospitals and health infrastructure. Nepean's healthcare infrastructure is robust, boasting several major hospitals and specialized institutions. The Ottawa Hospital, recognized as one of Canada's largest teaching and research hospitals, offers a wide array of services ranging from emergency care to advanced treatments in areas such as cancer, cardiac care, and women's health. Another notable institution is the Children's Hospital of



Nepean is perfectly situated to take advantage of Ottawa's talent and infrastructure and Kanata's tech strength."

Eastern Ontario (CHEO), dedicated to pediatric healthcare and providing comprehensive services for children and adolescents up to the age of 18.

Additionally, Nepean features a network of community health centers, has access to the Centretown Community Health Centre, aimed at delivering accessible healthcare services to diverse populations. These centers offer a range of services including mental health support, family medicine, and health promotion programs, contributing to the overall well-being of the community.

Public health initiatives are a priority in the area, overseen by Ottawa Public Health, which focuses on improving and safeguarding community health through prevention, promotion, and protection strategies. Recent statistics highlight an increasing emphasis on mental health support and preventative care, mirroring global health trends. Nepean's healthcare system benefits from a blend of public and private funding, ensuring a balance between accessibility and quality of care for residents.



### Amenities – Rank 5

Being a municipality within a capital city and being close to the Quebec border provides Nepean with an advantage when it comes to amenities and services for its population. Nepean boasts access to numerous family-friendly neighborhoods, each with its own distinct amenities catered to different preferences. Whether you value top-notch education, expansive green areas, recreational amenities, or convenient access to shopping centers, there's a neighborhood in Ottawa perfectly suited to your family's lifestyle.

The city is blessed with many specialty stores, and libraries with the Ottawa Public Library (OPL) serving as the main network. OPL provides access to a vast collection of books, digital resources, and educational programs across its numerous branches throughout the city.

Nepean is near several universities with standout programs in cybersecurity and IT, including Carleton University and the University of Ottawa. Both institutions offer renowned faculties and research centers focused on technology-related fields. Algonquin College is a bustling college which offers many tech and cybersecurity courses. Nepean also offers a wider array of elementary and high school options depending on needs.

The community boasts numerous museums showcasing art, history, and culture. Key attractions in the area include the National Gallery of Canada, the Canadian Museum of History, and the Canadian War Museum, offering enriching experiences for visitors of all ages. A vibrant arts scene includes various theaters and performing arts venues, such as the National Arts Centre (NAC) and the Nepean Centrepont Theatre, hosting a diverse range of theatrical productions, concerts, and cultural performances.

Throughout the year, Nepean hosts and accesses a multitude of community events and festivals celebrating arts, culture, food, and music. Notable events include Winterlude, Ottawa International Jazz Festival, and Canada Day celebrations on Parliament Hill. Ottawa also offers ample opportunities for sports enthusiasts, with facilities for hockey, soccer, basketball, and more. Residents can also enjoy professional sports events, including Ottawa Senators hockey games and Ottawa Redblacks football matches.

Nature lovers appreciate Nepean's abundant outdoor spaces, including parks, trails, and waterfront areas with numerous rail and bike and cross country trails are popular destinations for outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, and picnicking.



## **Career opportunities – Rank 18**

Nepean has very good access to cybersecurity and IT job markets located within Nepean, neighbouring Kanata or Ottawa. The job market is vibrant and diverse, offering opportunities across various sectors, including government, technology, finance, healthcare, and education. Ottawa is home to numerous organizations, both large and small.

Major employers are the Government of Canada including such agencies as the Canadian Centre for Cyber, Communications Security Establishment (CSE), and Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) offer quite a few cybersecurity positions. Some of the larger technology companies are BlackBerry, Shopify, QNX Software Systems, Field Effect and many more.



## Community – Rank 22

Nepean has a strong sense of community and the myriad of support systems available to its residents. The Greater Ottawa offers a range of social services to support individuals and families in need. These services include assistance with housing, food security, mental health support, and addiction treatment. It also offers a lot of volunteer opportunities for those seeking to give back to the community.

Many support Networks such as unemployment, domestic violence, or providing care for health issues. These networks include peer support groups, counseling services, and crisis hotlines, offering a lifeline to those in need of help. Additionally there are numerous accessibility services, cultural and linguistic support and of course emergency services.

Overall, Nepean's strong community spirit, coupled with its extensive support networks and services, fosters a sense of belonging and resilience among its residents, making it a welcoming and supportive place to call home.



## Internet – Rank 17

Internet is expensive but mostly reliable with good levels of bandwidth. There also tends to be a variety of suppliers offering solutions.

## OBSERVATIONS

Nepean is perfectly situated to take advantage of Ottawa's talent and infrastructure and Kanata's tech strength. Fully situated in a predominantly green space with access to many outdoor activities, Nepean is a perfect place for talent to raise their families. Crime in some areas of Nepean are high and therefore effort in reducing that would be of huge benefit to the community. Retaining talent in the wake of affordability and taxes is the major challenge moving forward. Especially with a new generation trying to establish a foothold in the industry.





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NVD CVE-2021-44832 6.6 CVSS 2% EPSS Fixed: 2.17.1 Read more VDP VEX

json (20190722)

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NVD CVE-2022-45686 7.5 CVSS 0% EPSS Fixed: 20230227 Read more VDP VEX

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# 8

# Victoria

## OVERVIEW

Victoria is the capital city of British Columbia, on the southern tip Vancouver Island off Canada's Pacific coast.

The city has a population of 397,237. The city of Victoria is the seventh most densely populated city in Canada with 4,406 inhabitants per square kilometre

Known as "the Garden City", Victoria is an attractive city and a popular tourism destination and has a regional technology sector that has risen to be its largest revenue-generating private industry. Victoria is often rated in the world cities for quality of life.

Victoria is known for its disproportionately large retiree population as it has a very gentle climate. Some 23.4 percent of the population of Victoria and its surrounding area are over 65 years of age, which is higher than the overall Canadian distribution of over 65-year-olds in the population (19%). But technology growth, entrepreneurial spirit and lifestyle is having some impacts in bringing more youth to the area.



## Ranking at a glance

Affordability	Rank 32	Health	Rank 9
Population growth	Rank 32	Amenities	Rank 23
Taxes	Rank 5	Career opportunities	Rank 14
Crime	Rank 41	Community	Rank 5
Weather	Rank 6	Internet access	Rank 20



## Affordability – Rank 32

Victoria is an expensive place to live. A family now needs to earn \$177,000 per year to qualify for a loan on an average home with the price tag of just below \$900,000. According to data from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Greater Victoria is the third-most expensive rental market in Canada, after Toronto and Vancouver.

Those costs might start pushing out students and those who are looking to start a family or buy a house. It is also causing social challenges and impacting the quality of life of many who live there.

This is an area of concern as it relates to developing, attracting, and retaining talent moving forward for a community like Victoria.



## Population growth – Rank 32

According to the figures from statistics Canada for the 2021 census, Victoria was not growing significantly as compared to its peers but Covid and recent work from home policies increased population growth by over 2% during the 2021 to 2023. It continues to grow fast at a 1.01% increase which is higher than most other communities. It will be interesting to see where this statistic is in a few years.



## Taxes – Rank 5

Federal and provincial tax rates are similar to the majority of other communities and provinces across Canada, except Alberta. Victorians do pay a lot less property tax on their homes than the majority of Canadians for homes of equal value. Gas taxes as per the rest of British Columbia are high. Other municipal taxes are also lower than the average.







### Crime – Rank 41

Crime in Victoria is very high, according to Areavibes, identifying Victoria's overall crime rate at 131% as per the national average. Reducing crime in the city and increasing social awareness and social services to help with vulnerable and affected populations would hopefully help address this problem.



### Weather – Rank 6

In Victoria, the summers are cool, dry, and partly cloudy and the winters are fairly mild, wet, and mostly cloudy. Over the course of the year, the temperature typically varies from 3 °C to 19 °C and is rarely below -2 °C or above 22 °C. Snow accumulation is very rare.



### Health – Rank 9

Victoria has pretty good health services with over 2,300 staff and physicians, Victoria General Hospital, located in the Victoria suburb of View Royal, provides comprehensive and emergency care. It is also Vancouver Island's centre for maternity, pediatric, trauma, and neuroscience treatment.



### Amenities – Rank 23

Victoria's got something for every interest—part of why it was voted the Number 1 City in The World by Condé Nast Traveller readers in 2023. Visit the world-class Royal BC Museum, tour 125-year-old heritage buildings, or explore diverse marine wildlife along our coast. From the Empress Hotel, Thunderbird park, the inner harbour, taking a tour on the ferries, Government street and Chinatown, Fan Tan Alley, the Market Square, the Royal British Columbia Museum, and whale watching of course are some of the key attractions. Not too far from Victoria are the world famous Butchart Gardens, a feast for the eyes and nose.







## Career opportunities – Rank 14

Victoria has a decent amount of cybersecurity and technology opportunities available. Being the seat of the provincial government, Victoria has significant infrastructure and departments, data and services that need to be protected from attackers. Victoria also has a burgeoning technology sector. According to Viatec which bills itself as Victoria's technology community, technology is Victoria's #1 industry with a \$4.06 billion economic impact and over 16,775 employees across 995 high-tech companies.



## Community – Rank 5

Victoria, BC, offers a wide range of community services to support the well-being and quality of life of its residents. These services cover various aspects, including social support, health care, education, recreation, and more. The community comes together to support various causes and is well connected overall.

The cybersecurity and tech community is supported by Viatec, ISACA Victoria and a great conference BSIDES Vancouver Island.



## Internet – Rank 20

Internet overall in Victoria is expensive compared to most communities in our survey but they do offer solid bandwidth.



## OBSERVATIONS

Victoria has a growing tech and entrepreneurial community with a strong cybersecurity talent base. It's beautiful location on the Pacific ocean, with mild climate and multi cultural origin is a very attractive location to live. Biggest challenges are affordability, ease of doing business and trying to reduce crime.

Victoria is definitely at risk of losing talent, especially younger mobile talent to more affordable Canadian locations and to the US who can offer more affordable housing and lower taxes and more career opportunities. Focusing on bridging more to Vancouver and other key Canadian tech cities and establishing a strong Victoria tech hub, is key to keeping Victoria's standing.

# 9

# Brampton



## OVERVIEW

Brampton, just outside Toronto, is Canada's 9th largest city and the fastest growing of Canada's largest 25 cities. Brampton is home to more than 90,000 businesses and its embarking on a journey to lead technological and environmental innovations.

Brampton is a multicultural hub with a significant South Asian population, particularly from India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. It's also home to communities from various other ethnic backgrounds, contributing to its cultural diversity.

The city has a diverse economy with a mix of manufacturing, retail, logistics, and services sectors. It's home to several major corporations and industries, including advanced manufacturing, food and beverage processing, and information technology.

Brampton is home to a first-in-Canada technology accelerator program solely committed to supporting Canadian cybersecurity scale-ups. In partnership with the DMZ at Ryerson, the Rogers Cybersecure Catalyst cybersecurity accelerator program provides critical assistance to help these early-stage cybersecurity firms succeed.

## Ranking at a glance

Affordability	Rank 33	Health	Rank 4
Population growth	Rank 1	Amenities	Rank 7
Taxes	Rank 31	Career opportunities	Rank 17
Crime	Rank 21	Community	Rank 1
Weather	Rank 23	Internet access	Rank 8



Brampton has an extremely strong community spirit and has a diverse community with 250 cultures speaking 171 languages.”



### **Affordability – Rank 33**

Housing affordability in Brampton, Ontario, has been a topic of concern in recent years, particularly as the city has experienced significant population growth and rising real estate prices. A study conducted by online real estate portal Point2Homes has ranked Brampton third among all Canadian cities for home ownership costs. The average Brampton home sold price is now at \$1,026,582.

While the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Brampton has increased by 29 per cent over the past year from an average of \$1,643 in August 2022 to \$2,274 in August 2023.



### **Population growth – Rank 1**

Brampton, Ontario, has experienced significant population growth over the past few decades, making it the fastest-growing city in Canada. Brampton has seen rapid population expansion primarily due to immigration, natural population growth (births exceeding deaths), and internal migration from other parts of Ontario and Canada. The city’s population growth has outpaced the national average, driven by its appeal as a vibrant and diverse urban center with economic opportunities.

Brampton has a relatively young population compared to the national average, with a significant proportion of residents being under the age of 35. This youthful demographic profile has implications for various aspects of the city, including education, workforce, and cultural dynamics.



### **Taxes – Rank 31**

Taxes in Brampton are high with the average property tax bill coming in around \$9,800. Brampton residents also pay GST and PST as well as high provincial and federal income tax rates.



### **Crime – Rank 21**

According to the article on [bramptonguardian.com](https://bramptonguardian.com), a recent survey by Ipsos in Brampton, showed that one in five residents identified public safety and crime rate as the most important issue in the city. Recent annual data shared by Peel Regional Police sheds more light on the spike in the region’s crime

severity index, with 58 shooting victims reported (an increase of 23 per cent), 210 stabbings (an increase of 27 per cent) for an overall 20 per cent increase from 2021.



## **Weather – Rank 23**

Brampton has four seasons. In Brampton, the summers are warm, the winters are cold, snowy, and windy and its partly cloudy all year round. Over the course of the year, the temperature varies from -10 degree centigrade to 27 degrees centigrade. The best time to visit Brampton for warm-weather activities is from late June to early September.



## **Health – Rank 4**

Brampton has access to Brampton Civic, which is a full-service community hospital serving Brampton, south Caledon and beyond. Opened in 2007, the hospital has one of the busiest emergency departments in Canada and one of the largest mental health and addictions programs in the province. Brampton Civic is also home to the only endovascular therapeutics suite in an Ontario community hospital, providing life-and-limb saving procedures through leading-edge equipment closer to home for residents.

Brampton Civic is also a leading community hospital for training emerging health care professionals, including physicians, nurses and allied health practitioners.

Brampton Civic provides a broad range of inpatient and outpatient services across all stages of life. It is home to one of the largest labour and delivery programs in the province, as well as leading-edge cancer, endovascular, dementia and palliative care programs. Specialized services include critical care, cardiology, complex surgeries, dialysis and kidney care, along with a range of diagnostic services and outpatient clinics.



## **Amenities – Rank 7**

Brampton, Ontario, offers a variety of activities and attractions for visitors and residents alike. Here are some things Brampton offers: Gage Park, walk historic downtown Brampton, Peel Art Gallery, Heart Lake Conservation Area, the Brampton Farmers Market, Chinguacousy Park, , lots of great restaurants offering diverse cuisine and CeleBramptonster

an annual event that celebrates Brampton's diversity with live music, food vendors, cultural performances, and activities for all ages.

The Rogers Cybersecure Catalyst is Toronto Metropolitan University's national center for training, innovation, and collaboration in cybersecurity. Headquartered in Brampton, Ontario, the Catalyst empowers individuals and organizations to seize the opportunities and tackle the challenges of cybersecurity.





### Career opportunities – Rank 17

Brampton is a significant tech employer with many large companies located there like MDA, Rogers and many others. The city itself requires a lot of technical and cybersecurity resources to manage services and operations. Being close to Toronto and other large cities, Brampton has access to a lot of career opportunities at a small distance.



### Community – Rank 1

Brampton has an extremely strong community spirit and has a diverse community with 250 cultures speaking 171 languages. Brampton offers a wide range of community services to support the well-being and quality of life of its residents. These services cover various aspects, including social support, health care, education, recreation, and more. The community comes together to support various causes and is well connected overall.

Having the Rogers Cybersecure Catalyst and Toronto Metropolitan University in the community has made it a strong hub and drives a sense of excitement in the technology community as it relates to education and business possibilities.



### Internet – Rank 8

Brampton offers many internet solutions with decent pricing and high bandwidth reliability.



## OBSERVATIONS

Brampton is well positioned to continue to grow its cybersecurity and technology community but will need to be careful as population growth is creating challenges around affordability and crime. Its proximity to Toronto and the Catalyst is a major plus driving gains. Ensuring community and business services can keep up to demand, Brampton's biggest challenge will be to keep young tech talent, who may consider pursuing less expensive work destinations where they can afford housing and have more disposable income.

# 10

# Halifax



## OVERVIEW

Halifax, located on Canada's Atlantic coast, is Nova Scotia's capital and most vibrant urban area. Halifax is a bustling cultural hub known for its maritime heritage, strong arts scene, and stunning coastline beauty. Its rich history began in 1749. The city has multicultural residents and a flourishing economy driven by shipping, finance, technology, and tourism.

### Ranking at a glance

Affordability	Rank 14	Health	Rank 3
Population growth	Rank 17	Amenities	Rank 6
Taxes	Rank 31	Career opportunities	Rank 14
Crime	Rank 21	Community	Rank 28
Weather	Rank 23	Internet access	Rank 1



### **Affordability – Rank 14**

Halifax has a comparatively low cost of living when compared to other major Canadian cities. According to reports, Halifax's housing costs, transportation, and everyday expenses are often lower than national norms, making it an attractive option for people of all ages seeking a balanced way of life. The average house price in Halifax is \$547,400.

The average cost of a two-bedroom apartment in Halifax was \$1,628 per month in 2023, up from \$1,445 in 2022. The national average rent for the markets in CMHC's survey was \$1,359. The bad news is that those price increases are continuing to rise.



### **Population growth – Rank 17**

Halifax was in the middle with the data growth from Statistics Canada from 2021 but saw a 3.9 per cent increase to its population, adding 19,780 people year-to-year. Metro Halifax's population on July 1, 2023, was 518,711. The City of Halifax is looking to double its population by 2050 and asking government to reduce building taxes to accommodate the growth needs.



### **Taxes – Rank 31**

The provincial income tax rates in Nova Scotia range from 8.79% to 21%, depending on the income group. Property taxes in Halifax are quite high at around \$5,600 for a \$500K home. Other municipal taxes are also on the high side compared to other major Canadian cities.



### **Crime – Rank 21**

Nova Scotia's crime rate for 2021 was 5,482 per 100,000 population. This was the first time since 2014 that Nova Scotia's crime rate was higher than the national average.



### **Weather – Rank 23**

Halifax has a temperate maritime climate defined by mild, wet winters and cool summers. While the city periodically experiences storms and heavy rains, current weather patterns have not considerably raised the likelihood of flooding or extreme weather events. Residents enjoy the beach breezes and temperate temperatures all year. With changing weather patterns, the summer of 2024 saw Nova Scotia impacted by significant forest fires and smoke.



### **Health – Rank 3**

Halifax is ranked very high national for the quality of it's hospitality but also for its availability. It has multiple hospitals, notably the QEII Health Sciences Centre, which provides specialty services such as heart care and cancer treatment. Dalhousie University's Faculty of Medicine offers medical

education and research possibilities, while Nova Scotia Community College offers nursing and other healthcare professional programs. According to a Nova Scotia Health Authority survey, the community has good feedback about the health system.



### **Amenities – Rank 6**

Halifax has a variety of amenities, including specialty stores, libraries, universities, and cultural institutions. Dalhousie University and Saint Mary's University are well-known higher education institutions, and the city's thriving cultural scene includes local museums, theatres, and community activities. Outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy parks, trails, and waterfront activities, making Halifax an excellent choice for both business and leisure.



### **Career opportunities – Rank 14**

Halifax is a good technology hub with high technology alongside cybersecurity providing a decent mix of career opportunities. As a large growing city, more and more cybersecurity resources are required to run government operations, services as well as important infrastructure making Halifax one of the key maritime Canada hubs.



### **Community – Rank 28**

Halifax has a deep sense of community and provides a variety of support services to its citizens, such as social programs, community centers, and efforts that encourage diversity and inclusion.

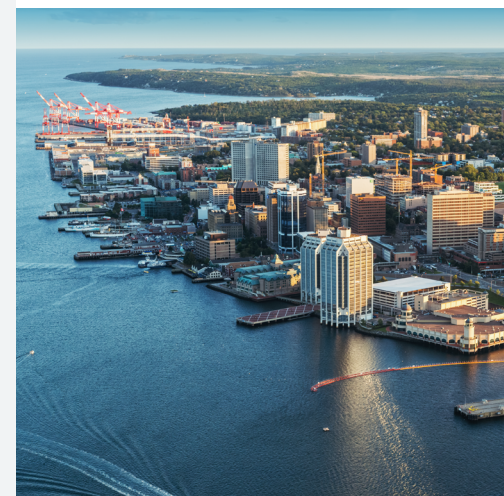


### **Internet – Rank 1**

The average cost of the internet in Halifax is \$20 less a month than the Canadian average. It is also had a good bandwidth level with sustained consistency.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

Halifax is the maritime technology hub with a great cybersecurity networking program out of Dalhousie University that has produced significant talent over the years. Halifax is a fairly affordable community offering great amenities and access to the outdoors. It is relatively close to the US markets and continues to grow quickly with strong talent moving to the community. The major challenge will be to extend collaboration outside of Halifax to neighbouring provinces where it can leverage solutions and community to achieve even higher goals.







## SPECIAL MENTION

### Fredericton

Although Fredericton did not meet our 100,000-population minimum, during our research we were told many times by CCN members that Fredericton, New Brunswick was a community we should be talking about. They were right Fredericton has emerged as a notable cybersecurity and technology community for several reasons:

1. **Strong academic presence:** Fredericton is home to the University of New Brunswick (UNB) and the New Brunswick Community College (NBCC), both of which have robust programs in cybersecurity and technology-related fields. These institutions produce a steady stream of skilled graduates who contribute to the local talent pool.
2. **Research and innovation:** UNB's Canadian Institute for Cybersecurity (CIC) is a leading research center focused on cybersecurity. The institute conducts cutting-edge research, collaborates with industry partners, and offers training programs to address cybersecurity challenges. This research activity fosters innovation and entrepreneurship in the local tech community.
3. **Government support:** The provincial and municipal governments in New Brunswick have demonstrated a commitment to fostering a thriving technology ecosystem. Through initiatives like CyberNB, a provincial cybersecurity strategy, and InvestNB, which supports economic development, the government provides support and resources to help grow the cybersecurity and technology sectors in Fredericton.
4. **Business incubators and accelerators:** Fredericton is home to several business incubators and accelerators, such as Planet Hatch and Ignite Fredericton, which provide support services and resources to technology start-ups. These organizations offer mentorship, networking opportunities, and access to funding, helping tech entrepreneurs grow their businesses.



5. **Collaborative community:** The Fredericton tech community is known for its collaborative spirit and supportive environment. Tech companies, start-ups, academic institutions, and government agencies work together to address common challenges, share knowledge, and promote innovation. Events like CyberSmart and networking groups such as Tech Fredericton facilitate connections and collaboration within the community.
6. **Quality of life:** Fredericton offers a high quality of life with a relatively low cost of living compared to larger urban centers. The city boasts a vibrant arts and culture scene, outdoor recreational opportunities, and a strong sense of community. This appealing lifestyle makes Fredericton an attractive destination for tech professionals seeking a balance between work and personal life.
7. **Proximity to government and industry:** Fredericton's location in close proximity to government agencies, such as the Canadian Forces Base Gagetown and the National Research Council of Canada (NRC), provides opportunities for collaboration on cybersecurity initiatives. Additionally, the city's strategic location within the Atlantic region facilitates access to markets and industry partners.

Thales recent announcement, that it will develop a new National Digital Excellence Centre in the Cyber Centre at Fredericton's Knowledge Park in Canada to strengthen its cybersecurity capabilities in industrial systems is a great example of the potential to grow cybersecurity in Fredericton.

Overall, Fredericton's combination of academic excellence, government support, collaborative community, and quality of life make it a great environment for cybersecurity and technology companies to thrive and for professionals to build rewarding careers.



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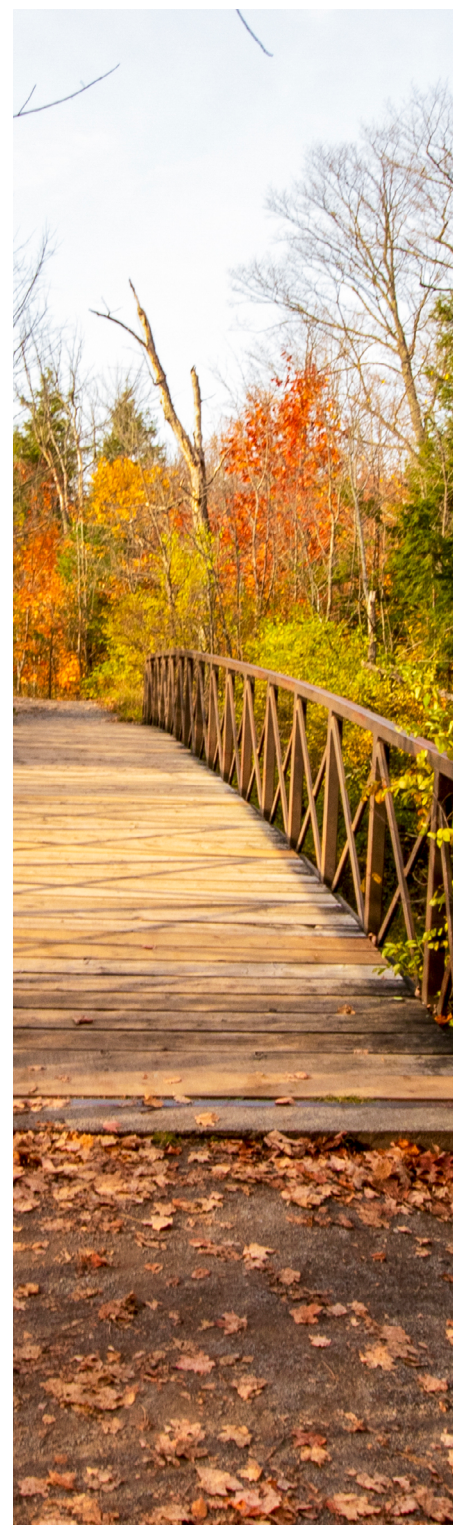
 120 Carleton St, Fredericton, New Brunswick

## Kanata

Kanata, a suburb of Ottawa, Canada, is a great hub for cybersecurity and technology talent for several reasons:

1. **Proximity to government agencies:** Ottawa, being the capital of Canada, houses various government agencies and departments. Kanata's proximity to Ottawa provides opportunities for cybersecurity professionals to work closely with government organizations on projects related to national security and digital infrastructure.
2. **Tech industry presence:** Kanata is home to a significant number of technology companies, including cybersecurity firms, software developers, and telecommunications companies. This concentration of tech companies creates a dynamic ecosystem for collaboration, innovation, and career advancement in the cybersecurity field.
3. **Tech parks and innovation hubs:** Kanata hosts several technology parks and innovation hubs, such as Kanata North Technology Park, which attract both established tech giants and start-ups. These hubs foster networking opportunities, knowledge sharing, and access to resources for cybersecurity professionals.
4. **Educational institutions:** Ottawa boasts several prestigious universities and colleges offering programs in computer science, cybersecurity, and related fields. This provides a steady pipeline of skilled talent and opportunities for professionals to pursue continuous education and professional development.
5. **Quality of life:** Kanata offers a high quality of life with access to amenities, green spaces, and a relatively lower cost of living compared to other major tech hubs. The city's cultural diversity, healthcare system, and education infrastructure make it an attractive location for tech talent seeking a balanced lifestyle.
6. **Strong community support:** The tech community in Kanata is known for its collaborative and supportive environment. Networking events, meetups, and industry associations provide opportunities for professionals to connect, share knowledge, and stay updated on the latest trends and technologies in cybersecurity.

Overall, Kanata's combination of industry presence, educational opportunities, quality of life, and community support make it an excellent destination for cybersecurity and technology talent to live and work.





# OVERALL RESULTS

## CYBERTOWNS 2024

- |                   |                    |                     |
|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Toronto        | 20. Kingston       | 39. Delta           |
| 2. Edmonton       | 21. St. Catherines | 40. Abbotsford      |
| 3. Calgary        | 22. Coquitlam      | 41. Vaughan         |
| 4. Winnipeg       | 23. Kelowna        | 42. Sydney          |
| 5. Ottawa         | 24. Québec         | 43. Cambridge       |
| 6. Vancouver      | 25. Markham        | 44. Gatineau        |
| 7. Nepean         | 26. Montreal       | 45. Sherbrooke      |
| 8. Victoria       | 27. Milton         | 46. Longueuil       |
| 9. Brampton       | 28. Kitchener      | 47. Ladner          |
| 10. Halifax       | 29. Oshawa         | 48. Thunder Bay     |
| 11. Burlington    | 30. Waterloo       | 49. Dartmouth       |
| 12. Moncton       | 31. Guelph         | 50. Trois-Rivieres  |
| 13. Saskatoon     | 32. Burnaby        | 51. Ajax            |
| 14. Hamilton      | 33. Richmond       | 52. Levis           |
| 15. Windsor       | 34. Okanagan       | 53. Greater Sudbury |
| 16. Richmond Hill | 35. Regina         | 54. Saguenay        |
| 17. Laval         | 36. Barrie         | 55. Terrebonne      |
| 18. London        | 37. Surrey         |                     |
| 19. Oakville      | 38. Mississauga    |                     |

Full data details of the survey are available at  
<https://canadiancybersecuritynetwork.com/cybertown>

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITIES TO ADOPT

## 1. Education

Canada's education system is doing a fairly good job of developing a qualified workforce but there are three areas of education that require specific attention by all 3 levels of government. First, we need to start teaching cybersecurity as early as possible, with primary schools being the focus, so that young people know what a career in cybersecurity is and also have basic understanding of the risks of the digital world and their data.

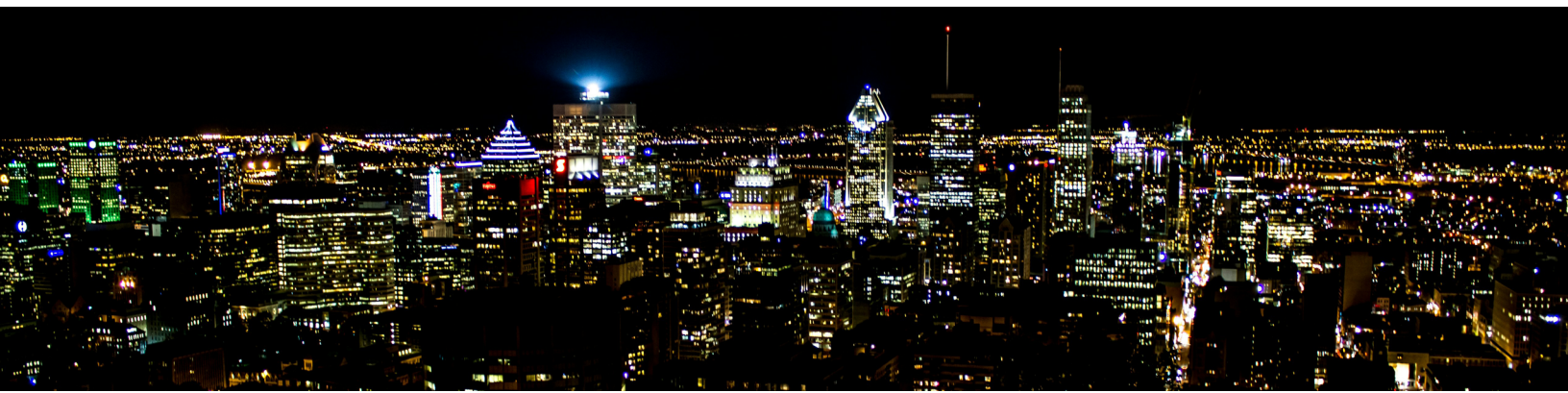
Secondly, we need to ensure all cybersecurity education programs are in synch with real world cybersecurity needs and challenges. Too many programs use tools or lack tools to give students real world experience.

Also in many cases universities and colleges use tools and environments that companies do not even use or used years past.

Thirdly, too many students graduate with no job prospects, no opportunity to get real world experience and therefore languish in other careers than cybersecurity. CCN believes we need to make cybersecurity a trade, so students get real world experience while they are in school. Governments at all levels would support these programs and businesses would then get students who can train as apprentices with them to acquire skills fundamental to starting their careers with a running start.

## 2. Technology hubs

Even more important in this post covid/remote world is the need to gather and exchange and learn. Communities that bring together the various elements and tools for cybersecurity workers to come together will build a strategic advantage. From opportunities to learn from others, access business funding, meeting rooms, food and coffee to ensuring newer technologies are represented like AI, Quantum and others. Innovation begins by bringing like minded but different people together. True collaboration is needed to accomplish this and go beyond the short minded thinking most communities bring to it. We encourage communities to think outside their city limits, provincial limit and or funding limits to truly embrace collaboration. Ottawa has done a good job here with Invest Ottawa's Bayview Yards project as has Brampton and the Rogers Cybersecure Catalyst and the Canadian Institute for Cybersecurity in Fredericton.



### 3. Collaboration

Working together to achieve common goals seems like a simple and easy approach to implement, but none of the communities in the top 10 are even doing a great job on it. Fighting over budgets, fiefdoms, personal vendettas, or narrow mindedness seems to still be the way of most communities. On the surface, representatives say they want to work together, and they are all about collaboration but as most cyber security or IT business person will tell you, that is far from the truth in their community. True, they fall over to the multi nationals and the larger companies, but the small start up or mid sized business tends to get little attention. CCN can tell you that during our research phase over the last few months, reaching out to politicians, city officials, economic development offices, etc. have proven for the most part unsuccessful. Imagine how difficult it must be for a small business. We approached cities wanting to celebrate their uniqueness to profile them in an article or discuss their plans for technology and in 95% of cases we were left on our own. So what may you ask are they doing if not wanting to share with their community and the rest of Canada their success?

As we said before, collaboration is the new currency. Communities who can bring together all parties in a way that allows each one to get maximum benefit to grow and expand are going to be the true winners in this new digital economy. Back room politics, self-congratulatory pats on the back and small thinking will doom those communities to mediocrity. Take a look at how the New Brunswick government took a leadership role here and how Alberta aims to follow suit.

### 4. Services for new Canadians

Canada is a country of immigrants. Our diversity is our strength but when communities no longer have the ability to support newcomers in the technology space who want to enter cybersecurity or perhaps run their own business they lose. Communities have either been overwhelmed by the sheer numbers coming into their communities, lack resources or have not planned properly for the services that are required to meet demand. New Canadians require language, education, cultural awareness training, social services, business and financial training and a lot more to adapt quickly and properly into Canadian society. Our members are telling us and the community, most communities are failing to address the basics and therefore making staying in that community a risk to their future.



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## 5. Affordability

Housing remains one of the biggest challenges for those new to Canada or the younger generation, therefore impacting their career and communities of choice more highly than established or close to retirement resources. Spending more than 30% of income on rental or mortgage payments is considered to much. In Vancouver as an example the vast majority of residents spend over 50%.

Covid and remote work accelerated the move out of the big city more than at any other time in recent history. Even though some companies have mandated employees come back to the office, many are allowing talent to work remotely and to visit the office infrequently. Partly this is due to the cybersecurity shortage, partly because cybersecurity talent has more career options than many other fields.

It is true that in many cases the younger generation would prefer in the larger city so they can have access to a more active and bustling social life but after a few years of paying incredibly high rent or when they cannot contemplate a seven figure mortgage, and intend to start a family, the decision is usually much easier.

How communities rein in housing costs and create rental legislation that is fair to renters, will be key to how communities continue to attract and retain top talent no matter what else they do around cybersecurity community building.

## 6. Taxes

Taxation in Canada is very high, from federal, provincial and municipal taxes. Recent decisions around increasing the capital gains tax has again raised the spectre of a brain drain from Canada to the US and elsewhere.

There is no doubt that Covid and remote work created some significant mobility increases in younger and older Canadians looking to benefit from an easier lifestyle and lower costs. This is where we saw a move from the big cities to smaller communities. Although the end of Covid created the beginning of a return to the big city and offices, a fairly large percentage of cybersecurity and technology workers stayed or now leverage dual properties to keep some of that work life balance.

CyberTowns 2024 data shows that some of these trends stuck and actually continue to grow. The significant move of younger people and new Canadians to Alberta communities is part of this. We expect to see more of this trend continuing as younger technology workers leverage Alberta living before the housing and rental markets go up. Alberta's advantage vs other communities is also reduced taxes, leaving tech workers with a bit more disposable income. Alberta seems to be a tech talent collector, a last-ditch effort by some to see if they can make it work in Canada, before deciding if they want to look at the lesser taxes pastures of many US states like Texas or Florida where cybersecurity grew exponentially during the pandemic.

The challenge for Canada is to keep taxes reasonable while creating cybersecurity/tech hubs that give individuals and businesses what they need to succeed and expand globally. We need to create a collaborative innovation first way of thinking so that our bright minds stay and we can attract others to join.

# CONCLUSION

Canada has one of the best cybersecurity talent communities in the world. Cybersecurity is now part of a country's defense arsenal like weapons of old. Not only do we need to defend against small hackers, now we must protect our democracy, our quality of life from nation states like Russia, China and North Korea who want to destabilize our government and economy. Developing and keeping the best cybersecurity resources in Canada is more than just business now, it's national security impacts to Canada if we do not address the challenges properly.

Developing and retaining cybersecurity talent needs to be part of our national DNA. We may not be able to keep our taxes as low as our neighbours to the south, or to keep affordability on par with them as well but Canada therefore needs to do twice as well as other countries when it comes to working together and collaborating on cybersecurity and technology challenges. Creating integrated career/education/learning pathways and community services, need to become the focus moving, so we can build the best cybersecurity talent pipeline that can be mobilized quickly for action. A cybersecurity community that is happy and feels that it is accomplishing to the best of its ability is one that will stay.

Communities need to ensure collaboration and co-petition are the focus vs competition. Not look at keeping budgets but to share budgets, talent and innovation across the community, the province and the country. Time is growing short, action is required, the cybersecurity community is ready to walk the talk, are governments ready to do the same.



# COMING UP

## CYBERTOWNS 2025

CCN will launch the beginning of CyberTowns 2025 in September 2024 as we start to collect data from our member survey and as we begin to research best practices across the country and the world. In our 2025 data set we will collect more data on gender, age, new Canadians and mobility as these areas came to the surface quickly in our 2024 research

### Share

We encourage the federal, provincial and communities that are part of the survey to reach out to us to share best in class innovation, they are doing in their communities well in advance of next year's report.

### Sponsor

Anyone who wants to be a sponsor of the CyberTowns 2025 report should get in touch with us at the address above at the earliest convenience so we can plan together for the launch of the Report in June 2025.

### Consult/speak

If you would like us to come speak to your community, consult on best practices or be part of a panel or share our CyberTowns journey and data, we would be happy to discuss how we can help.

### Invest

If you are interested in Canada as a potential country to locate your business and want us to help with any analysis or to connect you with the right people across Canada to discuss growing your business, please reach out.

Reach out to us at:

[service@canadiancybersecuritynetwork.com](mailto:service@canadiancybersecuritynetwork.com)



# OVERVIEW OF CCN

The Canadian Cybersecurity Network (CCN) is Canada's largest cybersecurity/technology member network with over 41,000 members across Canada.

Established in 2019 and managed by our Founder, Francois Guay and 18 board advisors in different areas of cybersecurity expertise and from across the country.

Our mission is to grow Canadian talent, businesses and to increase cybersecurity awareness. Our community is all about inclusivity, collaboration and connecting people and businesses.

## Our members

Individual membership is at no cost as to encourage more people to explore and learn about cybersecurity and to develop their careers as much as possible.

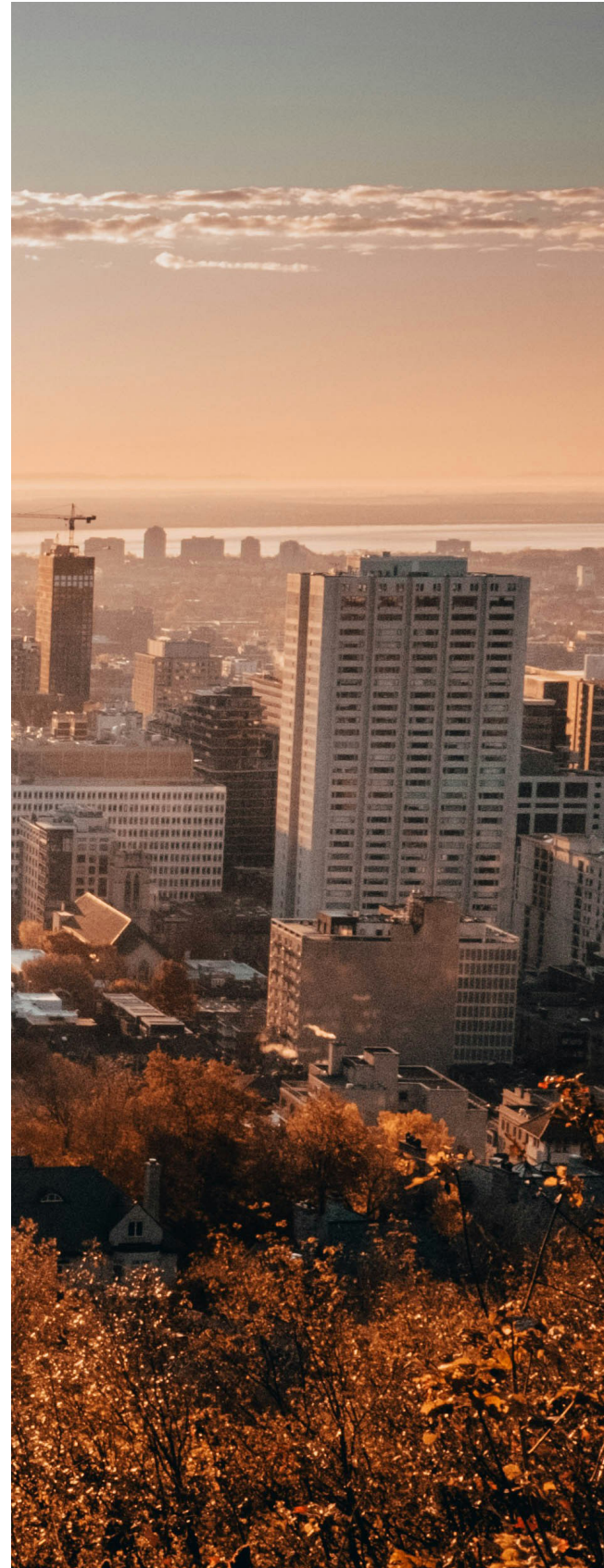
Universities and colleges as well as technical associations can also join at no cost, so that we can work together to increase their cybersecurity message across Canada.

Businesses pay a small fee to join to support the community and to receive business visibility and services to grow their business.


## Our services

The Canadian Cybersecurity Network offers individual members access to a huge membership for networking purposes as well as providing mentoring services and job access via Canadian Cybersecurity Jobs. More and more it's focus is on helping connect members to others who can help them grow their careers and or businesses.

CCN helps businesses of all sizes by marketing them to our members and Canadians. We provide webinars, support events of all sizes by increasing attendance, provide a variety of business advisory and talent acquisition services as well.







*Thank you to everyone who contributed to this report.  
Our amazing sponsors, board members, authors and other contributors whose research did not make the final report but whose work may be leveraged in the future. Special thank you to Initiate Marketing whose advise and expertise put the final touches on this report.*

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