



Youth Vital Signs – Fact Sheet

- *Youth Vital Signs* is youth-driven research and public opinion initiative - a report card - that measures the quality of life for young people in metro Vancouver.
- Over 3,500 young people from across the region responded to the *Youth Vital Signs* survey in May and June 2013.
- This is the second *Youth Vital Signs* report card. The first report was completed in 2009, but only captured the opinions of young people living in Vancouver.
- In 2013, *Youth Vital Signs* asked youth aged 15-24 across the entire metro Vancouver region to grade 13 subject areas and offer suggestions for positive change.
- The report is rounded out by an analysis of census data; a gathering of stories about innovative youth organizations; and a review of secondary research.
- The results show that youth in metro Vancouver care about their cities and their region. Overall it is a good news report with mainly average grades of Bs and Cs. But there is still room for improvement.
- Four of the 13 subject areas were identified as urgent and requiring immediate attention:
 - Poverty
 - Employment and Training
 - Education and Learning
 - Youth Housing and Homelessness
- These four subject areas are all closely interconnected: the high cost of living in the region, coupled with increased competition for entry-level jobs, all impact young people's ability to transition to independent living.
- Three main themes emerged across the subject areas:
 - High costs: Due to the high cost of living and shortage of available jobs, many young people are choosing to leave metro Vancouver to live in other regions of BC or other provinces.
 - Schools of Thought: Youth are interested in learning more about environmental and social justice at an earlier age, especially at school where they spend a lot of time. They would like to see these issues incorporated into their curriculum starting at the elementary school level.

- Accessibility and Awareness: Unless youth go looking for it, information about youth-specific services, resources and opportunities that meet their specific needs are not very easy to find.
- A few regional highlights:
 - Youth in Surrey gave Sustainability a C, while youth in the rest of metro Vancouver gave it a B.
 - Youth in Surrey were more likely to indicate that the creation of more green spaces is a priority.
 - Youth in Vancouver were more likely to give Transportation a higher grade.
 - Youth living in the central region (including Burnaby and New Westminster) gave Education a C, while youth in the rest of metro Vancouver gave it a B.
 - Youth living in the South Fraser region (including Surrey, White Rock and Langley) were more likely to give Safety a lower grade than youth living in the rest of metro Vancouver.
 - Youth in Vancouver frequently stated that reducing the cost of post-secondary studies is a priority, while youth living outside of Vancouver were more likely to want smaller class sizes.
 - Youth living in Vancouver were more likely to give Poverty, Youth Housing and Homelessness a lower grade.
- Poverty received the highest number of F grades, Youth Housing and Homelessness received the second highest number of F grades; and Transportation received the third highest number of F grades.
- The *Youth Vital Signs* report card is just the beginning. Young people in metro Vancouver want to connect with policy and decision-makers, to move forward in positive discussions and dialogue, and to explore how youth can be meaningfully engaged in decisions that impact their lives and the region they call home.
- The *Youth Vital Signs* Leadership Council will be hosting community conversations in early 2014, which will bring youth and decision-makers together to consider the grades and recommendations of the report, and to develop ideas for action and change.