



**Australian
Community
Philanthropy**

VitalSigns[®]
Community foundations taking the pulse of
Canadian communities.



COMMUNITY
FOUNDATIONS
OF CANADA
all for community.

Vital Signs takes the pulse of our communities. Community Knowledge gives us the power to change it

Vital Signs uses community knowledge to measure the vitality of communities - gathering data and publishing accessible reports on significant social and economic trends to tell the story of how communities are faring in key quality-of-life areas.

Vital Signs connects the dots between existing data to dive deep on locally meaningful issues such as poverty and disadvantage, education, food insecurity and youth unemployment.

Community foundations use **Vital Signs** to start conversations, identify trends, local priorities and opportunities and decide where to focus their attention and resources to have the greatest impact.

Vital Signs is a robust program which helps community foundations engage with citizens and stakeholders around the issues facing their communities.

A global program

Vital Signs was developed by the Toronto Community Foundation in 2001, after a group of civic leaders came up with a new way to engage their community in understanding and monitoring the health and vitality of Toronto on an ongoing basis. In 2006, **Vital Signs** became a national program of Community Foundations of Canada (CFC) and it continues to grow every year, both across Canada and internationally.

Vital Signs reports

Vital Signs reports present a picture of a community using relevant national data and local research on an identified range of issues.

Successful reports leverage stakeholder involvement at every level, from determining the report's issues and indicators, to exploring research sources.

Vital Signs reports help communities make connections between issues and trends in different areas. The findings are presented in a reader-friendly format that provides a snapshot of quality of life and community vitality. They are also an important touchstone for community leaders, service organizations and funders.

***Vital Signs* and collaboration**

Collaboration and partnerships occur at many levels in *Vital Signs* – research and data gathering, consultation, funding and community engagement. Community foundations may also choose to partner with another organisation on the production of a *Vital Signs* report.

***Vital Signs* in Australia**

Australian Community Philanthropy is the ‘parent’ of *Vital Signs* within Australia and manages the licensing of *Vital Signs* for Community Foundations within our region. We are committed to developing *Vital Signs* as a national program for community foundations and have established the *Vital Signs* Working Group to ensure a collaborative, cohesive approach and informed relationship between ACP, as the peak organisation, and community foundations; and identify strategic linkages with research partners, funding bodies and other *Vital Signs* partners.

What next

Undertaking *Vital Signs* is an important commitment for any community foundation. It requires dedicated human resources for a concentrated period time of at least 6 months. Below is an overview of the key steps for *Vital Signs*.

Stage One	Stage Two
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submit a participation agreement to ACP• Share information and identify stakeholders and potential partners• Secure funding• Establish an advisory committee or working group• Identify or hire a project coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify potential relevant local issue/s from the <i>Vital Signs</i> data framework and supporting data sets and sources• Conduct local community and stakeholder consultations• Confirm issues and indicators for your report• Develop and implement a communications strategy or enlist key media partners
Stage Three	Stage Four
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare indicator data• Conduct a community survey• Write and edit the <i>Vital Signs</i> report and editing of report• Organize the logistics of printing and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Print report and determine plan of how to share it with the community• Organize a launch event and generate media coverage• Prepare a community engagement strategy following the <i>Vital Signs</i> report launch• Conduct presentations following the launch event• Conduct an evaluation of the report’s release

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