

# Halton's visible minorities still earn less, says report

Visible minorities in Halton are more financially comfortable than typical Ontario residents, however, they still earn less than their non-minority neighbours.

Those are among the findings in a new report from the Halton Social Planning Council, called A Social Profile of the Halton Visible Minority Population.

It paints a picture of Halton having a relatively small population of visible minorities. But those who do live here tend to be well-educated and significantly more successful than minorities in the rest of Ontario.

The 90-page report, based on 1996 census data, found the median family income of visible minorities in Halton was \$62,722. That was 11 per cent less than the \$69,439 earned by a non-minority family in Halton.

But Halton minorities are financially ahead of the median Ontario household income of \$53,974. And they're way ahead of minorities in the rest of Ontario, where the median income was just \$36,822.

The median income is the middle point at which an equal number of people earn both more and less.

Ted Hildebrandt, senior planner with the council, said the information in the report provides an interesting snapshot of Halton. As a wealthy region, it tends to attract visible minorities who are more

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**TED HILDEBRANDT**

successful than most.

"It brings to the forefront the challenges faced by minorities, and we hope it can help visible minorities to find and keep employment," he said. "It can be a valuable resource for those in training and in policy-making."

The visible minority population in Halton was 7,095, representing 7 per cent of the population, according to the last census information. In the rest of Ontario it was 15 per cent.

The breakdown by ethnicity in Halton found 31 per cent of visible minorities were South Asian (including those from India and Pakistan). Next were Chinese, at 20 per cent, and those who identified themselves as black, at 19 per cent.

Halton minorities tend to be well-educated, with 70 per cent having at least some post-secondary education.

The report was created in cooperation with Human Resources Development Canada, to provide information that can be used to help visible minority workers to find and keep jobs.

Compared with other visible minorities across Ontario, visible minorities in Halton are likely to have been in Canada longer, said Mr. Hildebrandt, and more than 70 per cent speak English at home.

One disturbing aspect of the report's findings was the discovery that visible minorities are more likely to be among the poorest members of society, even in Halton. Among Halton families with household incomes of less than \$10,000, 7 per cent identified themselves as visible minorities. Comparatively, only 2 per cent of the rest of Halton families were that poor. The primary barriers to finding jobs for visible minorities in Halton are the same as those faced by other recent immigrants, Mr. Hildebrandt said.

The barriers include, among other things, the inability to speak fluent English, lack of Canadian experience, transportation and difficulty in getting accreditation for trades certificates and university degrees earned outside Canada.

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