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## **FAMILY WELLBEING: PRIORITY #1**

### **New Measurements of Progress**

Family Well-Being is the highest priority for those who responded to our January 2021 Survey.

People are most concerned about having opportunities, choices, and hope for themselves and their families as we all move into the future.

Unfortunately, very many people think and feel that the opportunities, choices, and hope for themselves and their families have been greatly diminished in the last 30 plus years.

One of the suggestions to improve the quality of life for people is to create a new and broader basis for measuring what is important to us. This newer broader measurement system would include the traditional economic measurements of Gross National Product (GNP) and how the stock market is doing. But it would also look at a more diverse and meaningful range of measurements to determine if we are moving toward a more hopeful society which will markedly improve the quality of lives for individuals and families.

There are several new indexes being used to measure more of these elements.

One of the most successful new efforts is happening in Canada which started using this approach after the Great Recession hit the world in 2008-09.

### **Canadian Index of Wellbeing**



<https://uwaterloo.ca/canadian-index-wellbeing/>

**Vision:** To enable all Canadians to share in the highest wellbeing status by identifying, developing, and publicizing statistical measures that offer clear, valid and regular reporting on progress toward wellbeing goals and outcomes Canadians seek as a nation.

#### **Mission**

- Conduct rigorous research related to, and regularly and publicly report on, the quality of life of Canadians.
- Encourage policy makers and government leaders to make decisions based on solid evidence; and
- Empower Canadians to advocate for change that responds to their needs and values.



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The Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) measures wellbeing in 8 areas that affect the lives of its citizens:

- Education
- Health
- Community Vitality
- Democratic Engagement
- Living Standards
- Time Use
- Environment
- Leisure & Culture

Learn more about the Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing at:

<https://uwaterloo.ca/canadian-index-wellbeing/about-canadian-index-wellbeing/our-mission-and-vision>

## **Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI)**

Another measurement system which is growing in usage is called the Genuine Progress Indicator. [Genuine Progress Indicator - Gross National Happiness USA \(gnhusa.org\)](http://gnhusa.org)

Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) is a metric designed to take fuller account of the wellbeing of a nation, only a part of which pertains to the health of the nation's economy. By incorporating environmental and social factors which are not measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP), GPI has been suggested to replace, or supplement, GDP as a measure of economic growth.

### **We get what we measure**

Traditional economic measures are only one part of a complete set of wellbeing indicators. While the USA is one of the world leaders using a measure like GDP, we must consider a wide range of progress indicators to create conditions where we can all thrive.

Even as GDP climbs in the US, there are indicators that reflect a society in distress:

- About half of all Americans live in very low income situations and/or in poverty
- The US infant mortality rate places us 48th in the world (of 193 countries)
- Life expectancy in the US ranks 46<sup>th</sup> in the world (of 193 countries)
- The US incarceration rate is the highest in the world and 500% greater than other developed countries
- The largest cause of bankruptcies in the US are health costs

These indicators are among many which show that, in spite of growth in GDP, many people in our country are going backwards when it comes to their overall quality of life.

That backward movement is one of the major causes of the extreme polarization which seriously threatens our country and our democracy.



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### GPI and Other Indexes Highlights

- Maryland and Vermont have implemented a [Genuine Progress Indicator](#)
- Canada has developed the [Canadian Index of Well-Being](#)
- The New Economics Foundation offers the [Happy Planet Index](#)
- The Organization for Economic and Cooperation Development (OECD) has unveiled the [Better Life Index](#).
- The United Nations in 2012 unanimously adopted a resolution making happiness central to development efforts and established March 20th as [International Day of Happiness](#).
- Multiple states are moving towards the use of GPI, including Colorado, Washington, and Utah.
- New Zealand has adopted and implemented a Wellbeing Budget for 2020-21 [Wellbeing Budget 2020 - Rebuilding Together - 14 May 2020](#)

A new and broader set of measurable economic, social, and environmental indicators can give us useful information about the positives and negatives affecting the lives of all of us. And it can point us and our policy makers in government and business to new 21<sup>st</sup> century solutions to 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges.

We can help that happen by supporting new ideas, people, and organizations promoting better, healthier, and happier lives for all of us.