

The Burden of Poverty:

A snapshot of poverty across Canada

There is no reason why poverty should exist in a country as wealthy as Canada.

Approximately 4.8 million people in Canada live in poverty according to the Low Income Measure. That's roughly 1 in 7.



Who Bears the Burden of Poverty?

Poverty cuts right across Canada's social boundaries: anyone can be poor.

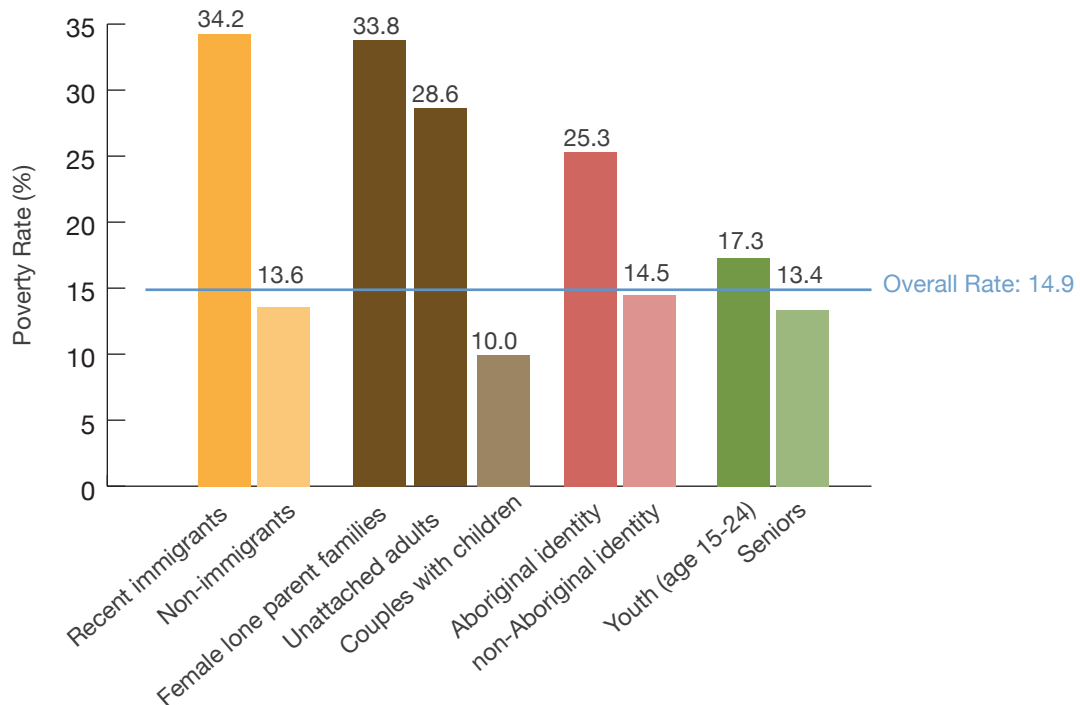
But poverty is not an equal opportunity offender. Certain demographics and groups are over-represented among those living in poverty.



What is Poverty?

In this report, we look at poverty as measured by income. But poverty is not only felt materially. It can create barriers to social inclusion, positive well-being, and a sustainable livelihood.

Poverty Rates Among Different Groups



Source: Low Income Measure (After-Tax), Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-014-X2011043

Poverty Rates Among Different Groups

- Foreign educational or vocational credentials are often not recognized in Canada. Many immigrants must accept low-wage jobs and forgo the Canadian education that could improve circumstances.
- Immigrants must also cope with discrimination, including being overlooked by employers.
- Today's recent immigrants have lower rates of employment and lower levels of earnings and family income than in the past.¹

34.2% RECENT IMMIGRANTS

25.3% ABORIGINAL IDENTITY

- Historical oppression has had a massive impact on the current living conditions of Aboriginal people.
- Those living on reserves face a unique set of barriers including minimal infrastructure, poor healthcare, inadequate housing, and geographical isolation.
- In urban areas, Aboriginal people are often unable to obtain education or employment due to factors such as systemic discrimination and racism, very high levels of poverty, and differences in culture.



- Of all lone-parent households in Canada, 80% are headed by women, which equals approximately one million families.²
- Women are more likely than men to be poor because they spend more of their day doing unpaid work, such as childcare and household work, and because they typically earn less than men.
- Currently, there are very few programs to address the high poverty rates among unattached adults.

FEMALE LONE PARENT FAMILIES 33.8%
UNATTACHED ADULTS 28.6%

YOUTH 17.3%
SENIORS 13.4%

- Youth face high levels of unemployment at 14.3%, a rate twice the national average of 7.2%.³
- One-third of young workers are employed only part-time. Many more are underemployed, or unable to secure enough hours work to earn a decent income.⁴
- Poverty rates for seniors have actually decreased over the last thirty years, in part due to effective income security programs like the Guaranteed Income Supplement and Old Age Security.



¹ Garnett Picot (2008), "Immigrant Economic and Social Outcomes in Canada: Research and Data Development at Statistics Canada," Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series, Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 11F0019M, No. 319 <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2008319-eng.pdf>

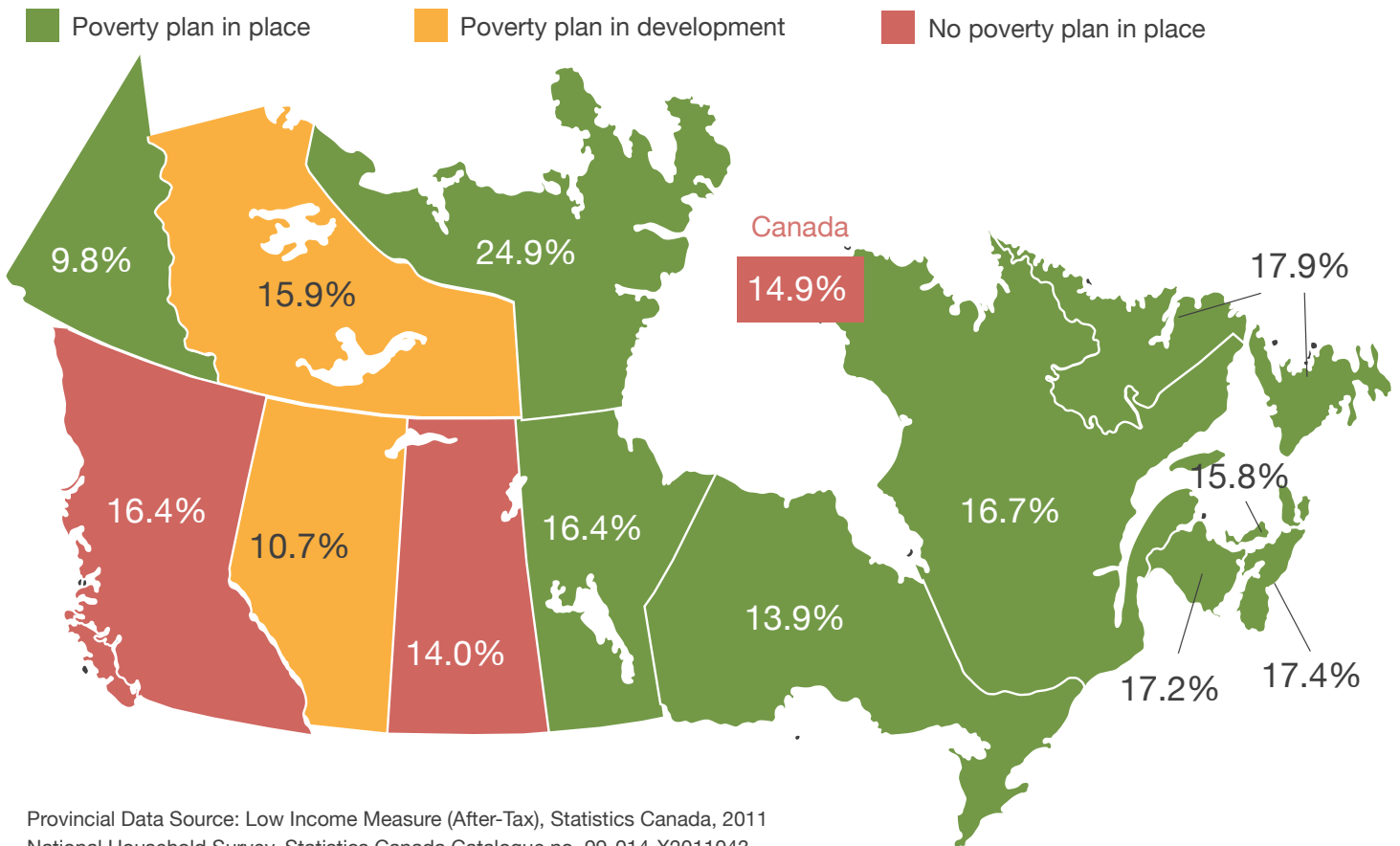
² Census Snapshot of Canada, Families, Statscan, 2006 <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/2007006/article/10380-eng.htm>, 2006

³ What has changed for young people in Canada? Statscan, 2012. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-006-x/2013001/article/11847-eng.htm>

⁴ Budget let-down: Canada's youth need much more, The Broadbent Institute, 2014 <https://www.pressprogress.ca/en/blog/budget-let-down-canadas-youth-need-much-more>

Poverty Rates by Province & Territory

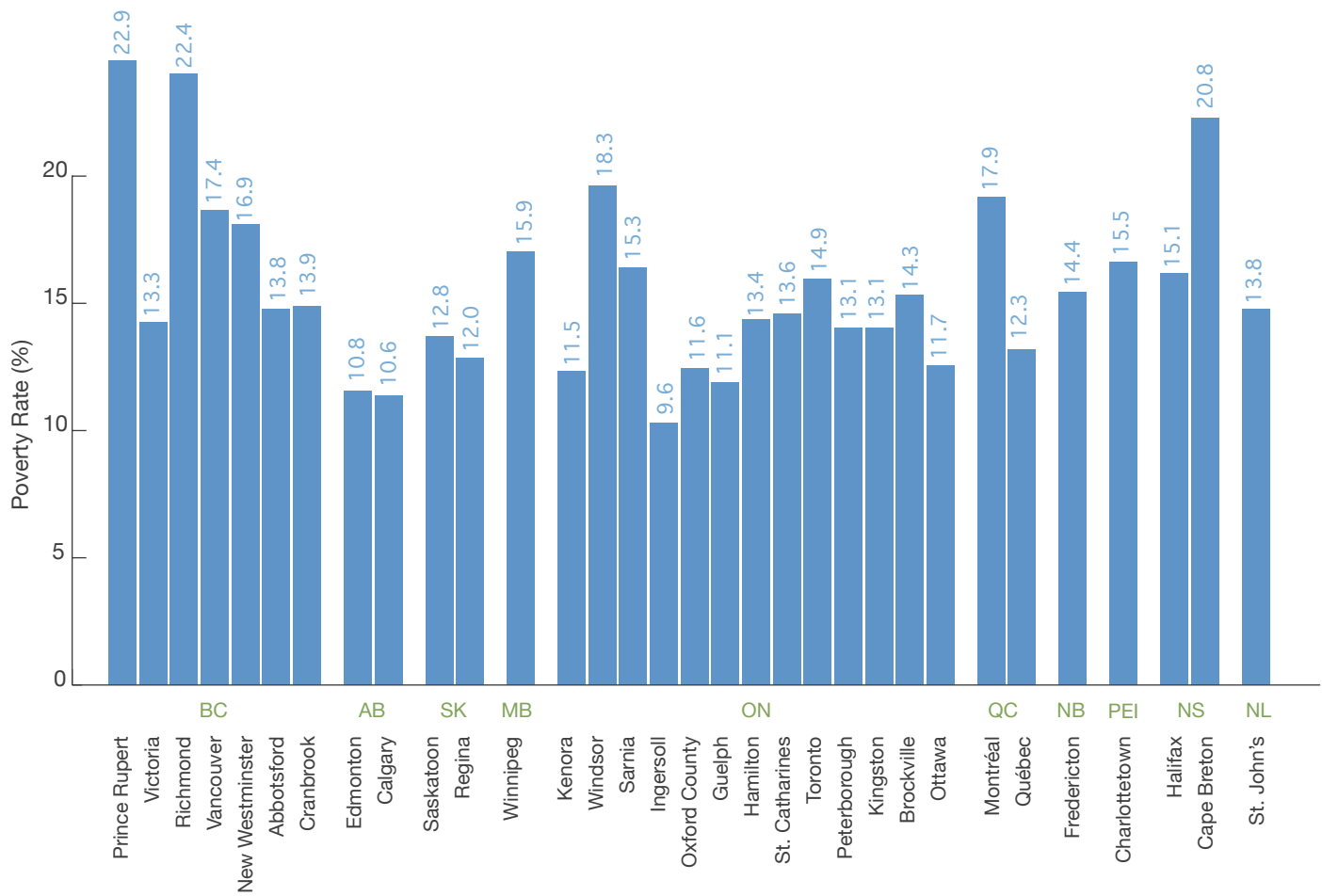
The rate of poverty varies significantly among Canadian provinces and territories. While some are faring better than others, meaningful poverty reduction strategies are having an impact.



Provincial Data Source: Low Income Measure (After-Tax), Statistics Canada, 2011
National Household Survey, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-014-X2011043

Territory Data Source: Low Income Measure (After-Tax) by family type and family type composition, annual;
Statistics Canada, 2010, T1FF, Table 111-0015

Poverty Rates in Various Communities



Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey, Low Income Measure (After-Tax), Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-014-X2011043

Canada is a wealthy country. According to the United Nations, Canada ranks 16th out of 240 countries in terms of GDP per capita.

Surely we can do more to address poverty.

Source: Per Capita Gross Domestic Product, 2012. United Nations Statistics Division, National Accounts Main Aggregates Database. <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/snaama/selbasicFast.asp>

We Need a Plan to End Poverty

Municipal, provincial, and federal governments have a key role to play in creating policies that ensure no one in Canada is poor.

Everyone should have access to an adequate income and the resources necessary for well-being, even when they are not able to secure all they need through paid work. Everyone suffers when some experience marginalization, insecurity, and social exclusion.

Canada has no plan to address poverty, despite multiple calls for its development and implementation.

- **2006 and 2013:** the Human Rights Council of the United Nations calls for Canada to develop a national poverty eradication strategy.
 - **2009:** The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology's Subcommittee on Cities calls for national leadership on poverty, housing, and homelessness.
 - **2010:** The House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities calls for a federal poverty reduction plan.
- When poverty is not dealt with, Canadian governments must spend significantly more in managing the symptoms – estimates suggest that Canada spends between \$72.5 billion and \$86.2 billion managing the effects of poverty.⁵



It's important to have a plan but even more important to make sure it is enacted. A good plan is legislated and has accountability measures built in.

Key areas to address in a poverty elimination plan include:

- income security
- housing
- food security
- employment
- health
- childcare

For more information about the call for a poverty elimination plan, check out the Dignity for All web site at www.dignityforall.ca.

⁵ The Cost of Poverty: An Economic Analysis of Poverty in Ontario, The Ontario Association of Food Banks, 2008. <http://www.oafb.ca/assets/pdfs/CostofPoverty.pdf>

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