

CPRS Consultations: Poverty Backgrounder

WE NEED A COMPREHENSIVE, RIGHTS-BASED NATIONAL STRATEGY.

Canada is one of the world's wealthiest countries, yet [4.9 million people](#) live in poverty. That is 14.4% of us, or 1 in 7 people. The impact of poverty is far-reaching, hitting communities across Canada hard.

Poverty is a violation of human rights and robs people of their dignity. It is a complex reality that exists when people do not have their basic needs met and cannot fully participate in economic, political, social, and cultural life.

There are systemic barriers that exist preventing people from engaging fully in their communities. These include:

- A lack of income supports available to meet basic needs, including inadequate social assistance programs that are highly stigmatizing, and difficult to navigate;
- a lack of safe, affordable housing, reaching a crisis level in some communities;
- a lack of access to health care services, including mental health and addictions supports, dental care, and affordable prescription medications;
- a lack of access to healthy, culturally appropriate food, particularly in remote and northern Indigenous communities, as well as urban and rural “food deserts”;
- a lack of long-term employment at a living wage and adequate training for employment;
- a lack of access to affordable, high quality child care.

Sadly, racial, gender, and other forms of discrimination add to these barriers.

Poverty has a broad impact in Canada, but there are some populations that are highly vulnerable.

- Indigenous people
- Recent immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers
- Children
- Single-parent families
- Single Seniors

For more information, see CPJ's 2016 Poverty Report, [Break the Barriers](#).

