

CITIZENS FOR
PUBLIC JUSTICE



On the Margins: a glimpse of poverty in Canada

Poverty in Canada is persistently leaving people
and communities on the margins. †

4.9 million Canadians, 1 in 7, live in poverty

14.6%



live in
Poverty

Source: 2013 Statistics Canada. Table 111-0015 - Family characteristics, Low Income Measures (LIM), by family type and family type composition, annual. Low Income Measure (After-Tax). Low Income Measure (After-Tax)

† The title is reminiscent of the 2009 Standing Senate Committee Report, "In From The Margins: A Call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness," which called for a national anti-poverty plan.

Poverty Rates: Who is most impacted?

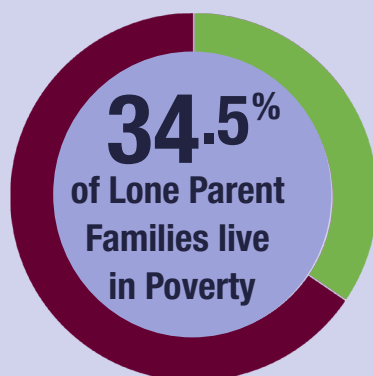


We know that poverty rates only tell us part of the reality of poverty in Canada. The reality also includes isolation and marginalization, as well as social and health impacts.



Children: 19%

- Although regular commitments have been made in Parliament since 1989 to end child poverty, including the 2015 motion, M-534, unanimously approved (save one abstention), child poverty in Canada persists.
- National poverty rates for Indigenous children in Canada are at 40% (Inuit, Metis, and First Nations). For First Nations children, the number is closer to 50%, with numbers as high as 62% and 64% in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.¹
- Since 2008 food bank usage has increased by 25%; children and youth represent 30% of users.²



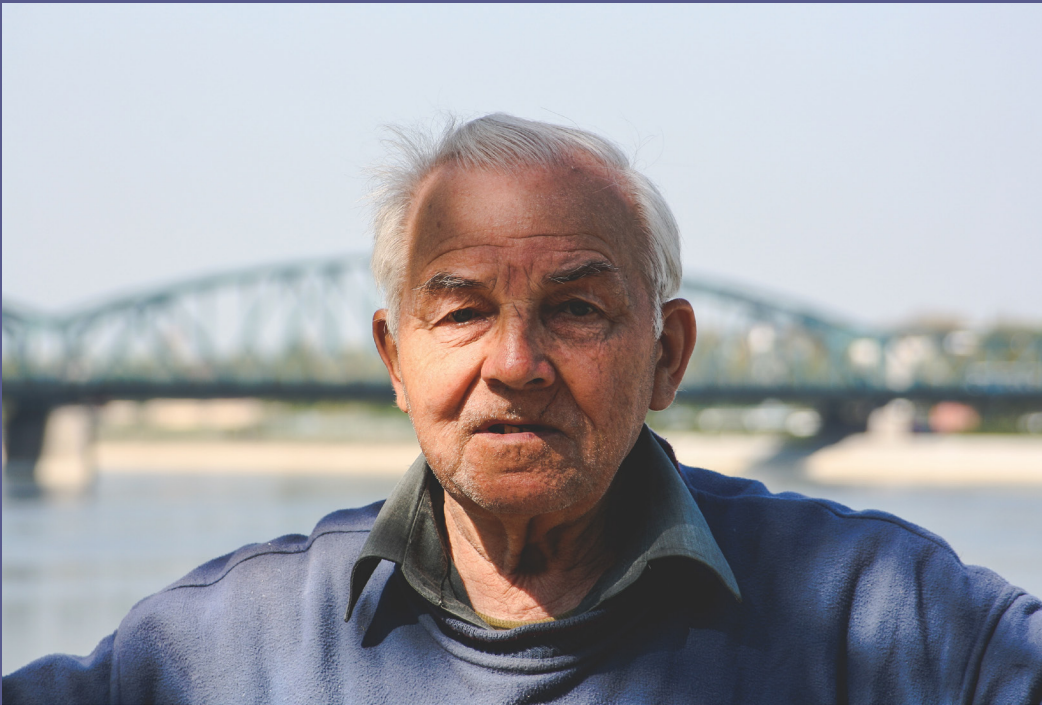
Single Parent Families: 34.5%

- In 2012, one third of female-led single parent families were food insecure.³
- Regulated and high quality child care can address social isolation, as well as allowing more women access to jobs.⁴
- Increase to the Canada Child Tax Credit and the National Child Benefit would have a direct impact in lowering poverty rates for single parent-led families and for children.⁵

Statistics Canada. Table 111-0015 - Family characteristics, Low Income Measures (LIM), by family type and family type composition, annual Low Income Measure (After-Tax)

Poverty Rates: Who is most impacted?

- continued

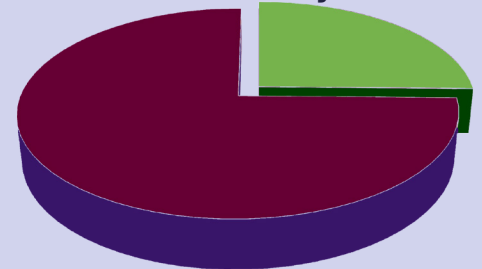


We are a less vibrant, less productive, and less compassionate society when we allow poverty to persist.

Indigenous people: 25.3%

- The legacy of colonialism and exploitation, including forced relocation and residential schools, has done damage that has been deep and intergenerational.
- The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) states that poverty among the Indigenous peoples of Canada is at unacceptable levels.⁶
- Along with fully supporting the recommendations of the TRC final report, there is a need for federal commitment to supporting Indigenous-led improvements in education, food security, housing for Inuit, Metis, and First Nations.

25.3%
of Indigenous People
live in Poverty



Newcomers - refugees, immigrants: 34.2%

- Newcomers to Canada, whether immigrants, refugees, or refugee claimants, face challenges, including precarious employment and lower wages that do not meet the cost of living.
- If fully implemented, cuts to the Interim Federal Health program in the federal government's 2012 omnibus budget bill would have a serious impact on the health of many refugees and refugee claimants, as well as overall health costs.⁷
- Guaranteed health coverage, along with government supported skills training, improved income security programs, and recognition of international credentials would make a difference in the lives of newcomers.

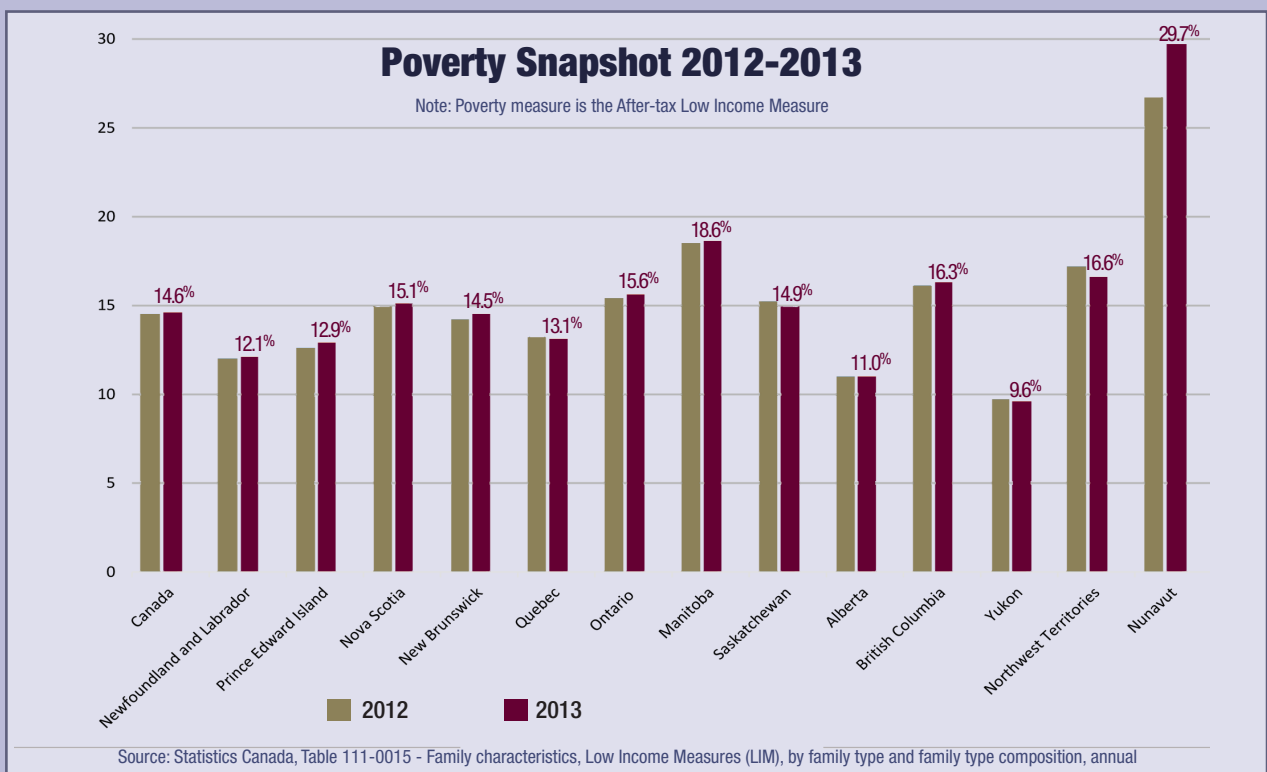
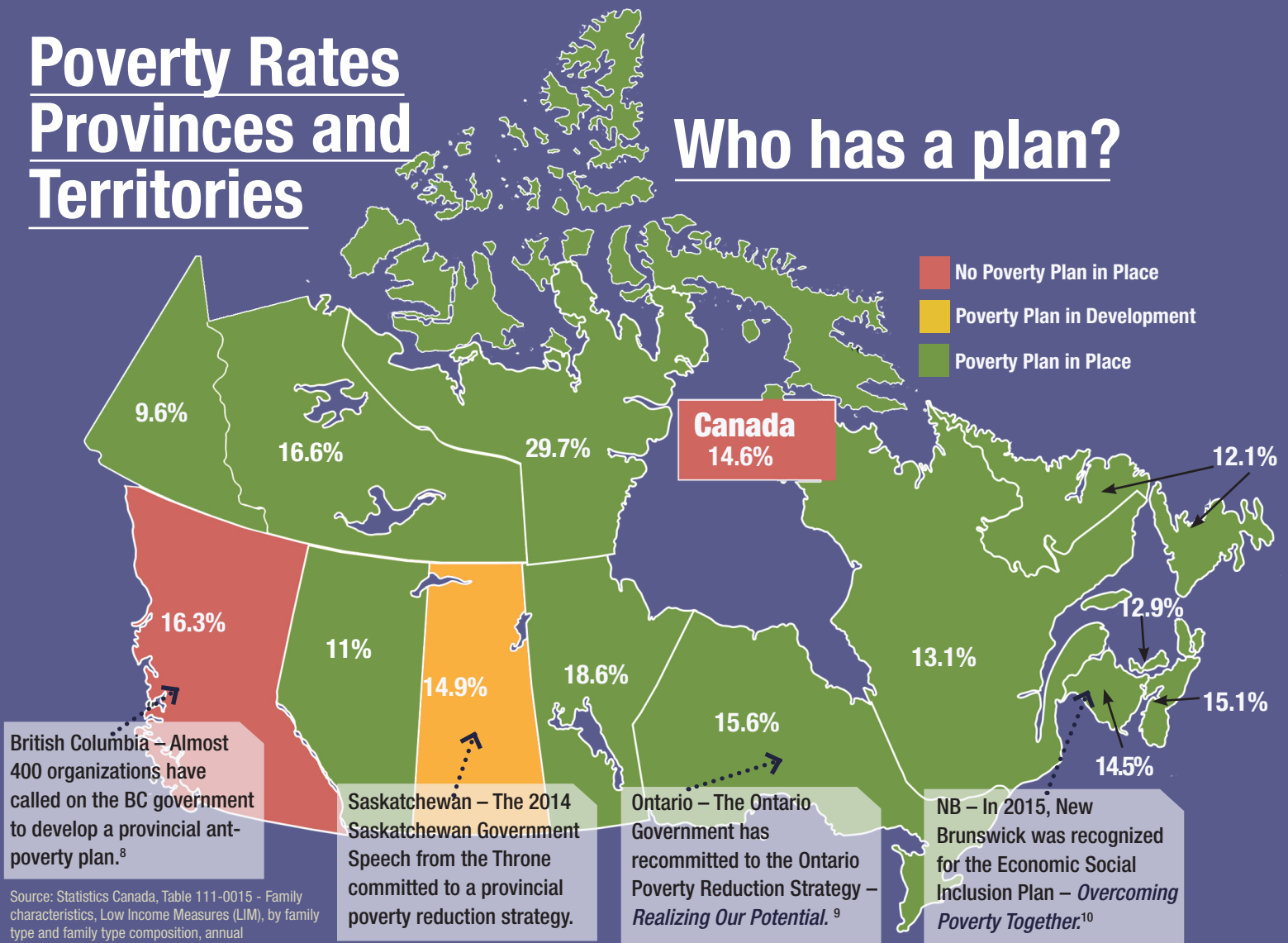
34.2%
of Newcomers
live in Poverty



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

Poverty Rates Provinces and Territories

Who has a plan?



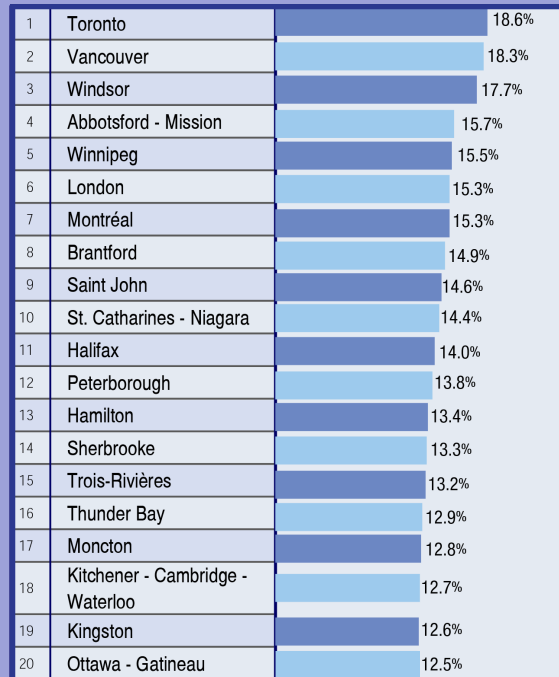
Ranking of poverty rates in communities across Canada

Many communities across Canada have continued their hard work to develop poverty reduction/poverty elimination strategies, task forces, and councils.¹¹

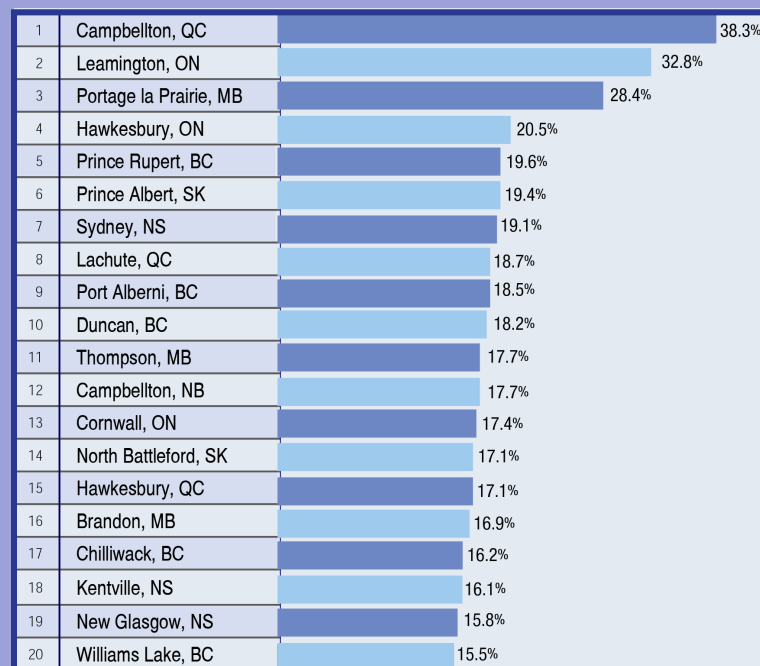
Edmonton – Mayor Iveson has commissioned a task force with a goal to end poverty in Edmonton in a generation.¹²

Toronto City Council released *TO Prosperity: Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy* in 2015 with a 20-year anti-poverty plan.¹⁴

20 Highest Poverty Rates: Big Cities



20 Highest Poverty Rates: Smaller Communities



Federal Parties on Poverty Elimination

While the four main federal parties have not outlined a comprehensive national anti-poverty plan in their election platforms, they have indicated support for policies that could be part of a plan to eliminate poverty.

Conservative Party:

- Commits to increases to the Guaranteed Income Supplement for seniors
- Supports investments in skills training for First Nations
- Has committed to investing new money in the Foreign Credential Recognition Loan program

New Democratic Party:

- Supports a \$15/day national child care program
- Supports an Act to Eliminate Poverty and developing a National Council on Poverty Elimination
- Supports a national housing strategy
- Has committed to addressing food security in the North

Liberal Party:

- Supports a new Canada Child Benefit that combines the Canada Child Tax Benefit and the National Child Benefit Supplement
- Supports investments in affordable housing
- Commits to investing in First Nations education

Green Party:

- Supports a Guaranteed Livable Income
- Supports a national housing strategy
- Supports a National Pharmacare Plan ¹³

We need a National Anti-Poverty Plan

In February, 2015, **Dignity for All** released its model National Anti-Poverty Plan for Canada. While municipalities, provinces and territories have been moving forward with poverty reduction and poverty elimination strategies, **we need federal action.**

It is imperative that the federal government develop a comprehensive **National Anti-Poverty Plan**, with measurable goals and timelines, and that builds on the Dignity for All policy recommendations, including:

Income security

- Increase to the National Child Benefit/Canada Child Tax Benefit
- Increase to Old Age Security (OAS) and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)
- Support for the Working Income Tax Benefit

Health

- Support for a National Pharmacare program
- Implement a National Mental Health Strategy
- Implement a Health Impact Assessment recognizing the social determinants of health

Housing and Homelessness

- Support for a National Strategy on Housing and Homelessness
- Support for a comprehensive Aboriginal Housing Strategy
- Dedicated funding and measurable goals

Food Security

- Develop, with all government levels and Indigenous governments, a National Right to Food Policy
- Increase federal investments to address food insecurity for Indigenous communities

Early Childhood Education and Care

- Develop, with provinces, territories, and Indigenous governments, high quality, universal early childhood education and care program
- Improve maternal/paternal parental leave benefits

Jobs

- Develop a National Jobs Creation and Training Strategy
- Set national wage standards
- Renew the Aboriginal Skills Employment and Training Strategy

October 2015

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EndNotes

¹ David Macdonald and Daniel Wilson. June 2013. "Poverty or Prosperity: Indigenous Children in Canada." Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives/Save the Children report. Data is based on the 2006 census. Updated data will be available in winter 2016.

² Hunger Count 2014. <http://www.foodbankscanada.ca/HungerCount>

³ Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. 2015. Delivering the Good: Alternative Federal Budget 2015, p. 80. https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2015/03/AFB2015_MainDocument.pdf

⁴ Ibid. p. 41.

⁵ Dignity for All: A National Anti-Poverty Plan for Canada; Campaign 2000 (<http://www.campaign2000.ca/anniversaryreport/CanadaRC2014EN.pdf>)

⁶ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, p. 194.

⁷ This legislation was ruled as "unconstitutional" in a Federal Court ruling, but is being appealed by the federal government. Steve Barnes. 2013. The Real Costs of Cutting the Interim Federal Health Program. The Wellesley Institute.

⁸ BC Poverty Reduction Coalition; <http://bcpovertyreduction.ca/>

⁹ Realizing Our Potential: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy (2014-2019); <http://www.ontario.ca/page/realizing-our-potential-ontarios-poverty-reduction-strategy-2014-2019-all>

¹⁰ Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan, 2014-2019; <http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/esic/pdf/NBEconomicSocialInclusionPlan2014-2019.pdf>

¹¹ Tamarack Vibrant Canada; <http://vibrantcanada.ca/>

¹² Tamarack Vibrant Canada; <http://vibrantcanada.ca/blogs/tamarack/edmonton-will-end-poverty-generation>

¹³ Canadian Association of Community Health Care Centres; <http://www.cachc.ca/federalelection/>

¹⁴ http://www1.toronto.ca/City%20of%20Toronto/Social%20Development,%20Finance%20&%20Administration/Strategies/Poverty%20Reduction%20Strategy/PDF/interim_poverty_reduction_strategy_report.pdf
