

# Poverty Persists among Unattached Working-Age Adults

Unattached working-age adults continue to be forgotten by society and policy makers. While programs have reduced poverty among children and seniors, income supports for working-age individuals have been cut back.

Notions of “undeserving poor” persist, despite the fact that many unattached working-age adults are unable to work and that there is a shortage of good jobs.

household types (non-elderly families, elderly families, and unattached individuals over 65) but has worsened for single working-age adults.

**The number of single, unattached working-age adults living in poverty has doubled since 1981, going from 538,000 people to 1,195,000 in 2011.** The number of poor individuals in other family types, on the other hand, has decreased: unattached individuals 65 and over by 44.3 per cent, non-elderly families by 15.5 per cent, and elderly families by 53.3 per cent.

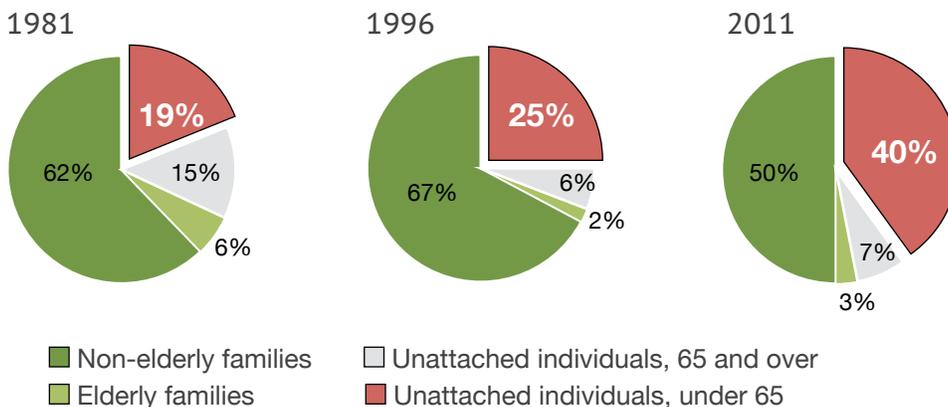
**?** Why have we ignored the plight of unattached working-age adults? Are some people more/less worthy of dignity and support?

The poverty rate for single working-age adults has stagnated since the 2008–09 recession; between 2010 and 2011 it increased by 3.2 per cent. Forty-seven thousand more working-age singles were poor in 2011 than in 2010.

This is part of a much longer trend: compared to 30 years ago, poverty has fallen for all other main

**The poverty gap for unattached working-age individuals is much higher than average; they live on incomes 44 per cent below the poverty line.**

## Percentage distribution of poor households, 1981–2011



Single working-age adults comprised 40.4 per cent of the poor population in 2011 compared to 19.0 per cent 30 years ago.

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 202-0804 Persons in low income, by economic family type, annual