

Fact Sheet #2

Poverty by Province

The rate of poverty varies significantly by province in Canada, reflecting differing economic realities across the country. Over the past decade, there has been significant progress in reducing the incidence and depth of poverty, notably in Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan and Quebec. However, when the recession hit in 2008, progress ground to a halt. Several provinces experienced a sharp increase in poverty in 2009 and 2010 and have yet to fully recover.⁵

Some provinces faring better than others

- In 2010, Prince Edward Island had the lowest rate of poverty among the provinces at 3.9%, followed by New Brunswick (5.5%), Saskatchewan (6.4%) and Newfoundland and Labrador (6.5%).
- The rate of poverty, by contrast, was higher than the Canadian average (9.0%) in British Columbia (11.5%), Quebec (10.0%) and Manitoba (9.2%).⁶

Poverty trending down in Newfoundland, PEI and Saskatchewan; no progress in BC

- Looking at change over the past three decades, we see a significant reduction in poverty in Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, and Saskatchewan. Quebec has also experienced a notable reduction in its rate and depth of poverty since late 1990s.
- British Columbia has seen very little improvement in its poverty situation over the past 30 years.

Recession drove up poverty rates in western and central Canada

- Alberta experienced the largest increase in poverty between 2007 and 2009 from 6.1% to 7.7%. Poverty rates were still above pre-recession levels in both Alberta and British Columbia in 2010 (at 6.8% and 11.5% respectively).

- Ontario experienced the second highest increase in poverty between 2007 and 2009, behind Alberta, while the poverty rate in Quebec increased between 2007 and 2008 and again between 2009 and 2010.
- The Atlantic provinces and Saskatchewan were sheltered from the worst of the economic downturn; poverty in these provinces declined between 2007 and 2010.

Meaningful poverty reduction strategies have an impact

- Strong economic growth in western Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador has been decisive in lowering the incidence and depth of poverty in these provinces.
- The changing demographic composition – notably population aging – of these provinces is also significant as older families tend to have lower rates of poverty than younger families.
- Provinces such as Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador introduced anti-poverty strategies in the 2000s which have helped to reduce rates of poverty, particularly among families with children.

Poverty Trends by Province

Poverty Rates and Total Numbers in Poverty, by Province, 2007-2010									
Province	Household Type	Rate (%)				Number (x 1,000)			
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2007	2008	2009	2010
NF	Families (2 or more)	3.5	4.5	4.6	4.4	16	20	20	19
	Unattached Individuals	32.3	28.3	25.9	21.7	19	17	16	13
	Total Persons	6.8	7.3	7.1	6.5	34	36	36	33
PEI	Families	2.8	3.1	3.1	1.5	3	4	4	2
	Unattached Individuals	20.0	18.6	15.9	18.4	4	3	3	4
	Total Persons	5.1	5.2	4.9	3.9	7	7	7	5
NS	Families	5.1	4.8	4.6	4.7	39	36	36	36
	Unattached Individuals	24.9	26.2	25.1	23.2	36	38	37	35
	Total Persons	8.2	8.2	8.0	7.7	75	75	73	71
NB	Families	5.8	3.8	4.0	3.0	36	23	25	19
	Unattached Individuals	23.4	29.8	23.9	20.2	24	31	25	22
	Total Persons	8.3	7.5	6.9	5.5	60	55	50	40
QC	Families	6.2	6.7	4.8	6.0	389	424	308	388
	Unattached Individuals	31.2	31.5	29.1	29.6	395	404	378	391
	Total Persons	10.4	10.9	8.9	10.0	784	828	686	778
ON	Families	6.1	6.5	7.3	6.0	670	719	824	685
	Unattached Individuals	27.3	28.4	28.8	27.6	441	468	482	468
	Total Persons	8.8	9.3	10.1	8.8	1,111	1,187	1,306	1,153
MB	Families	7.2	5.3	5.7	6.0	68	51	56	60
	Unattached Individuals	27.4	26.1	26.4	27.2	46	44	45	47
	Total Persons	10.2	8.5	8.8	9.2	114	96	101	107
SK	Families	5.5	4.9	5.1	4.3	43	39	41	35
	Unattached Individuals	21.5	20.1	17.1	17.5	32	30	27	28
	Total Persons	8.0	7.3	7.1	6.4	75	69	68	63
AB	Families	4.0	4.2	5.7	4.8	116	128	175	150
	Unattached Individuals	18.6	14.4	19.3	17.7	95	76	104	97
	Total Persons	6.1	5.7	7.7	6.8	212	203	279	247
BC	Families	7.3	7.8	9.0	7.6	257	280	328	281
	Unattached Individuals	30.6	28.4	27.4	31.6	209	199	195	229
	Total Persons	11.0	11.1	12.0	11.5	466	479	523	510

Source: Statistics Canada (2012), Income in Canada, 2011. CANSIM Table 202-0804 - Persons in low income families, annual. Note: After-tax Low Income Cut-off.