



Just the Facts

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Nearly five million people in Canada – that's one out of every seven individuals – currently live in poverty. Poverty is a widespread issue across the country and the world, but vulnerable groups such as people living with disabilities, single parents, elderly individuals, youth, and racialized communities are more susceptible. The effects of poverty can be expressed in different aspects of a person's life, including food security, health, and housing. The following statistics show the different manifestations of poverty in Canada.

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Basic statistics about poverty in Canada

The following are statistics about the current reality of poverty in Canada.

- [1 in 7 \(or 4.9 million\)](#) people in Canada live in poverty.
- In Edmonton, [1 in 8](#) individuals are currently living in poverty.
- Poverty [costs](#) Canada billions of dollar annually.
- Precarious employment has increased by nearly [50%](#) over the past two decades.
- Between 1980 and 2005, the average earnings among the least wealthy Canadians fell by [20%](#).
- Over the past 25 years, Canada's population has increased by 30% and yet annual national investment in housing has decreased by [46%](#).

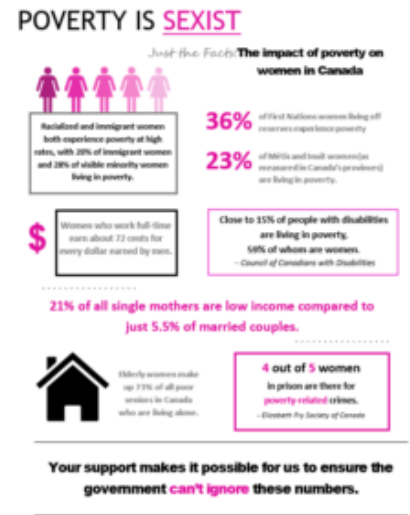
Poverty & Demographics

Marginalized Communities

Some members of society are particularly susceptible to the effects of poverty. The following statistics suggest groups who are particularly likely to experience poverty.

- People living with disabilities (both mental and physical) are [twice](#) as likely to live below the poverty line.
- Nearly [15%](#) of people with disabilities live in poverty, 59% of which are women.
- Estimates place the number of homeless individuals living with a disability or mental illness as high as [45%](#) of the overall homeless population.
- Children with disabilities are [twice](#) as likely to live in households relying on social assistance
- [21%](#) of single mothers in Canada raise their children while living in poverty ([7%](#) of single fathers raise their children in poverty).
- Women parenting on their own enter shelters at [twice](#) the rate of two-parent families.

- Indigenous Peoples (including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples) are **overrepresented** among the homeless population in virtually all urban centres in Canada.
- **28%-34%** of shelter users are Indigenous.
- **1 in 5 racialized** families live in poverty in Canada, as opposed to 1 in 20 non-racialized families.
- Racialized women living in poverty were almost **twice** as likely to work in manufacturing jobs than other women living in poverty.
- Overall, racialized women earn **32%** less at work.
- Nearly **15%** of elderly single individuals live in poverty.
- Nearly 2 million seniors receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement, and live on about **\$17,000** per year. However, the most basic standard of living in Canada is calculated at \$18,000 per year for a single person



Child Poverty

Children and youth under 18 are particularly vulnerable to conditions of poverty. The following statistics outline risk factors and the realities of youth poverty in Canada.

- In Canada, **1.3 million** children live in conditions of poverty (that's 1 in 5).
- **1 in 2** Status First Nations children lives in poverty.
- **8%** of children in British Columbia live in poverty with children under the age of 6 representing an even higher poverty rate of 20.1% (both are higher than the national average of 18.5%)
- **1 in 5** Edmontonian children (under the age of 18) live in poverty, which increases to 1 in 3 children in single-parent families.
- **40%** of Indigenous children in Canada live in poverty, and 60% of Indigenous children on reserves live in poverty.
- More than **one-third** of food bank users across Canada were children in 2016.
- About **1 in 7** of those using shelters in Canada are children.

The Impact of Poverty

Food Insecurity

One aspect of poverty is not having enough food or having limited to access to nutritious and healthful food. The following statistics outline the reality of hunger in Canada.

- Residents in Nunavut spend **twice** as much on food as the rest of the country on average (\$14,800 v. \$7,300 annually).
- **4 million** people in Canada experience food insecurity.
- **1 in 8** Canadian households struggle to put food on the table.
- In 2014, the majority of food insecure households – **62.2%** – were reliant on wages or salary from employment.
- **8 out of 10** provinces saw an increase in food bank usage in 2016.
- **62%** of children living in the North are food insecure.
- **2 out of every 5** Northern households are food insecure.
- Food bank usage across Canada is **3%** higher than 2015 and 28% higher than it was in 2008.
- In Nunavut, **7 of 10** Inuit preschoolers live in food insecure households.
- Food bank usage has **increased in all provinces** since 2008, apart from Newfoundland and Labrador.
- **2%** of food bank users are Indigenous.



Health

The effects of poverty are wide-ranging and can be difficult to see from the outside. The following statistics show the risks and effects poverty has on an individual's physical and mental health.

- **1 in 10** Canadians cannot afford to fill their medical prescriptions. Canada is the only industrialized country with a universal healthcare system but without a national pharmacare policy.
- A McMaster University study found a **21-year difference** in life expectancy between the poorest and wealthiest residents of Hamilton, Ontario.
- Researchers have found that men in the wealthiest 20% of neighbourhoods in Canada live on average **more than four years longer** than men in the poorest 20% of neighbourhoods.
- Estimates place the cost of socio-economic disparities in the health system to be **20%** of all healthcare spending.
- It has been estimated that \$1 invested in the early years of a child's life can **save** up to \$9 in future spending in the healthcare system.
- Food insecure households were 80% **more likely** to report having diabetes, 60% more likely to report high blood pressure, and 70% more likely to report food allergies.

Housing

Homelessness is the most obvious expression of poverty's effect on housing, but it's not the only one. The following facts delve into housing instability and homelessness in Canada.

- **3 million** Canadian households are precariously housed (living in unaffordable, below standards, and/or overcrowded housing conditions).
- An estimated 235,000 people in Canada **experienced** homelessness in 2016, with roughly 35,000 people being homeless on any given night.
- Almost **1 in every 5** households experience serious housing affordability issues (spending over 50% of their low income on rent) which puts them at risk of homelessness.
- Three-quarters of Yukon's population live in **Whitehorse** where the average price of housing increased 80% over six years.
- Estimates place the number of homeless individuals living with a disability or mental illness as high as **45%** of the overall homeless population.
- In Toronto, there were **5,219 people** who were homeless in 2013 (the latest available data). Roughly half of the homeless population were on wait lists for affordable housing during the same period.
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation predicts that its major national housing program funding will fall from **\$3.04 billion (2010) to \$1.68 billion by 2017** — a \$1.36 billion difference.
- According to new research, **spending \$10 on housing** and support for high-need chronically homeless individuals resulted in almost \$22 of savings related to health care, social supports, housing, and the justice system.
- Youth aged 16-24 make up about **20%** of the homeless population
- The number of older adults and seniors experiencing homeless is rising, making up a combined **4%** of shelters users in 2016



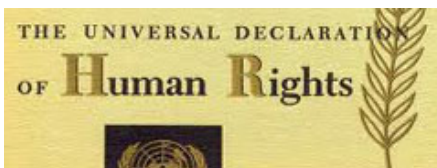
International Rankings

Canada is a wealthy country, but people living in Canada still experience poverty. How does Canada compare to other countries around the world?

- UNICEF rated Canada **17th out of 29 wealthy countries** due to the number of children living in poverty in Canada and 26th out of 35 wealthy countries for overall child inequality.

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