

Poverty Facts 2003

Poverty snapshot

- Number of people living in poverty in Canada: **4.9 million**
- Total population of British Columbia: **4.2 million***
- Poverty rate in 2003: **15.9%**; in 1996: **20.6%**; in 1989: **14%**
- Family type with highest poverty rate: **Single-parent mothers** (48.9%)
- Family type with lowest poverty rate: **Senior couples** (5.2%)
- Number of children living in poverty: **1.2 million or 17.6%**
- Amount needed to bring all low-income Canadians up to the poverty line: **\$21.6 billion**
- Canada's gross domestic product in 2003: **\$1.2 trillion**

Depth of poverty

- Families farthest below the poverty line: **Two-parent families** (\$9,900 below)
- Families closest to the poverty line: **Single senior women** (\$3,300 below)
- Working-age single people surviving on incomes of less than half the poverty line: In 2003: **552,000**; in 1989: **163,000**

Women

Years since 1980 when women's poverty rates were lower than men's: **0**

Working for pay, but still poor

- Families that received more than half of family income from working:
 - **47%** of poor families
 - **57%** of poor singles
- Major income earner worked full-time, all year:
 - **26%** of poor families
 - **18%** of poor singles
- Percentage of food bank clients whose primary source of income is employment: **12.9%****

Social assistance

Percentage of poor families relying primarily on welfare:

- Two-parent families: **8%**
- Working-age couples without children: **18%**
- Working-age single people: **24%**
- Single-parent mothers: **28%**

Income inequality

- Share of total after-tax income:
 - By the richest 20 percent of family units: **43.7%**
 - By the poorest 20 percent: **5.0%**
- Increase in after-tax incomes since 1980:
 - By the richest 20 percent of family units: **+14.4%**
 - By the poorest 20 percent: **+4.3%**

* Population as of July 1, 2003. Statistics Canada (2006). Population by year, by province and territory.

** The Canadian Association of Food Banks, HungerCount 2003