

Poverty Update October, 2014

Notes on recent data, dimensions of poverty, links to organizations and resources, and informative reports.

Recent Data:

After a six-year decline (2004 to 2010), Toronto's poverty rates are on the rise. In 2012, 29% of children in Toronto (17 and under) lived in poverty – about 146,000. (Vital Signs Report)

Almost 1 in 4 people in Toronto live in poverty (2.8 million)

In Toronto 21% of families live in poverty. The national average is 12%

Toronto has the highest rate of poverty in Canada, tied with Saint John, N.B.

More children in Canada lived in poverty in 2011 than in 1989, when the House of Commons resolved to end poverty in Canada by 2000.

In 2010 the poverty levels were: single person - \$19,460; household with two members - \$27,521; household with four members - \$38,920

(above data from APT – Alliance for A Poverty-Free Toronto)

The Province of Ontario's Poverty Reduction Plan

Carol Goar, in the Toronto Star, September 10, 2014, stated that: “(the latest plan) consists of *recycled promises, long-term goals, soothing language and self-congratulations*, despite the fact that she (Deputy Premier Deb Matthews) *fell far short of her last five year target. Anti-poverty advocates have learned to welcome crumbs from the Ontario Liberals. They politely overlooked the fact that the minister did not raise welfare rates, did not provide a nutrition allowance, did not address the shortage of child care spaces and did not offer rent supplements. The social assistance system remained rigid and judgemental.*“ (Elsewhere in the article Carol Goar does acknowledge that the child benefit had gone up as promised, the finance minister had increased social assistance rates by one percent (inflation was at 2.5%), and child poverty did go down by 9.2%). (*italics were not in the original*)

Good Sources for Information about Poverty in general:

Poverty Free Ontario – www.povertyfreeontario.ca

Social Planning Toronto – www.socialplanningtoronto.org (see their Building Toronto report, and Election Resources, as well as a link to APT – Alliance for a Poverty-Free Toronto)

www.canadiansocialresearch.net

www.25in5.ca

www.campaign2000.ca

Good Sources for Social Justice in General:

Justice Notes: <http://tinyurl.com/Justice-Note>, or <http://growingjustice.wordpress.com>

Anglican Diocese of Toronto, Social Justice and Advocacy

www.toronto.anglican.ca/parish-life/social-justice

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives www.policyalternatives.ca

Dimensions of Poverty: Child Care; Disability; Employment; Food/Hunger; Housing/Homelessness; Income Inequality; Social Assistance

Child Care

The plan announced by the federal NDP party would, by 2018/2019, fund 370,000 \$15 per day spaces, at a cost of \$1.87 billion. The annual cost for one million spaces by 2023 would be more than five billion dollars, to be shared in partnership with the provinces, who would pay 40% of the cost.

Disability

For 23% of food bank users, having a disability or a serious illness is the top reason for visiting a food bank for the first time. (www.dailybread.ca)

The number of people receiving the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) is steadily increasing, from 17% in 2005 to 28% in 2014. (www.dailybread.ca)

Good source of information: O.D.S.P. Action Coalition www.odspaction.ca

Employment

The unemployment rate in Toronto hovers around 10% - much higher for youth

In 2014 the average wage in Canada was \$24.45. The minimum wage in Ontario is \$11.00

The Campaign to Raise the Minimum wage is advocating for an immediate raise to \$14.00 (<http://raisetheminimumwage.ca>)

The federal NDP party has promised to raise the federal minimum wage to \$15.00

The Toronto Star reported on October 20, 2014, that a report produced by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives finds that increasing the minimum wage does not result in higher rates of unemployment.

Food/Hunger

In 2014, 883,900 people in the City of Toronto used food banks; 378,700 in the city core (down 12%), and 505,200 in the Inner Suburbs (up 38%)

For 36% of food bank clients hunger means not eating for an entire day due to lack of money. In the general Canadian population it's 1%

Source: Daily Bread Food Bank. www.dailybread.ca

Housing/Homelessness

9 of 10 families in high-rise apartments in low-income buildings are inadequately housed and at some risk of homelessness.

77,109 households were on the waiting list for affordable housing in 2013. In the same year, 3,698 households received housing.

Toronto's Vital Signs 2014 Report, the Toronto Foundation <http://ckc.torontofoundation.ca>
Wellesley Institute Report: *Precarious Housing in Canada*, Summer 2010. www.wellesleyinstitute.com

Income Inequality

Toronto has the second biggest income gap between the top 1% and the rest after Calgary.

The average income of the top 1% has risen over 80% since the 1980s.

In 2010 the top 1% in the GTA had 18% of all income. Their median income was \$314,500.

Income is now as concentrated in the top 1% as during the "Roaring Twenties".

Above info is from the Vital Signs report

Canada now has 320,000 millionaires, up 7.2% over last year (Toronto Star)

Toronto Star, September 12, 2014: Rick Smith, Executive Director of the Broadbent Institute, article titled "As inequality grows in Canada, so does the will to fight it" www.broadbentinstitute.ca

The top 10% of Canadians controlled 48% of all wealth in Canada in 2012

The bottom 50% controlled 6%; the bottom 30% controlled 1%.

This is characterized by the Broadbent Institute as "deep persistent inequality".

Almost half of Toronto workers are in precarious employment. (source?)

www.growinggap.ca – website operated by the CCPA, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
(CEO pay in Canada is 171 times that of the average Canadian worker)

By 1:11 p.m. on January 2, Canada's top 100 CEOs already had earned \$46,634, which is the average income for a Canadian working full-time.

Reports available:

The Road to Better Public Services

The Campaign for a Living Wage

Outrageous Future

Income Splitting in Canada

The Broadbent Institute www.broadbentinstitute.ca

Reports available from its Equality Project:

Have and Have-Nots: Deep and Persistent Wealth Inequality in Canada, September, 2014

Towards a More Equal Canada, February, 2013

It's Time to Tackle Income Inequality

Social Assistance

Current social assistance rates: (from Income Security Advocacy Centre www.incomesecurity.org)

	Monthly	Annual	Poverty Level	% Below Poverty
Single person	\$626	\$7,512	\$19,460	61%
Household with two members	\$1041	\$12,492	\$27,521	55%
Households with four members	\$1362	\$16,344	\$38,921	58%

Pertinent Reports

The Burden of Poverty: A Snapshot of Poverty Across Canada., Citizens for Public Justice, October, 2014 .
www.cpj.ca

Building Toronto, Creating Community: The City of Toronto's Investment in Non-Profit Community Services, October, 2014. www.socialplanningtoronto.org

The "Welfarization" of Disability Incomes in Ontario, John Stapleton, Metcalf Foundation, 2013
www.metcalffoundation.com

The "Working Poor" in the Toronto Region: Who They Are, Where They Live, and How Trends Are Changing, John Stapleton, Brian Murphy, Yue Xing, Metcalf Foundation, 2012.
www.metcalffoundation.com

Precarious Housing in Canada, Wellesley Institute, 2012. www.wellesleyinstitute.com

Profiting From the Precarious: How Recruitment Practices Exploit Migrant Workers, Fay Faraday, Metcalf Foundation, 2014. www.metcalffoundation.com

Why Don't We Want the Poor to Own Anything? Our Relentless Social Policy Journey Toward Destitution for the 900,000 Poorest People in Ontario, John Stapleton, Metcalf Foundation, 2009.

Who's Hungry Report – 2014 Profile of Hunger in the GTA, Daily Bread Food Bank, September 25, 2014.
www.dailybread.ca

New Data Shows Epidemic Poverty Levels in Toronto, August 27, 2014, Alliance for a Poverty Free Ontario.