

Inequalities in Working Poor Canadians



The working poor are Canadians who struggle to make ends meet.

7.6%* of Canadians between 18 and 64 years old are working poor.**

The working poor are more likely to have:



less stable jobs



unpredictable work hours



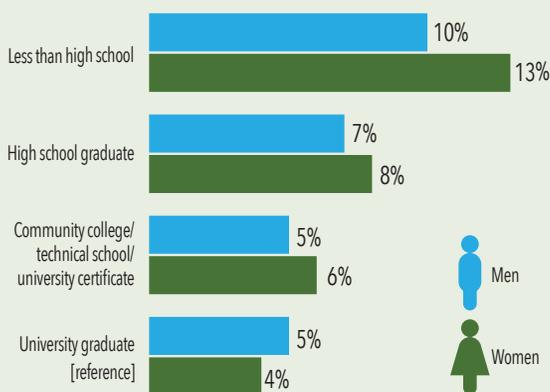
fewer benefits (e.g., drug and dental plans, disability insurance)



greater health problems



Lower levels of education are associated with a higher proportion of working poor, particularly among women.



The proportion of working poor is:

2.0x HIGHER

among those who are recent immigrants than among non-immigrants

The working poor proportion as compared to White Canadians is:

2.2x HIGHER

among Black Canadians

1.5x HIGHER

among Arab/South Asian/West Asian Canadians

1.5x HIGHER

among East Asian/Southeast Asian Canadians

First Nations people, both on reserve and off reserve, have

2.1x HIGHER

proportion of working poor than non-Indigenous people

Inequities experienced by First Nations, Inuit and Métis populations are a direct result of colonial policies and practices that included massive forced relocation, loss of lands, creation of the reserve system, banning of Indigenous languages and cultural practices, and creation of the residential school system. Unaddressed intergenerational trauma adds to the ongoing challenges faced by Indigenous peoples.

Reducing inequalities among the working poor requires providing access to education, safe working conditions, job security, a social safety net including pensions and benefits, and addressing discrimination.¹

* Source: National Household Survey (2011)

** Working poor in Canada are defined as individuals between 18 and 64 years who live independently, are not students, and earn at least \$3 000 a year with an after-tax family income below the low-income threshold.

¹ Block S, Galabuzi GE. Canada's colour coded labour market: The gap for racialized workers [Internet]. Ottawa (ON): Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives; 2011 [updated 2011; cited 2018 Oct 9]. 20 p. Available from: http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Colour_Coded_Labour_MarketFINAL.pdf

For more data on health inequalities in Canada, visit: www.health-infobase.canada.ca/health-inequalities

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