

MEDIA RELEASE



Poverty Free Saskatchewan
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*PFS is a network of individuals
and organizations working
toward poverty elimination.*

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FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL LEADERSHIP NEEDED TO ADDRESS POVERTY

REGINA, SK: Positive collaboration between federal and provincial leaders is essential to addressing poverty in Saskatchewan and across Canada, according to Poverty Free Saskatchewan (PFS). Recent poverty initiatives in Saskatchewan and Canada, the upcoming federal election and the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on October 17th point to the need for an integrated and comprehensive plan to eliminate poverty.

The recent Advisory Group on Poverty Reduction (AGPR) report contained a series of recommendations for the Saskatchewan government to consider. While there are gaps in the report, it is a positive step provided the government finally takes effective action to actually produce an anti-poverty plan.

PFS advocates for anti-poverty legislation, which is necessary to bring together public goals and ensure poverty elimination efforts have some teeth. Legislation has already been used effectively in Canada, such as in Quebec and Newfoundland.

Dignity for All stresses the federal government's important role regarding tax policy, tax credits, the Guaranteed Income Supplement, programs addressing the poverty of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people, the Canada Social Transfer and Affordable Housing Agreements. PFS would also add social housing as a key area for federal involvement.

These policies and programs require federal government resourcing and leadership to facilitate cross-Canada consultations and linkages between federal, provincial and municipal governments and First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and governing bodies.

Based on the Low Income Measure – After Tax, one in seven (or 4.8 million) people in Canada lived in poverty in 2010. Poverty costs Canada as a whole between \$72 billion and \$84 billion annually. The rate for Saskatchewan was 14% - a cost to Saskatchewan of \$3.8 billion annually. Even with an expanding economy, by 2012 our poverty rate was still 12.7%.

Canadian and Saskatchewan government collaboration is urgently needed along with new dedicated resources, as well as an independent body to monitor and ensure such anti-poverty plans are implemented.

For more information about poverty elimination strategies, see the PFS web site: <http://www.povertyfreesask.ca> and *Strategies to Eliminate Poverty in Saskatchewan* http://www.povertyfreesask.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Framework_PFS2.pdf .

Canada Without Poverty "Poverty Progress Profiles" <http://www.cwp-csp.ca/poverty/poverty-progress-profiles/> ; "Dignity for All: A National Anti-Poverty Plan for Canada" http://www.cwp-csp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/DignityForAll_Report-English-FINAL.compressed.pdf "Just the Facts" <http://www.cwp-csp.ca/poverty/just-the-facts/>

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty <http://www.un.org/en/events/povertyday/> 2015 Theme: Building a sustainable future: Coming together to end poverty and discrimination

Statistics Canada 2011 National Household Survey: Data tables 99-014-X2011043

Poverty Costs http://www.thinkupstream.net/poverty_costs_saskatchewan_released

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Poverty Free Saskatchewan



Poverty in Saskatchewan 2012

Over the last decade, poverty in Saskatchewan has declined as economic conditions have improved. But economic expansion has been insufficient to eliminate poverty and many persons and groups remain marginalized and vulnerable to the effects of low income. The following data on low income in Saskatchewan come from Statistics Canada. The measure of low income used is the Low Income Measure – After Tax (LIM-AT).

The poverty rate for the province is 12.7 per cent, with 128 thousand of the more than one million residents of the province having incomes below the LIM-AT (\$41,568 after-tax income in 2012 for a family of four). Among the groups that PFS has identified as being vulnerable to poverty are the following.

Children (ages 0-17). The poverty rate for the province's approximately 230,000 children is 16.6 per cent, meaning 38,000 children live in families with incomes below the LIM-AT. For female lone-parent families, the poverty rate is over 40 per cent.

Unattached individuals. Living alone increases vulnerability to low income. 18.2 per cent of adults of ages 18 to 64 who live alone have incomes below the LIM-AT.

Seniors. Poverty among Canadians aged 65 and over has fallen dramatically over the last thirty years. But many seniors, especially those living alone, have very low incomes. In the province, 14 per cent of seniors have incomes below the LIM-AT.

Aboriginal persons. From the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), 29 per cent of persons of Aboriginal identity in Saskatchewan had low incomes, as contrasted with a low-income rate of 12.2 per cent for those of non-Aboriginal identity.

Persons with disabilities. Across Canada in 2011, the rate of low income for persons with disabilities was 23.5 per cent – the rate in Saskatchewan was likely very similar.

Immigrants. Recent immigrants to the province, those who arrived since 2001, had a low-income rate of 24.3 per cent, as reported in the 2011 NHS.

Low income areas. The low-income rate for Prince Albert and for parts of Saskatchewan outside the nine largest cities is approximately 20 per cent, according to data obtained from income tax returns. Statistics Canada states that these rates are not comparable with the data presented in the following table. Much poverty in the province is concentrated in specific geographic areas – small towns, rural areas, inner city neighbourhoods, and the north.

Number and percentage of persons below the LIM-AT, Saskatchewan, 2012

Group	Saskatchewan persons in households with income below the LIM-AT	
	Number in thousands	Percentage
All Saskatchewan persons	128	12.7
Male	58	11.6
Female	70	13.7
Children – ages 0 to 17	38	16.6
In two-parent families	22	12.4
In female lone-parent families	13	41.4
Persons ages 18 to 64	70	11.0
In families	49	9.5
Males	21	8.3
Females	28	10.5
Unattached individuals	21	18.2
Males	12	16.9
Females	9	20.2
Seniors – ages 65 and over	20	14.0

Data sources:

Data in the above table come from Statistics Canada, Canadian Income Survey, 2014. CANSIM series 206-0001 to 206-0004.

Data concerning Aboriginal persons and immigrants was obtained from the National Household Survey, 2011. Information about low income areas comes from income tax returns in Statistics Canada, CANSIM series 111-0015. Data concerning people with disabilities come from *Financial Security – Low Income Incidence*, Employment and Social Development Canada.

LIM-AT. The Low Income Measure – After Tax is an income that is one-half of the median income, adjusted for household size. In 2012 the LIM-AT was \$21,734 for an unattached individual and \$41,568 for a family of four.

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