



TOWARDS A POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY - IN BRIEF



HAVE YOUR SAY

The Government of Canada is committed to developing a Poverty Reduction Strategy that will guide its future actions and ensure that fewer Canadians live in poverty. Poverty is a complex problem that requires involvement from a wide range of partners. For this reason, the Government of Canada is reaching out to its provincial, territorial and municipal partners, Indigenous people, community organizations, poverty experts and academics, the business community and, notably, those who have a lived experience of poverty to work together towards reducing poverty.

The Government of Canada would like to hear your views. Please consider these questions as you provide your input:

1. How do you define poverty? How should it be measured? Are there data gaps that need to be addressed to help improve our understanding of poverty in Canada?
2. What will success look like in a Poverty Reduction Strategy? What target(s) should we pick to measure progress?
3. Which indicators should we use to track progress towards the target(s)?
4. On which groups should we focus our efforts? Which dimensions of poverty should be prioritized?
5. Which Government of Canada programs and policies do you feel are effective at reducing poverty? Are there programs and policies that can be improved? What else could we do?
6. How can the Government of Canada align its Poverty Reduction Strategy so that it supports existing efforts by provinces, territories, municipalities and communities?
7. What are some initiatives/innovations in Canada or elsewhere that other governments, community organizations, academia, or businesses have introduced or proposed to effectively reduce poverty?
8. How can the Government encourage an on-going dialogue with other levels of government, community organizations, academia and businesses on its poverty reduction efforts?

THE CALL TO ACTION

Many indicators demonstrate how well Canada is doing socially and economically. Canada is 9th in the world in terms of human development based on strong achievement in the areas of life expectancy, educational attainment and income per capita. Canada has also seen a decline in the unemployment rate from a high of 8.7% to 6.9% between July 2009 and July 2016. Despite these positive signs over 3 million Canadians still live in poverty, which means that 1.9 million families struggle every day to make ends meet.

Poverty places a heavy burden on individuals. People living in poverty are forced to make difficult choices that they should not have to make. Choices like having to decide between paying rent or buying healthy food.

An online engagement website has been launched where interested individuals and organizations can share their thoughts and ideas. There are discussion forums and an opportunity for Canadians to share their story. The online engagement will be complemented by in-person roundtables with Indigenous organizations, businesses, community organizations, academic experts and, especially, Canadians who have lived in poverty.

THE MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY

Poverty is complex. It impacts individuals in different ways and to different degrees. For some, poverty is temporary and associated with a short-term life event such as a job loss. For others, it can last a long time due to the multiple barriers they face. In some cases, it can be so pervasive that it is passed from parents to children.

When many think about poverty, the first thing that comes to mind is income. While income is essential for well-being, poverty is not only about a lack of adequate income. Being poor often goes hand-in-hand with poor housing, health, employment and education. Poverty also impacts social mobility. The multidimensional nature of poverty means governments need to respond to both its causes and its consequences by taking action to address the various deprivations that Canadians experience when living in poverty.

The various dimensions of poverty also cut across diverse groups of people and impact them in different ways. In other words, poverty affects people differently. Certain groups are more likely to live in poverty than others – single-parent families, single individuals aged 45-64, people with work-limiting disabilities, recent immigrants and Indigenous people.

DELIVERING AND REPORTING ON RESULTS

The Government of Canada recognizes that accountability matters for its commitment to reduce poverty in Canada. To meet this commitment, it will be important to build partnerships, establish clear targets, report on progress and identify what is successful and what is not.

One challenge in setting a target for a Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy is that Canada does not have an official definition of poverty, nor an official measure to track it. Many countries do not. The most common way to measure poverty is by looking at income levels compared with pre-established thresholds. Canada has three main measures of low income that could be used to choose a target for the

Strategy: Low Income Cut-offs, the Low Income Measure and the Market Basket Measure.

The Government of Canada welcomes input regarding what targets and measures it should use to guide its efforts.

To complement an overall poverty-reduction target, other indicators could also be selected to track progress on certain dimensions related to poverty, such as education, employment, health and/or housing.

The Government of Canada has already implemented and announced several initiatives that will help reduce poverty in Canada.

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| Children and Families | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced the Canada Child Benefit. • Working with the provinces, the territories and experts to develop a framework on early learning and child care to address the need for access to affordable, high-quality child care. • Develop a strategy against gender-based violence. |
| Seniors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased the Old Age Security (OAS) and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). • Cancelled the age of eligibility increase from 65 to 67 for OAS and the GIS. • Reached an agreement-in-principle with provincial governments to expand the Canada Pension Plan (CPP). • Committed to increase the Working Income Tax Benefit to ensure that lower-income workers have larger CPP benefits in retirement |
| People with Disabilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing accessibility legislation. • Committed to reinstate the Court Challenges Program of Canada. |
| Innovation in poverty reduction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with its partners to develop a Social Innovation and Social Finance Strategy to support community organizations working to tackle persistent social challenges in new, innovative ways. |
| Indigenous Peoples | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing an Indigenous Early Learning and Child care Framework. • Investing for improvements to primary and secondary education on reserve. • Investing for school infrastructure on reserve. • Investing in the First Nations Child and Family Services Program to help improve child welfare services. • Investing in housing and community infrastructure. • Investing to support the renovation and construction of shelters for victims of family violence in First Nations • Investing in labour market programming. • Engaging stakeholders on a renewed and expanded Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy. • Strengthening and renewing the Urban Aboriginal Strategy. • Investing in the Aboriginal Courtwork Program. • Investing to support economic development for the Métis Nation. • Investing to promote, preserve and enhance Indigenous languages through the Aboriginal Languages Initiative communities. • Investing to support mental wellness on reserve and in territories. |
| Housing and Homelessness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a National Housing Strategy. • Investing in Investment in Affordable Housing program. • Investing in the Homelessness Partnering Strategy. • Investing in affordable housing for seniors. • Investing in shelters for victims of family violence. • Providing funding towards the renovation of existing social housing. • Investing towards an Affordable Rental Housing Innovation Fund. |
| Health and Food | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and negotiating a health accord with provinces and territories. • Providing additional funding to expand Nutrition North Canada. |
| Post-secondary education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Canada Student Grants for low-and middle-income students. • Improved the Canada Student Loans Program to better meet the needs of low-income students. • Changed the repayment rules for the Canada Student Loans Program to help reduce student debt. • Improved access to the Canada Learning Bond for children from low-income families. |
| Support for low-income workers and the unemployed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced Employment Insurance (EI) premiums. • Working to reduce the waiting period to enhance income support through EI. • Eliminated higher eligibility requirements to the EI program for the New-Entrant and Re-Entrant to the Labour Market categories. • Extended the EI program's Working While on Claim pilot. • Temporarily extended EI benefits to regions that have experienced significant job losses as a result of the commodity price decline. • Committed to enhance parental and caregiving benefits delivered through EI. • Invested in the Labour Market Development Agreements and in the Canada Job Fund Agreements to support training and skills development. • Introduced initiatives to promote good-quality jobs and decent work in the federally regulated private sector. • Invested in the the Northern Adult Basic Education Program. |

[Canada.ca/reduce-poverty](https://canada.ca/reduce-poverty)

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