

Urban Poverty in Canada: Looking Back

www.ccsd.ca

Overview

Urban poverty took a firm foothold in Canada over the decade between 1990 and 2000. Here is how it played out in urban and suburban areas.

- Canada is one of the world's most urbanized nations. Fully 80% of our population – 25 million people – live in cities. (p. 7)
- In 2001, more than half of Canada's population – 15.3 million people – lived in just four urban regions: Greater Montréal, the Golden Horseshoe (Oshawa, Toronto, Hamilton, St. Catharines-Niagara, Kitchener), B.C.'s Lower Mainland/southern Vancouver Island, and the Calgary-Edmonton corridor. (p. 7)
- Between 1996 and 2001, the population in those four urban regions grew by 7.6%, while the rest of the population grew by only 0.5%. (p. 7)
- 45% of Canada's GDP was produced by seven of its largest metropolitan areas in 2001. (p. 8)
- The 10 largest cities accounted for more than half of Canada's total employment in 2000. (p. 8)
- One of every six Canadian lived in poverty in 2000. That translates into 4.7 million Canadians – more than the entire population of the CMA of Toronto. (p. 10)
- In 2000, 3.3 million poor Canadians lived in one of 25 Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs). And while the overall population in CMAs was growing, the number of poor was growing even faster. (p. 13)

	1990	1995	2000	% increase 1990 to 2000
Total population	26,396,000	28,011,400	29,105,705	10.3%
Poor population	4,289,000	5,514,200	4,720,490	10.1%
Poverty rate	16.2%	19.7%	16.2%	
Number of poor in CMAs	2,761,900	3,790,800	3,290,755	19.1%
CMA Poverty rate	16.9%	21.6%	17.6%	

Note: Individuals in the Yukon, NWT and Nunavut are excluded from these low income statistics, as are those living on Indian reserves and those in collective dwellings.
Source: prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's 2001 Census, custom tabulations.





Urban Poverty in Canada

Looking Back (continued)

- The growth in the number of poor occurred entirely in CMAs. Non-CMAs experienced a decline in the number of poor people. (p. 11)
- Over the decade, the number of poor people living in Canada's 25 largest Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) grew by over half a million. (p. 12)
- In 1990, 64% of Canada's poor lived in one of the 25 largest CMAs. By 2000, that proportion had grown to 70%. (p. 11)
- Urban areas with populations of 500,000+ tended to have the highest rates of poverty. And when the recession hit in 1991, they had a more pronounced spike in poverty rates than most smaller communities. (p. 18)
- Canada's Employment Insurance Program provides protection for less than 25% of workers in urban centres. (p. 37)
- Food bank usage grew by 100% between 1989 and 2006. (p. 4)

The Urban Poverty Project

These facts have been compiled from the report, *A Lost Decade: Urban Poverty in Canada, 1990 to 2000*, the second product in the CCSD's *Urban Poverty Project 2007* series. Want more information about certain statistics? Most of the data here are referenced to a page number in the report. The entire document – as well as an extensive glossary, definitions of census geographies, and other reports in this UPP series – can be found at <http://www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2007/upp/>.

More Facts:

The CCSD supports community and social development with reliable data and analyses. Visit our **Stats and Facts** page on the CCSD website for more free information on demographics, education, health and more. Visit www.ccsd.ca/factsheets/index.htm.