

## COMMUNITY OPTIONS REQUIRED

- Over the last few decades we have witnessed a dramatic growth in the numbers of women who are part of the paid work force. In 2003, 57% of all women aged 15 and over had jobs and women accounted for 47% of the employed work force.
- The dramatic growth of women prisoners can largely be attributed to such global phenomena as the dismantling of social and health services and programs and retreat of the state in terms of social safety net functions, combined with a simultaneous intrusion of the state in terms of surveillance, monitoring, criminalization, and institutionalization.
- Regardless of their educational attainment, women are still less likely than their male counterparts to be employed, although the gaps are smallest among women with higher education.
- There has been particularly sharp growth in the employment rate of women with children in the past quarter century. In 2003, 72% of all women with children under the age of 16 living at home were part of the paid work force. However, women with children are still less likely to be employed than women without children. Women have accounted for about 70% of all part-time employees since the late 1970s.
- Although young women today are better educated than their male peers, in 2001, 21% of women aged 20-29 were university graduates, compared with 15% of their male counterparts.
- The majority of employed women continue to work in occupations in which women have traditionally been concentrated. In 2003, 70% of all employed women were working in teaching, nursing or related health occupations, clerical or other administrative positions, or sales and service occupations.
- Immigrant women are less likely to have paid employment than immigrant men; non-immigrant women, even for those with university degrees. A high number of immigrant or refugee women are forced as domestic workers to live in the homes of their employers, which puts them at great risk of financial, physical and sexual abuse.
- While more than 80% of adult women have progressed beyond Grade 9, for women prisoners the figure is closer to 50%.
- In 1996, there were just over 300,000 child care spaces available to preschool children in Canada. At the same time, there were 900,000 families in Canada with at least one preschool aged child living with two working parents or a lone parent who was employed.

- Gaining work skills is considered an important factor in successful community reintegration for women prisoners. However, women have little access to meaningful work opportunities and employment programs while they are incarcerated.
- On October 22, 2003, 373 service agencies in Canada reported serving 4,358 clients that day: 77% were female and 23% were male.
- The basic support systems for Canadian women, combined with a reliance on the use of penalties and imprisonment, are resulting in the increased criminalization of women and children. Statistics Canada reports that crime rates have been dropping since 1996, however, the fear of crime and the criminalization of women and girls have increased.

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## References

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Women in the Workplace – Work Chapter Updates.