

Poverty

- Women traditionally have higher poverty rates than men, and the differences often arise from the disadvantages women face in the paid labour force and the disproportionately large responsibilities they have for the care of their children.¹
- Often the stereotype of people and their families living in poverty is that they are all dependent on welfare. Government programs and payments play an important role in supporting families in poverty, especially seniors, but earnings are a key source of income for most working-age people living in poverty.²
- The poverty rate for women in 2003 was 17.1 percent, higher than the rate of 14.7 percent for men. This was mainly driven by the higher poverty rates for unattached women and single-parent mothers.³
- Single-parent mothers are the ‘family’ category with the highest poverty rate: (48.9%);⁴ the number of such families living in poverty, with incomes of less than half of the amount deemed to be the poverty line, more than doubled from 23,000 in 1989 to 52,000 in 2003.⁵
- In 2003, the poverty rates for families without earners ranged from 94.6% for single-parent mothers to 39.3% for couples without children.⁶
- 28% of single-mothers rely on social assistance, compared to 24% of working-age single people, 18% of working-age couples without children, and only 8% of two-parent families.⁷
- Single-parent mothers experiencing poverty are the family type most likely to rely primarily on welfare. However, an almost equal number of poor single-parent mothers relied mainly on employment earnings and did not receive any welfare payments in 2003.⁸
- At every level of education, women wage earners usually earn less than men. For example, in 2003, women high school graduates earned 71.0 % of what male high school graduates earned for full-time, full-year work. Women with post-secondary degrees earned 68.9% of what their male counterparts did for full-time, full-year work.

¹ *National Council on Welfare Report, 2006.*

² *National Council on Welfare Report, 2006.*

³ *National Council on Welfare Report, 2006.*

⁴ *National Council on Welfare Report, 2006.*

⁵ *National Council on Welfare Report, 2006.*

⁶ *National Council on Welfare Report, 2006.*

⁷ *National Council on Welfare Report, 2006.*

⁸ *National Council on Welfare Report, 2006.*