

Welfare incomes 2004 ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

- Report in pdf ^[2]

- Press release in pdf ^[3]

Excerpts from the press release:

Governments need to provide adequate financing for welfare programs and end the "clawback" of child benefits from families on welfare, the National Council of Welfare said in a report published today.

Welfare Incomes 2004 shows many welfare recipients eking out a living on incomes well below the poverty line. After adjusting for inflation, many of the incomes were significantly lower in 2004 than they were ten or 15 years ago.

Miserly income supports have been the biggest problem with the welfare system for many years. As in previous years, the report for 2004 shows that typical welfare incomes in Canada - without exception - were thousands of dollars below the poverty line. Single employable recipients in New Brunswick were the worst off, with total incomes that amounted to only 19 percent of the poverty line. Single parents in Newfoundland and Labrador were in the "best" circumstances relatively speaking, but their total welfare incomes were still only 70 percent of the poverty line.

"Welfare has long been neglected in Canada, and Welfare Incomes 2004 shows that the neglect is continuing," the report said.

Another huge problem has been the "clawback" of federal child benefits from families with children on welfare in Prince Edward Island, Ontario, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and all three territories.

The federal government pays the Canada Child Tax Benefit and National Child Benefit Supplement to low-income families everywhere in Canada, but it has encouraged provinces and territories to claw back the supplement from welfare families by reducing their welfare or related benefits. The result has been a significant drop in purchasing power among some of Canada's poorest families.

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