

The precarity penalty: Employment precarity's impact on individuals, families and communities and what to do about it ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Full report ^[2]

Executive Summary ^[3]

Introduction

The world of work is changing. New sectors and industries have emerged. Fewer Canadians are employed in manufacturing and more in the service industries. But that is not the only thing that is changing. Since the 1980s, temporary and contract work, and self-employment have grown faster than permanent, full-time employment. Many of the jobs being created are often defined by insecurity and uncertainty. Secure employment, offering benefits and a possible career path, has become harder to find.

Based on United Way Toronto's report, *Losing Ground*, we knew that the growth of insecure work was impacting the lives of families living in poverty, but we wanted to know more. In 2013, the Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario (PEPSO) research group released a report, *It's More than Poverty: Employment Precarity and Household Well-being*. The report offered proof that precarious employment had grown in the Greater Toronto-Hamilton Area (GTHA) and that workers and their families were being negatively affected.

The Precarity Penalty is a follow-up to *It's More than Poverty* based on a new survey of 4,193 workers conducted during 2014, and 28 interviews conducted during 2015. Our goal was to confirm the findings first reported in *It's More than Poverty* and to examine themes that surfaced in our first report. We wanted a deeper understanding of how income interacts with employment security to shape social outcomes and the effect of employment discrimination on access to secure, well-paying employment. Readers of this summary are encouraged to access the full report at www.pepsocanada.org ^[4] for a detailed discussion of the issues examined here.

The results are troubling. The Precarity Penalty confirms that precarious employment is a significant feature of our labour market. As many as 44% of working adults are in jobs with some level of precarity. Many in precarious employment face significant barriers in getting ahead or in moving into better opportunities. Lack of training and inability to access childcare can trap workers in low-paying, insecure employment. Across all income levels, this type of employment can negatively affect a person's well-being. Workers from racialized communities and, in particular, racialized women, are disproportionately affected by these trends. If left unchecked, the social consequences of these changes in our labour market will not only affect the ability of people to build stable and fulfilling lives, but it will threaten our region's capacity to develop a competitive workforce.

The Precarity Penalty ends with a call to action. We have identified three areas of focus:

- Building a dynamic labour market that supports workers in precarious employment
- Ensuring that jobs are a pathway to income and employment security
- Enhancing social and community supports for a new labour market

Region: Ontario ^[5]

Tags: poverty ^[6]

accessibility ^[7]

labour market ^[8]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/15/05/precariety-penalty-employment-precariety%E2%80%99s-impact-individuals>

Links

^[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/15/05/precariety-penalty-employment-precariety%E2%80%99s-impact-individuals> ^[2]

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