

Welfare incomes 2002 ^[1]

Author: National Council of Welfare

Source: National Council of Welfare ^[2]

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AVAILABILITY

Available in print for order (see SOURCE) and online for download.

- Full report in pdf ^[3]

- Complete press release ^[4]

Excerpt from press release:

Welfare incomes across Canada in 2002 were only a fraction of average incomes and the poverty line, said the National Council of Welfare in a report released today.

Welfare incomes for single people were worth as little as 15 percent of the average income and only 20 percent of the poverty line.

Families on welfare fared only slightly better. In Alberta, the income of a single parent was worth only 27 percent of the average income and just 48 percent of the poverty line. The income of a two-parent family in Ontario was worth just 20 percent of the average income of families the same size. In Quebec, the welfare income of a couple with two children reached only 49 percent of the poverty line.

The Council's new report notes that families on welfare now receive a larger share of their income from the federal government but less from their provincial and territorial governments. Since the National Child Benefit began in 1998, all provinces and territories reduced their payments to families on welfare either by clawing back part of the National Child Benefit, or by allowing inflation to erode their share. The federal government, on the other hand, made larger and larger payments to low-income families with children. The recent federal budget committed even more increases to the program.

When Ottawa, the provinces and territories negotiated the National Child Benefit, the federal government allowed provincial and territorial governments to claw back part of the money that goes to families that rely on welfare. Only Newfoundland and New Brunswick resisted the temptation to take the money from those children who were unlucky enough to have parents whose incomes came from welfare, not from jobs. Nova Scotia, Quebec and Manitoba have since reduced the amounts they claw back. The National Council of Welfare has been a vocal opponent of this practice.

"The Council believes that a far more constructive approach to getting people off welfare would be to provide real incentives to work. The most obvious incentive for parents on welfare is the provision of high-quality affordable child care. It is overwhelmingly clear to the Council that the provision of child care is the very first step in making it possible for a parent on welfare to complete an education or training program, and then find and keep a job."

The report also noted that the welfare incomes of people with disabilities are in a slow decline. While people with disabilities were spared the direct cuts many provinces imposed in the last decade, their incomes have not kept pace with inflation.

Region: Newfoundland ^[5]

Nova Scotia ^[6]

Canada ^[7]

New Brunswick ^[8]

Quebec ^[9]

Ontario ^[10]

Tags: economics ^[11]

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