



Income Security

Despite the fact that, on average, Canadian families enjoy a higher standard of living today than they did thirty years ago, there are still **4.9 million people** in Canada living in poverty.

The “working poor” continue to face difficulties due to precarious employment, including inadequate pay and limited opportunities for advancement, while those receiving social assistance survive on benefits that keep them firmly below any measure of poverty in Canada.

Suggested policy initiatives:

- ✓ **Reform EI sickness benefits to better serve the needs of individuals with disabilities**, who represent over half of the benefit recipients.
- ✓ **Enhance the Canada Social Transfer with a boost of \$2 billion** to the provinces to support poverty reduction efforts, tying the money to measurable goals and timelines for transparency and accountability.
- ✓ **Improve maternity leave benefits** by increasing maternity benefit level to 80% of wages, creating a more flexible system with regards to leave time and financing options, and improving eligibility for currently-excluded workers.
- ✓ **Add 8 weeks of parental leave for a non-birthing parent**, in addition to existing maternity leave.
- ✓ **Increase the GIS top-up for low-income seniors by \$1,000 a year** (costing \$1.9 billion total annually).