



Bearing the Brunt: Alberta Fact Sheet

Poverty

- Poverty rate 2007: 6.1%
- Child poverty rate 2007: 6.3%

Unemployment

- Alberta lost 68,000 jobs between October 2008 and October 2009
- Proportionally, this was the greatest number of jobs lost of any province: 3.3%

Employment Insurance

- Before the recession, Alberta had the lowest EI coverage of any province
- Fewer than 1 in 4 unemployed workers qualified for EI prior to the recession
- EI coverage rose during the recession, but Alberta still had the third lowest rate of coverage in the country
- Less than half of unemployed workers qualified for EI during the recession
- The Beneficiaries to Unemployed rate increased from 23.4% in October 2008 to 46.5% in October 2009
- All of Alberta's urban communities saw a 115% increase or more in EI recipients

Alberta Income Support Assistance

- Alberta had the highest increase in social assistance caseloads during the recession, rising 42.7% between October 2008 and December 2009
- The December 2009 caseload was 38,230
- In January, 2010, the caseload rose even higher to 39,315, the highest caseload in 13 years
- 39.9% of Income Support Assistance cases are families with children
- Alberta has very low welfare rates, including the lowest rate in Canada for a single parent family in 2007, at 63% of the LICO

Cost of living

- Food prices increased 4.8% in 2009 compared to core inflation of -0.1%
- Prices for meat, dairy, fruits and vegetables all increased more than 5%
- Alberta was the only province to see a decrease in average rent of 1.9% between the October 2008 and October 2009
- CMHC attributes this decline to the high vacancy rate, which rose from 2.5% in October 2008 to 5.5% in October 2009
- Because of this decline in average rent, affordability increased in both Calgary and Edmonton
- However, Calgary still had the second highest rent for a two-bedroom apartment in the country, second only to Vancouver
- Average monthly rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Calgary was \$1,099

Bankruptcy

- The number of bankruptcies in Alberta increased by 82.2% between the third quarter of 2008 and the third quarter of 2009
- This was by far the largest increase in bankruptcies in the country

Food bank use

- Alberta witnessed the largest increase in food bank use in the country at 61%
- 53,976 people used a food bank in March 2009
- Alberta also had a higher than average number of first-time users at 16%. The national average was 9.1%
- 43% of food bank users are children
- The number of people reporting employment income was much higher than elsewhere in the country at 27%. The national average was 13.6%
- The number of people on EI using food banks increased from 2.7% to 4.9%