



THE FEDERATION
of COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES of BC

Altogether better.

Life in BC Snapshot: 2017

Community inclusion

Things aren't getting better for the people of BC

Two years ago, The Federation of Community Social Services of BC scoured the news, research, and literature to take a snapshot of what life in BC was like. We wanted to understand how good things were for the people of our province. We also wanted to investigate important aspects of day-to-day life that get overlooked by a government focused on economic prosperity.

Things didn't look that great. And two years later, they are no better. We have updated these snapshots to prove that point and to help you talk about the state of our province and the things that need to change in order for the people of British Columbia to actually prosper and thrive.

News headlines about community inclusion in BC

- ⇒ More BC companies hiring people with disabilities - *Global News*, 3/4/2016
- ⇒ Disability rates won't alleviate poverty - *Times Colonist*, 2/19/2016
- ⇒ Food or bus pass? Clawback Creates Hard Choices for British Columbians with Disabilities - *The Tyee*, 8/22/2016 (1)
- ⇒ Province-wide protests mark day of increase in B.C. disability benefits - *Georgia Straight*, 9/1/2016 (2)
- ⇒ Aging BC parents struggling to raise adult children with disabilities - *Vancouver Sun*, 11/20/2016 (3)
- ⇒ As girl gets ready for grad, mom worries about support for disabled adults - *CBC News*, 5/21/2016
- ⇒ Compass gate closures lead to complaints from people with disabilities - *CBC News*, 4/14/2016
- ⇒ Vancouver woman with disability facing homelessness after waiting for BC Housing for 7 years - *CBC News*, 12/16/2016

550,000

Nearly 550,000 British Columbians are considered to have a disability.⁴



Case study: Carla must choose between food or family

“ Last year, Carla gave up her bus pass so she could get the full increase to her provincial disability benefits. But now she doesn't get out as much and feels isolated. Some of her younger friends have found rewarding part-time work but Carla hasn't. She still relies on money from her children to pay for her groceries and rent (and her rent is almost the full amount of her monthly benefit). As a result, her kids rarely have enough spare cash to afford to visit Carla. But Carla's biggest worry is that, at this rate, her kids will be forced to give up on their own dreams in order to care for their mother.

\$77

The max monthly increase for BC's Person With Disabilities income assistance rates in 2016, the first increase in a decade.⁷

Why these issues matter

Poverty is unavoidable for many of the people of BC with disabilities. In a province where the average rent for a 1-bedroom apartment is \$1,054,⁶ the maximum disability payment for a single person is only \$983.42.³ That's not good enough. The number of unpaid senior citizen caregivers looking after their adult children with disabilities is greater than the populations of Prince Rupert and Nelson combined. The people of BC deserve better.

58,000

The number of students with special needs that need additional supports in schools across BC.⁸

Raising awareness about these issues

- The average payment for a single person with disabilities is \$983.42 a month (including the max shelter rate and transportation allowance).³
- In the next five years, Community Living BC expects the number of people aged 45 to 64 using its funded services to increase by 14 percent.³
- There are currently over 100,000 British Columbians on disability assistance but only a portion of those get the full amount.²

18,900

The number of clients across the province relying on the "diminishing resources" of Community Living BC.³

Talking points about community inclusion in BC

"This won't eliminate the challenges those living with disabilities face, and it won't suddenly make life easier, but we hope it will help make life a little less hard."
- Mike de Jong, BC Finance Minister

*"We will continue to invest in programs and services that ensure people with disabilities receive an increasing level of support."*⁵
- Michelle Stilwell, Social Development Minister

*"With that aging baby boom, you've got overburdened long-term care facilities, over-burdened government services."*³
- Alanna Hendren, Developmental Disability Association Director



About The Federation

The Federation of Community Social Services of BC is a social justice umbrella organization. We work tirelessly to improve the social conditions in BC on behalf of our members: community social service organizations across the province. We believe that:

- ⇒ Healthy, happy, and supported communities make good economic sense.
- ⇒ For your family to succeed, all families must succeed.
- ⇒ Job creation alone is not the solution to our province's social problems.

Learn more at www.fcssbc.ca or email us at info@fcssbc.ca

20,000

The number of people in BC on disability assistance who no longer have a government-provided transit pass in 2016.¹

ADDITIONAL SOURCES:

- (4) *B.C. celebrates Aboriginal Disability Awareness Month*. BC Government News. November 1, 2016.
- (5) *Transportation and the disability assistance rate increase*. BC Government Opinion-Editorial. March, 2016.
- (6) *Rental Market Report: British Columbia Highlights*. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. 2016
- (7) *BC Budget Speech 2016*. http://bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2016/speech/BudgetSpeech_2016.pdf
- (8) *Government announces massive step backwards in inclusive education*. Inclusion BC News Release, October 6, 2016.