



THE FEDERATION
of COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES of BC

Altogether better.

Life in BC Snapshot: 2017

Employment and wages

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 employment and wages in BC

- ⇒ Pessimism growing in BC over economy: poll - *Vancouver Sun*, 1/21/2016 (1)
- ⇒ No one happy about BC's minimum wage increase - *Global News*, 10/15/2016 (2)
- ⇒ BC minimum wage hike still means poverty for thousands - *Globe & Mail*, 9/15/2016
- ⇒ BC losing jobs everywhere except Vancouver, Victoria, says report - *CBC News*, 1/11/2017
- ⇒ Food bank use in BC at an all-time high - *CBC News*, 11/14/2016
- ⇒ BC has Canada's highest job vacancy rate - *Vancouver Sun*, 4/7/2016
- ⇒ 'Working poor' in all areas - *Delta Optimist*, 7/15/2016
- ⇒ Underpaid and overworked? - *CBC News*, 10/11/2016

Case study: Working two jobs and still in poverty

“Jon's been a part-time line cook for three years. His job only pays minimum wage so he can't afford to go back to school. Plus, last month his rent just increased (again). Jon got a second part-time job as a security guard at night but he still has to rely on the food bank almost every month. And because his part-time jobs offer no benefits, he hasn't been to the dentist since he moved out on his own nearly a decade ago. He can't rely on his parents because his mom is in a senior's home and can barely afford her own rent. If his community didn't have a non-profit Rent Bank, Jon is pretty sure that he would probably be homeless by now.”

79,000

The number of jobs BC needs to return to the pre-recession employment rate—more jobs than have been created in the last 4 years combined.⁷

32%

Percentage of BC food bank users under the age of 18 in 2016.⁵



\$18,060

2012 median family income in Vancouver, one of the most expensive cities in the world in which to live.³

Why these issues matter

Simply having a job is not the sign of a prosperous life. For the past few years, the majority of jobs created in BC have been precarious: short-term, part-time or contract work. And in spite of a recent increase, BC's minimum wage is still only the 8th highest in Canada meaning thousands and thousands of low wage jobs are forcing many British Columbians into poverty and instability. It's time for things to start getting better for the people working in BC.

1 in 9

Number of employed British Columbians who still required assistance from Food Banks in 2015.⁶

Raising awareness about these issues

- Until September 2016, BC had the lowest minimum wage in Canada at \$10.45/hour. Now, at \$10.85, it is only the 5th lowest in Canada.⁷
- Nearly half of British Columbians see the economic conditions in BC as "poor" or "very poor" according to recent polling.¹
- Among the ten occupations with the most job vacancies in BC, five paid less than \$12/hour and only two paid more than \$15/hour.⁷

100,000

The number of working-age people in Metro Vancouver who had jobs but remained stuck below the poverty line.⁶

Talking points about employment and wages in BC

"We see people working two or three part-time jobs and still being unable to make ends meet."⁵

- Shawn Pegg, Food Banks Canada Director of Policy and Research

"Low minimum wages likely contribute to increases in working poverty in Metro Vancouver."⁶

- Igluka Ivanova, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

"We think it's a responsible approach to continue to incrementally and reasonably increase the minimum wage."²

- Shirley Bond, BC Jobs Minister



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.

3.4%

Increase in food bank use across BC from 2015 to 2016—the third year in a row food bank use has increased.⁵

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

ADDITIONAL SOURCES:

- (3) *Working poverty on the rise in Metro Vancouver municipalities*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, June 2016.
- (4) *British Columbia 2024 Labour market outlook*. WorkBC, 2014.
- (5) *HungerCount 2016*. Food Banks Canada (2016), www.foodbankscanada.ca/Hunger-in-Canada/HungerCount-2015.aspx
- (6) *Working Poverty in Metro Vancouver*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, June 2016.
- (7) *BC's job market is weaker than the government would like you to believe*. Policy Note, Feb 2016.