



THE FEDERATION  
of COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES of BC

Altogether better.



## LIFE IN BC SNAPSHOT

The FCSSBC is a group of community-based social services organizations that influence decision-making to improve the wellbeing of communities.

We believe that:

- Healthy supported communities make good economic sense.
- For our families to succeed, all families must succeed.
- For jobs to be the answer to social inclusion other conditions must exist

We have scoured the literature and research to take a snapshot of Life in BC that captures some aspects of the economy that traditionally get overlooked and we will use these markers to determine how good life in BC *really* is. Below are some of the key facts that stood out for us.

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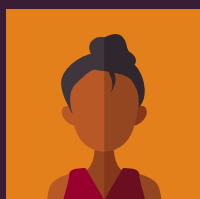
*We are challenging the traditional notion of "economy" and we want to make visible people who are often ignored when we look at the economic health of our province. BC is not a great province for everybody and we are going to shine a light on those for whom it is not...because they are often ignored when we talk about economic health.*

The current corporate and punitive perception of social care is dangerous and will impact the health of future generations. For many in our communities, access to the basic necessities like housing and food is a struggle. When we talk about the economic wealth of our province we need to think about all our community members.

WHAT  
WE  
HAVE  
TO  
SAY

## ECONOMY & INCLUSION

CASE  
STUDY



Harpreet is a mother of 4 school-aged children. She works 2 jobs and feels fortunate that her elderly mother is able to live with her and help her with childcare when her children are not in school. After leaving an abusive relationship 7 years ago Harpreet is proud of the fact that she is able to keep her kids safe and that they are doing well in school. She rents a 2 bed-room basement suite for her family; because she has access to her local food bank and a clothing swap at her local neighbourhood house she is able to pay her rent and utilities each month. Sometimes her hours are cut at work if business is slow and she must pay for her groceries on her credit card. She pays the minimum balance each month but worries about the mounting debt she is acquiring to feed her family.

WHAT  
WE  
KNOW



Half of BC seniors live on \$24,000<sup>1</sup> a year or less, and more than 50,000 (35%) are living on \$20,000 or less. 36% of seniors with household incomes less than \$30,000 believe they will need to move in the future due to affordability.<sup>2</sup>

Canada-wide one in five households helped by food banks rely on disability related benefits as their main source of income.<sup>3</sup> Income assistance and disability benefits have not kept pace with the increasing cost of living.<sup>4</sup>



The average rent plus utilities in BC is \$988.00.<sup>5</sup> The affordability gap for a family of three relying on income assistance falls between \$125 per month in Prince George to \$438 per month in Kelowna.<sup>6</sup>



1 in 4 queer and trans youth in BC are forced out of their homes due to severe family conflict. Among homeless youth in BC, 1 in 3 females and 1 in 10 males self-identify as queer, trans or questioning.<sup>7</sup>

Since 2008 food bank use across Canada has increase nearly 25%.<sup>8</sup>



<sup>1,2</sup> Office of the Seniors' Advocate. (May 2015) Seniors Housing in BC: Affordable. Appropriate. Available. Retrieved from <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2015/05/Seniors-Housing-in-B.C.-Affordable-Appropriate-Available.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Food banks Canada. (2014) Hunger count 2014, A comprehensive report on hunger and food bank use in Canada and recommendations for change. Retrieved from [http://www.foodbankscanada.ca/getmedia/76907192-263c-4022-8561-73a16c06dd2f/HungerCount\\_2014\\_EN\\_HR.pdf.aspx](http://www.foodbankscanada.ca/getmedia/76907192-263c-4022-8561-73a16c06dd2f/HungerCount_2014_EN_HR.pdf.aspx).

<sup>4</sup> Disability without Poverty Network (July 2012) Overdue: The case for increasing the Persons with Disability Benefit in BC. Retrieved from [http://www.cmha.bc.ca/files/overdueincreasepwd\\_1.pdf](http://www.cmha.bc.ca/files/overdueincreasepwd_1.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> BC Non-Profit Housing Rental Housing Index. <http://bcnpha.ca/rhi/> (accessed August 20, 2015)

<sup>6</sup> Social Planning & Research Council of BC (SPARC BC). (2014) Family Homelessness in Prince George, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nelson and Nanaimo Final Report - September 2014. Accessed from <http://www.sparc.bc.ca/> August 26, 2015

<sup>7</sup> BC Poverty Reduction Coalition. (2013) Poverty is a Queer and Trans. Retrieved from [http://bcpovertyreduction.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/2013\\_prc-lgbqt-poverty-factsheet.pdf](http://bcpovertyreduction.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/2013_prc-lgbqt-poverty-factsheet.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Food banks Canada. (2014) Hunger count 2014, A comprehensive report on hunger and food bank use in Canada and recommendations for change. Retrieved from [http://www.foodbankscanada.ca/getmedia/76907192-263c-4022-8561-73a16c06dd2f/HungerCount\\_2014\\_EN\\_HR.pdf.aspx](http://www.foodbankscanada.ca/getmedia/76907192-263c-4022-8561-73a16c06dd2f/HungerCount_2014_EN_HR.pdf.aspx).

*IF YOU WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION LET US KNOW;  
WE HAVE LOTS OF READING MATERIAL*