



Bearing the Brunt: British Columbia Fact Sheet

Poverty

- Poverty rate 2007: 11.1%
- Child poverty rate 2007: 13%
- Highest poverty and child poverty rates in the country in 2007

Unemployment

- BC lost 51,800 jobs between October 2008 and October 2009
- Proportionally, this was the third highest number of jobs lost in the country: 2.2%
- Unemployment increased from 5.2% in October 2008 to 8.3% in October 2009
- This is the third highest increase in unemployment (behind Alberta and NL)

Employment Insurance

- Less than half of unemployed workers qualified for EI during the recession
- The Beneficiaries to Unemployed rate increased from 36.2% in October 2008 to 48.2% in October 2009
- 9 urban communities saw an increase of 115% or more in EI recipients over this period

British Columbia Employment and Assistance

- BC had the third highest increase in social assistance caseloads during the recession, rising 20.3% between October 2008 and December 2009
- In December 2009, there were 130,341 cases of BCEA
- In January, 2010, the caseload rose even higher to 132,304, the highest caseload in 8 years
- The number of children receiving BCEA increased 25.2% during the recession. 20.8% of BCEA recipients are children

Cost of living

- Food prices increased 4.3% in 2009, compared to core inflation of 0%
- Prices for fruits (5.9%) and vegetables (6.5%) all increased more than 5%
- Average rent for a two-bedroom apartment increased 2.8% between October 2008 and October 2009
- Victoria had the third largest rent increase in the country over this period at 5%
- Vancouver had the highest average rent for a two-bedroom apartment at \$1,169 a month
- Both Victoria and Vancouver saw a decline in rental affordability. The median rent for a two-bedroom apartment is more than 30% of the median income earner's income

Bankruptcy

- The number of bankruptcies in BC increased by 55.2% between the third quarter of 2008 and the third quarter of 2009
- This is the second highest increase in the country

Food bank use

- Food bank use increased 15% in 2009
- 89,886 people used a food bank in March 2009
- 31% of food bank users in BC are children
- 12% of food bank clients report employment income
- 6% of clients are EI recipients