

Canadian Income Survey, 2015

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The median after-tax income of Canadian families and unattached individuals was \$56,000 in 2015, virtually unchanged from 2014. Since the start of the Canadian Income Survey in 2012, the median after-tax income of Canadians has increased 2.9%.

Senior families, where the highest income earner was 65 years of age or older, had a median after-tax income of \$57,500 in 2015, up 5.7% from 2012. After-tax income of these families has been climbing steadily since at least the mid-1970s. In 1976, senior families received \$33,100 in after-tax income.

In 2015, unattached individuals 65 years of age or older had a median after-tax income of \$26,300, while their non-senior counterparts reported \$29,400. Both groups have seen little change in their median after-tax income since 2012.

Families where the highest income earner was 64 years of age or younger had a median after-tax income of \$82,600 in 2015, up 3.0% from 2012. Within this group, two-parent families with children had a median after-tax income of \$94,200, up 6.8% from 2012.

Lone-parent families (\$45,700) had less than half the median after-tax income of two-parent families in 2015, virtually unchanged from 2012. These two groups of families have seen their incomes grow steadily since the mid-1990s.

Incidence of low income

According to the after-tax low income measure (LIM-AT), almost 5 million people or 14.2% of the population lived in low income in 2015, up 1.2 percentage points from 2014 but little changed from 2012. The LIM-AT is an internationally used measure of low income. The concept underlying the LIM-AT is that all persons in a household have low income if their household after-tax income falls below half of the median after-tax income.

For children 17 years of age and under, just over one million or 15.2% lived in low income in 2015. Among children living in two-parent families, 12.4% lived in low income, while 38.2% of children living in female headed lone-parent families lived in low income.

For seniors living in an economic family, 7.7% or 315,000 lived in low income, up 1.5 percentage points from 2012, while the rate for unattached seniors was four times higher at 32.0%, up 3.7 percentage points from 2012.

Increase in government transfers associated with child benefit programs

Government transfers play an important role in supporting Canadian families and individuals. The transfers received in 2015 varied by family type.

Median government transfers for senior families rose 3.0% from 2014 to \$27,500 in 2015, compared with a 1.8% increase to \$17,400 for unattached seniors.

Among families where the highest income earner was 64 years of age or younger, median government transfers rose 27.0% from 2014 to \$4,700 in 2015. The increases were pronounced for couples with children, whose median government transfers rose from \$4,300 in 2014 to \$5,800 in 2015. Meanwhile, lone-parent families saw their median government transfers rise from \$9,600 to \$11,500.

This significant change for families with children was attributable to additional income received from the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB), which was enhanced by the federal government and, to a lesser extent, the Children's Fitness Tax Credit. In 2016, to simplify and consolidate the existing child benefits, the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) and the UCCB were replaced by the Canada Child Benefit.



The median amount of income tax, both federal and provincial, paid by families and unattached individuals in 2015 was \$6,800, up 6.3% from 2012 but virtually unchanged from 2014.

Employment income rises since 2012

In 2015, 20.6 million people had employment income. Median employment income for all workers was \$33,100 in 2015, up 2.5% from 2012 but virtually unchanged from 2014.

Nationally, 11.6 million people worked both full year and full time in 2015 and their median employment income was \$51,200. Alberta (\$62,100) posted the highest median employment income in 2015, while New Brunswick had the lowest (\$44,600). The median employment income for full-year full-time workers in Ontario was \$53,000 in 2015, up 2.9% from 2014.

Impact of the 2015 oil crisis on Alberta

By the end of second quarter of 2015, Canada was in the midst of an economic downturn, caused largely by a rapid drop in oil prices over the preceding year. Hardest hit by this price shock was Canada's largest oil producing province, Alberta.

While the LIM-AT rate of low income in Alberta was virtually unchanged from 2014 (6.9% in both 2014 and 2015), the downturn was reflected in a number of ways in the province. For example, the total number of full-year and full-time workers was down 6.1%, from 1.6 million in 2014 to 1.5 million in 2015. This decrease was largely driven by working males, as their ranks fell 9.1%, from 929,000 workers in 2014 to 844,000 workers in 2015.



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Total income refers to income from all sources including market income or government transfers. In 2015, average total family income was \$82,600, while in 1951 it was \$29,200 (expressed in 2015 dollars).

Over the last six decades, there has been a significant shift in the sources contributing to total income, away from earnings towards private retirement income and government transfers. In 1951, income from employment accounted for nearly 90% of total income in Canada. This share dropped to just over 72% in 2015. This drop was partially offset by retirement income, which rose from 1% in 1951 to nearly 8% in 2015, and government transfer payments, which increased from 5% to almost 13% over this period.

Using data from 1976 to 2015, it becomes apparent that an important driver of the increase in government transfers was from Canada Pension Plan and Quebec Pension Plan (CPP/QPP) benefits. From 1976 to 2015, the share of income received from CPP and QPP rose five fold, from 0.7% to 3.9% of total income. In 2015, the proportion of families receiving CPP/QPP benefits more than tripled from 1976 (10.5% in 1976 compared with 32.6% in 2015).

Note to readers

The Canadian Income Survey estimates are based on probability samples and are therefore subject to sampling variability. As a result, estimates will show more variability than trends observed over longer time periods.

In this release, differences between estimates are reported only where they are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Definitions

An **economic family** refers to a group of two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law, adoption or a foster relationship. This concept differs from the census family concept used for subprovincial data in the Annual Income Estimates for Census Families and Individuals.

This release analyses income on the basis of medians. The **median** is the level of income at which half the population had higher income and half had lower. Dollar estimates are expressed in 2015 constant dollars to factor in inflation and enable comparisons across time in real terms.

After-tax income is the total of market income and government transfers, less income tax.

Market income consists of employment income, private pensions as well as income from investments and other market sources.

Employment income consists of wages and salaries, commissions, net-income from unincorporated non-farm and or professional practice and net farm self-employment income

A **full-year full-time** worker is a person who is 16 years of age and over, who was employed 52 weeks in the year, and worked on average 30 or more hours per week.

Government transfers include benefits including Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplement, Canada and Quebec Pension Plan, Employment Insurance, Social Assistance, Goods and Services Tax Credit, provincial tax credits and various types of child benefits.

Low income in this release is calculated using the after-tax Low Income Measure (LIM-AT). Individuals are defined as having low income if their adjusted after-tax income falls below 50% of the median adjusted after-tax income. Adjusted after-tax income is derived by dividing household income by the square root of the household size and assigning this value to all persons in the household.

Table 1
Income statistics by selected family types, 2014 and 2015

	2014				2015			
	After-tax income	Market income	Government transfers	Income tax	After-tax income	Market income	Government transfers	Income tax
	median (2015 constant dollars)							
Economic families and persons not in an economic family	56,200	52,700	5,700	6,900	56,000	52,200	6,500	6,800
Economic families	76,500	77,200	7,400	10,500	76,900	76,900	8,100	10,800
Senior families	55,100	33,000	26,700	3,700	57,500	34,500	27,500	3,800
Non-senior families	83,000	88,200	3,700	12,500	82,600	87,500	4,700	12,500
Two-parent families with children	92,000	99,700	4,300	14,400	94,200	99,800	5,800	15,200
Lone-parent families	43,900	34,700	9,600	F	45,700	32,400	11,500	900
Persons not in an economic family	29,500	24,900	1,600	2,700	28,200	22,600	1,700	2,000
Seniors	27,200	12,100	17,100	1,000	26,300	10,500	17,400	500
Non-seniors	30,100	31,000	700	3,500	29,400	29,000	700	2,900

F too unreliable to be published
Source(s): CANSIM table [206-0011](#).

Table 2
Persons in low income (after-tax low income measure), 2012 to 2015

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2012	2013	2014	2015
	thousands				% of all persons			
All persons in low income	4,647	4,615	4,517	4,979	13.7	13.4	13.0	14.2
Persons under 18 years old ¹	1,083	1,090	991	1,032	16.1	16.2	14.7	15.2
In two-parent families	713	704	603	701	12.8	12.8	10.8	12.4
In female lone-parent families	309	313	313	264	43.4	41.7	44.9	38.2
Persons 18 to 64 years old	2,951	2,923	2,849	3,147	13.3	13.0	12.6	13.9
In economic families	1,924	1,852	1,777	1,987	10.5	10.0	9.6	10.6
Not in an economic family	1,027	1,071	1,072	1,160	26.3	27.4	27.0	29.1
Persons 65 years of age and older	612	602	677	800	12.2	11.6	12.5	14.3
In economic families	225	204	257	315	6.2	5.4	6.5	7.7
Not in an economic family	388	398	421	485	28.3	27.5	28.8	32.0

1. Data do not add up to the total, as some components have been excluded.
Source(s): CANSIM table [206-0041](#).

Table 3
Median employment income, Canada and provinces, 2012 to 2015

	2012	2013	2014	2015
	median (2015 constant dollars)			
Canada	32,300	32,800	33,200	33,100
Newfoundland and Labrador	29,600	30,200	32,100	31,300
Prince Edward Island	24,100	25,900	25,500	27,200
Nova Scotia	29,500	30,400	30,000	29,800
New Brunswick	28,200	28,500	29,400	29,600
Quebec	30,500	30,600	31,300	30,900
Ontario	32,600	32,500	33,400	33,600
Manitoba	32,100	33,700	32,900	33,000
Saskatchewan	34,500	35,000	37,100	36,400
Alberta	41,200	43,000	41,500	40,600
British Columbia	30,000	30,700	31,500	30,800

Source(s): CANSIM table [206-0053](#).

Available in CANSIM: tables [206-0011](#), [206-0012](#), [206-0021](#), [206-0031 to 206-0033](#), [206-0041](#), [206-0042](#), [206-0051 to 206-0053](#) and [206-0091 to 206-0094](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5200](#).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).