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September 10, 2026

WEBINAR

THE STATE OF WELFARE IN CANADA: THE FEDERAL ROLE IN INCOME SECURITY

Speakers

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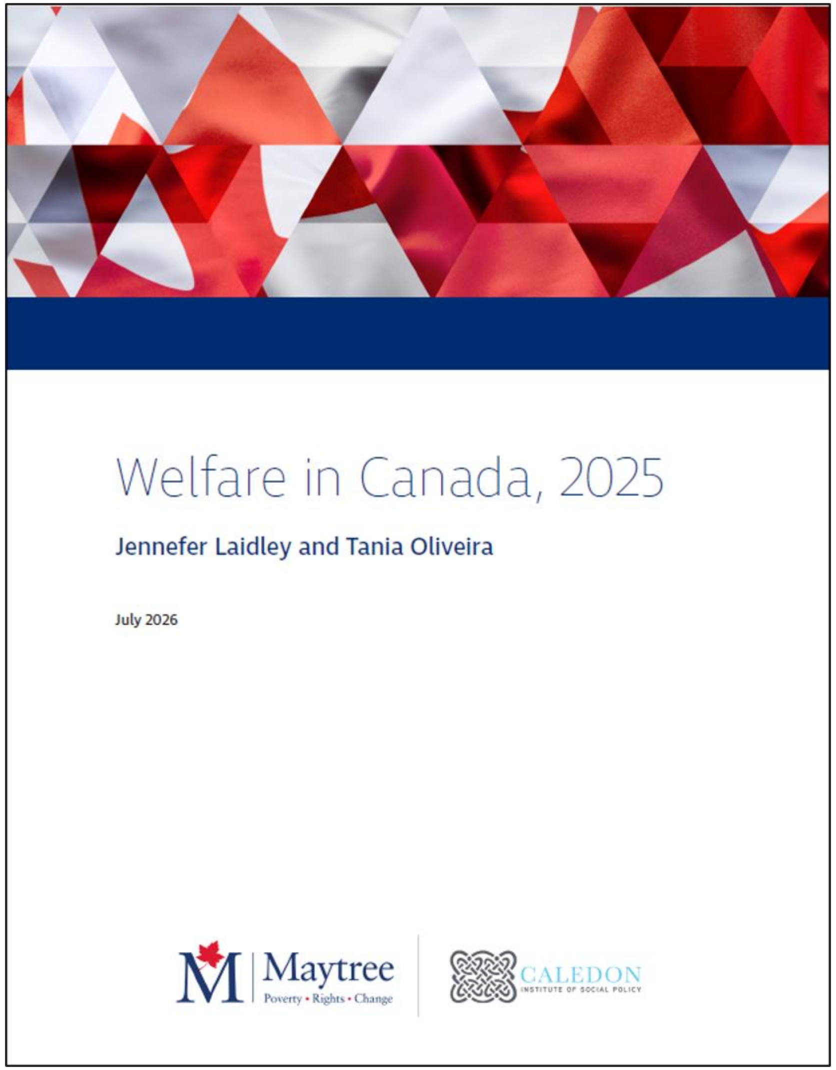
President

Welfare in Canada


Welfare in Canada, 2025

Jennefer Laidley and Tania Oliveira

July 2026

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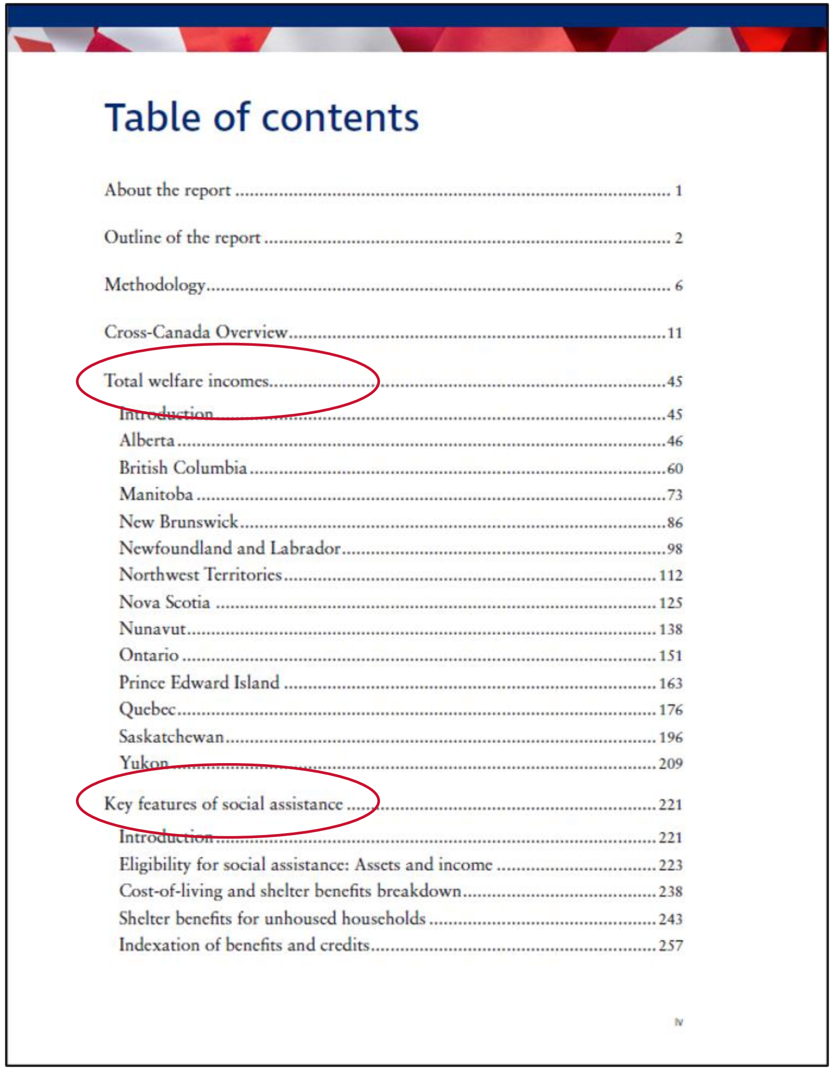
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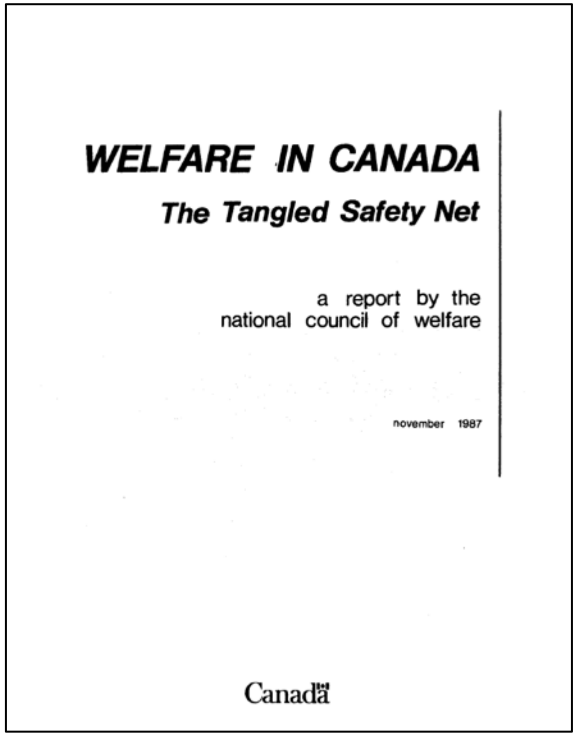
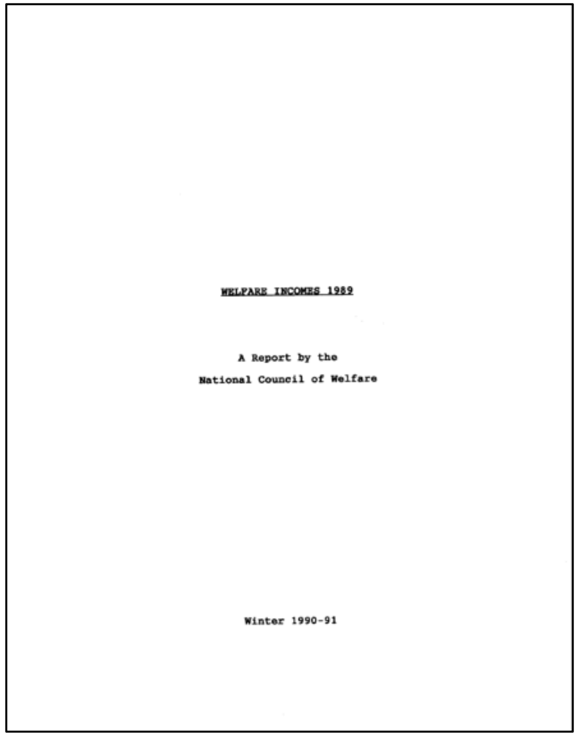
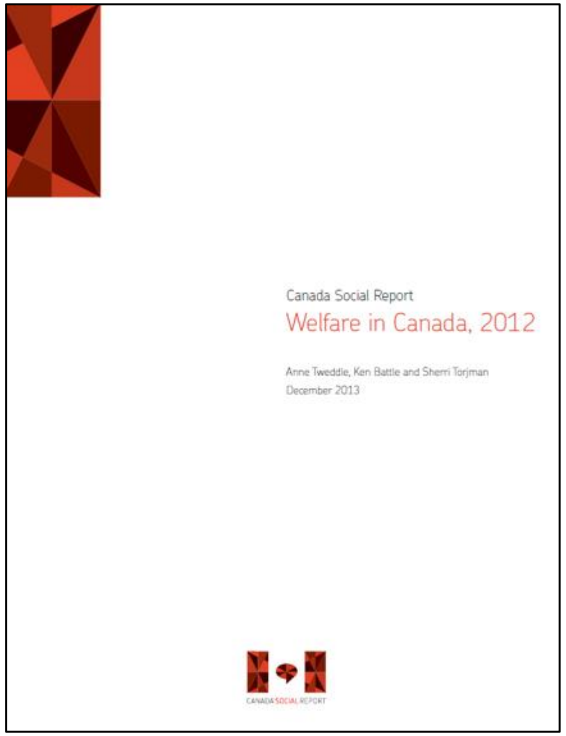
Today's presentation

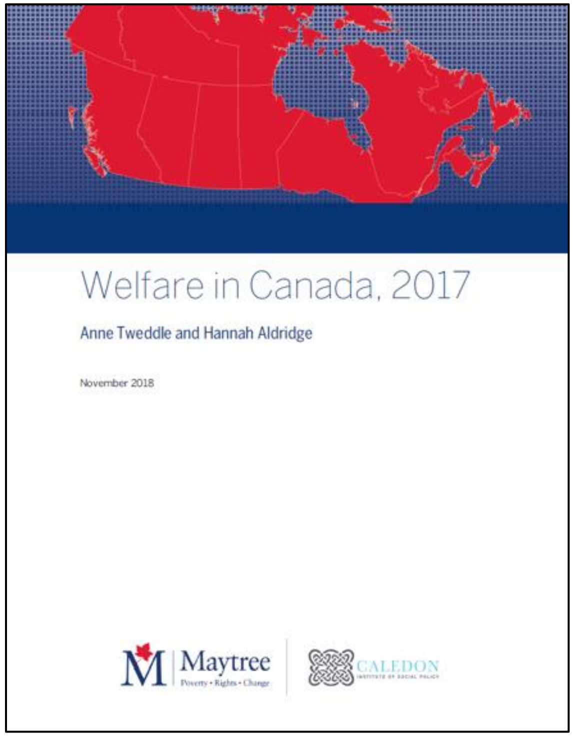
1. **Background**
   - History of Welfare in Canada
   - Methodology & components of total welfare incomes
2. **Adequacy of total welfare incomes in 2025 and over time**
3. **The federal role in income security for people receiving social assistance**
   - Carbon tax rebate losses by household in all jurisdictions
   - Federal tax credit design and disadvantages to the lowest-income single adults
   - Shelter benefits and the potential for a greater federal role in housing security
   - Improving the Canada Disability Benefit
4. **Policy recommendations**

The *Welfare in Canada* series: A history


WELFARE IN CANADA
The Tangled Safety Net
a report by the
national council of welfare
november 1987
Canada


WELFARE INCOMES 1989
A Report by the
National Council of Welfare
Winter 1990-91


Canada Social Report
Welfare in Canada, 2012
Anne Tweddle, Ken Battle and Sherri Torjman
December 2013


Welfare in Canada, 2017
Anne Tweddle and Hannah Aldridge
November 2018
Maytree
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National Council of Welfare
1987, 1989-2009

Caledon Institute
2012-2016

Maytree
2017-now

Methodology

Unattached single considered employable

Unattached single with a disability

Single parent with one child aged 2

Couple with two children aged 10 and 15

Assumptions about our four example household types:

- Started to receive social assistance on January 1 and remained on assistance for the entire year
- Had no earnings so were eligible to receive the maximum rate of assistance
- Lived in the largest city in their province or territory
- Lived in private market housing and utility costs were included in the rent
- Filed an income tax return at the end of the previous tax year
- The heads of all households were deemed fully employable, except for the single person with a disability.

Components of welfare income

Provincial and Territorial sources

- Basic social assistance
- Additional social assistance
- Tax credits and benefits
- Child benefits

Federal sources

- Tax credits and benefits
- Canada Child Benefit

Measures of adequacy

Measures of poverty

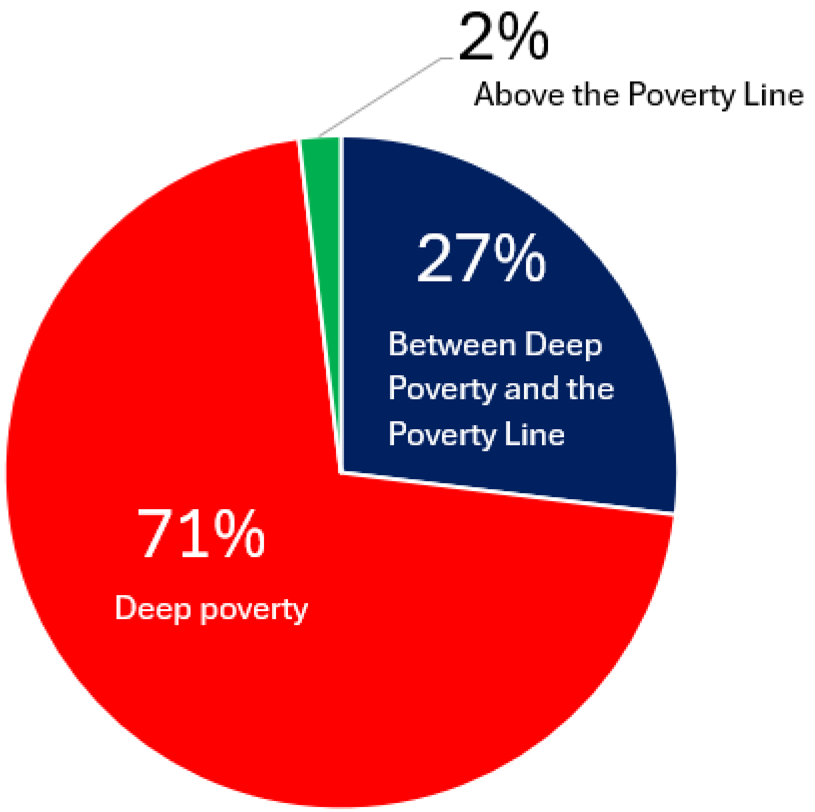
- Canada's Official Poverty Line, the Market Basket Measure (MBM) and Northern Market Basket Measure (MBM-N)
- Deep income poverty threshold, 75% of the MBM (MBM-DIP) or MBM-N (MBM-N-DIP)

Measures of low income

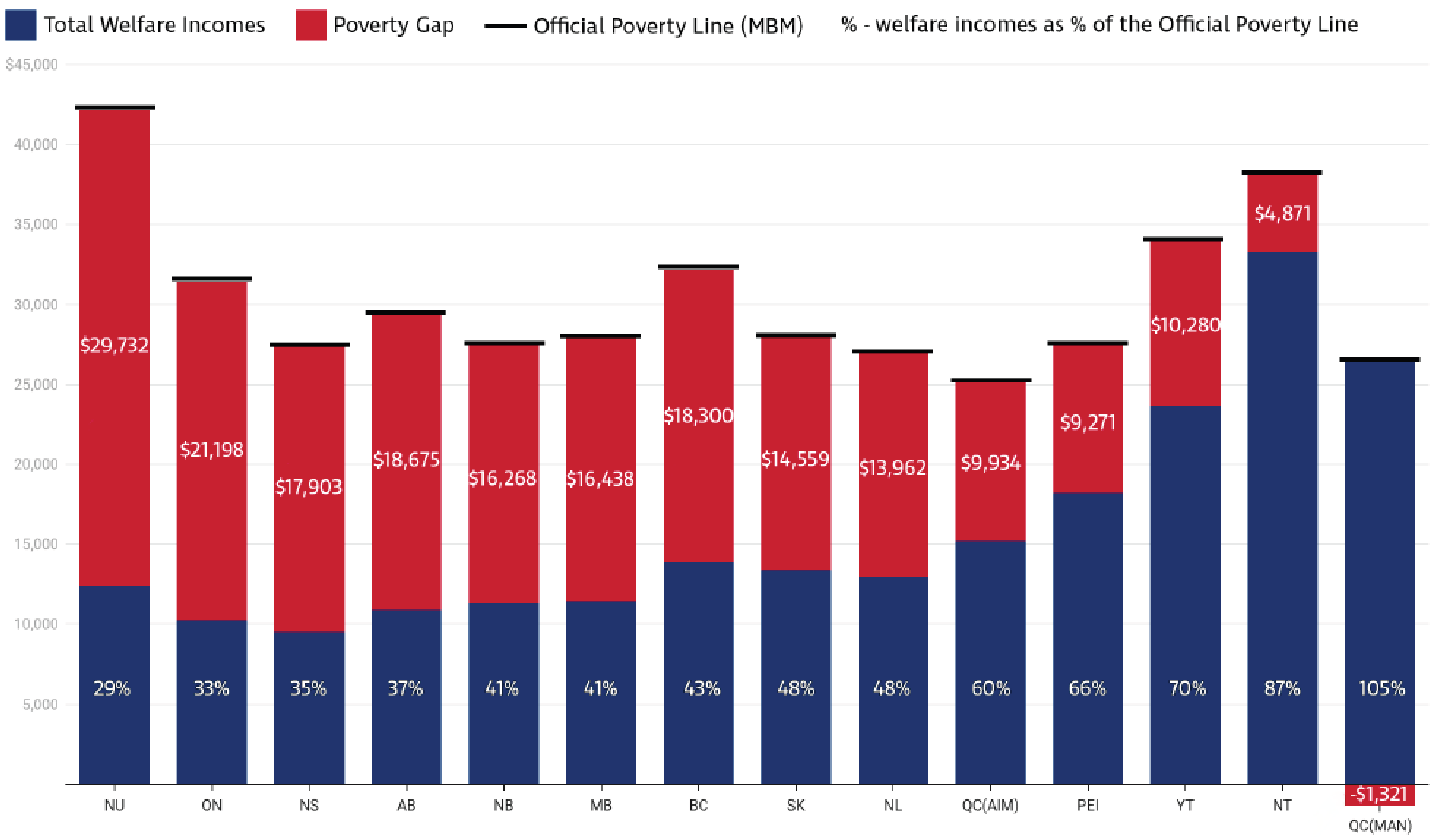
- Low income measure (LIM)
- Low income cut-offs (LICO)

Adequacy in 2025: Overview

- **98%** of households (55 of 56) were living below the Official Poverty Line
  - 43 of 44 in the provinces
  - 12 of 12 in the territories
- **71%** of households (40 of 56) were living at or below the Deep Income Poverty threshold (75% of the Official Poverty Line)
  - 35 of 44 in the provinces
  - 5 of 12 in the territories

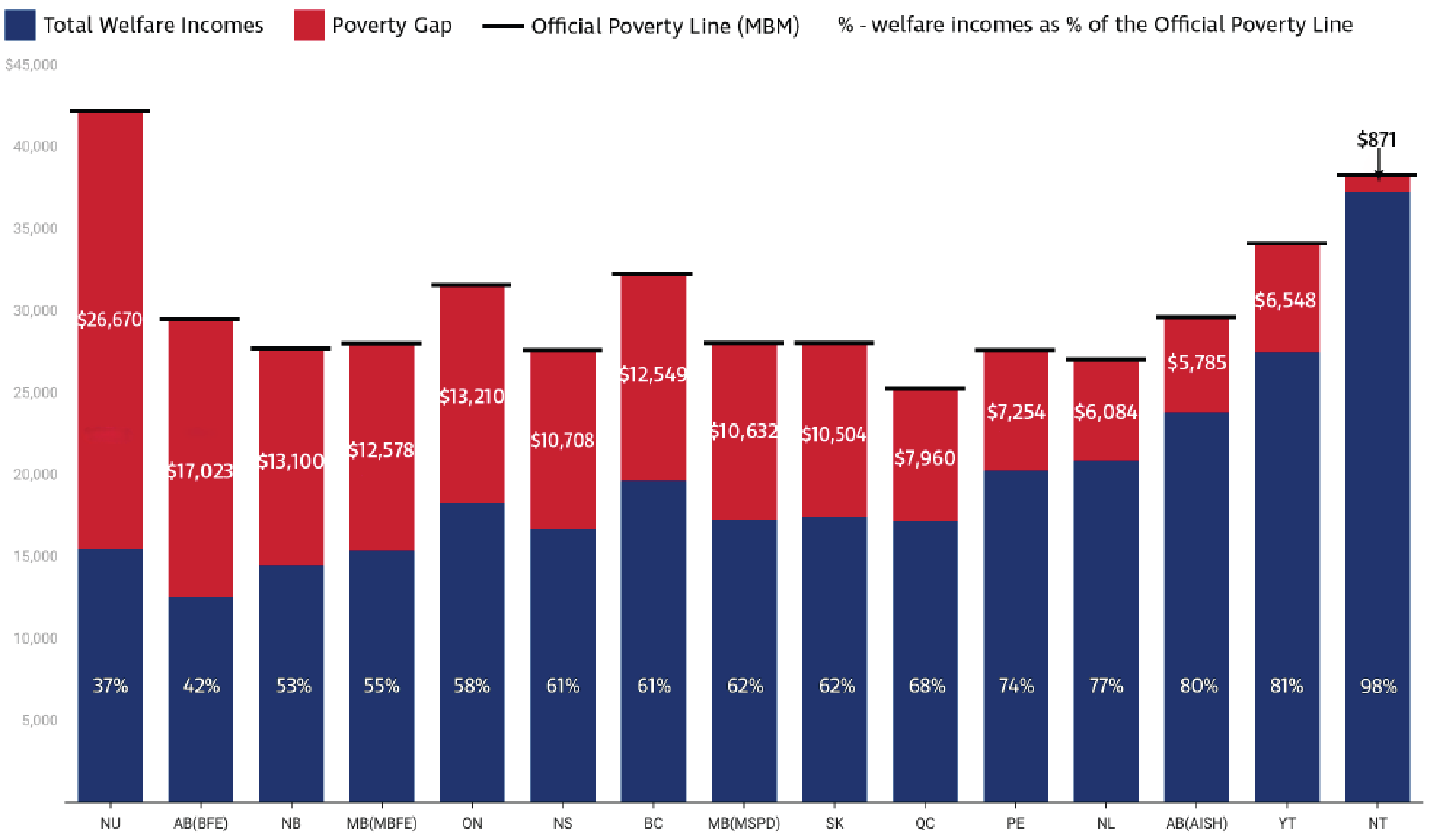


Adequacy: Unattached single considered employable



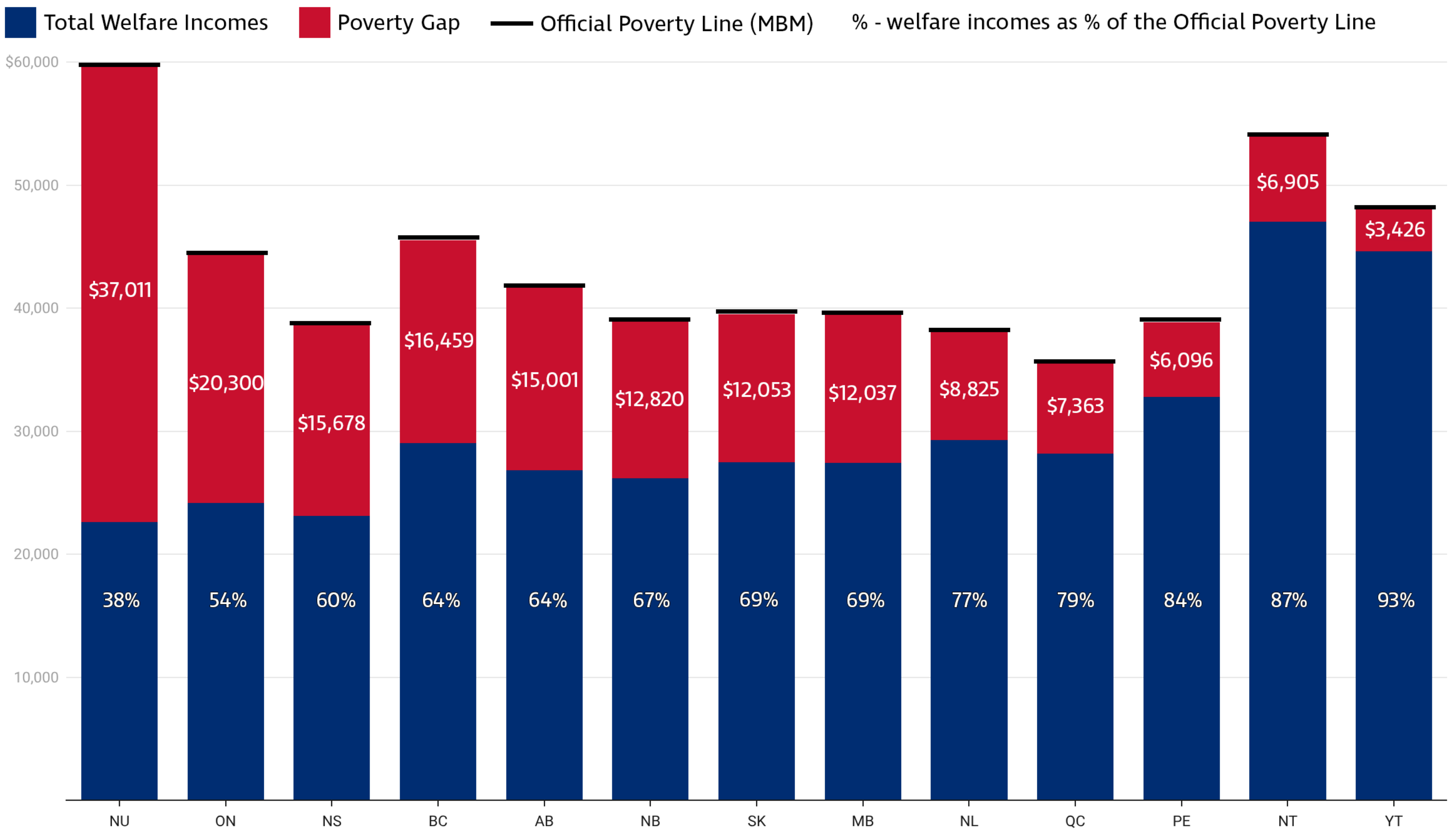
Note: AIM refers to Quebec's Aim for Employment program. MAN refers to Quebec's Manpower Training measure.

Adequacy: Unattached single with a disability

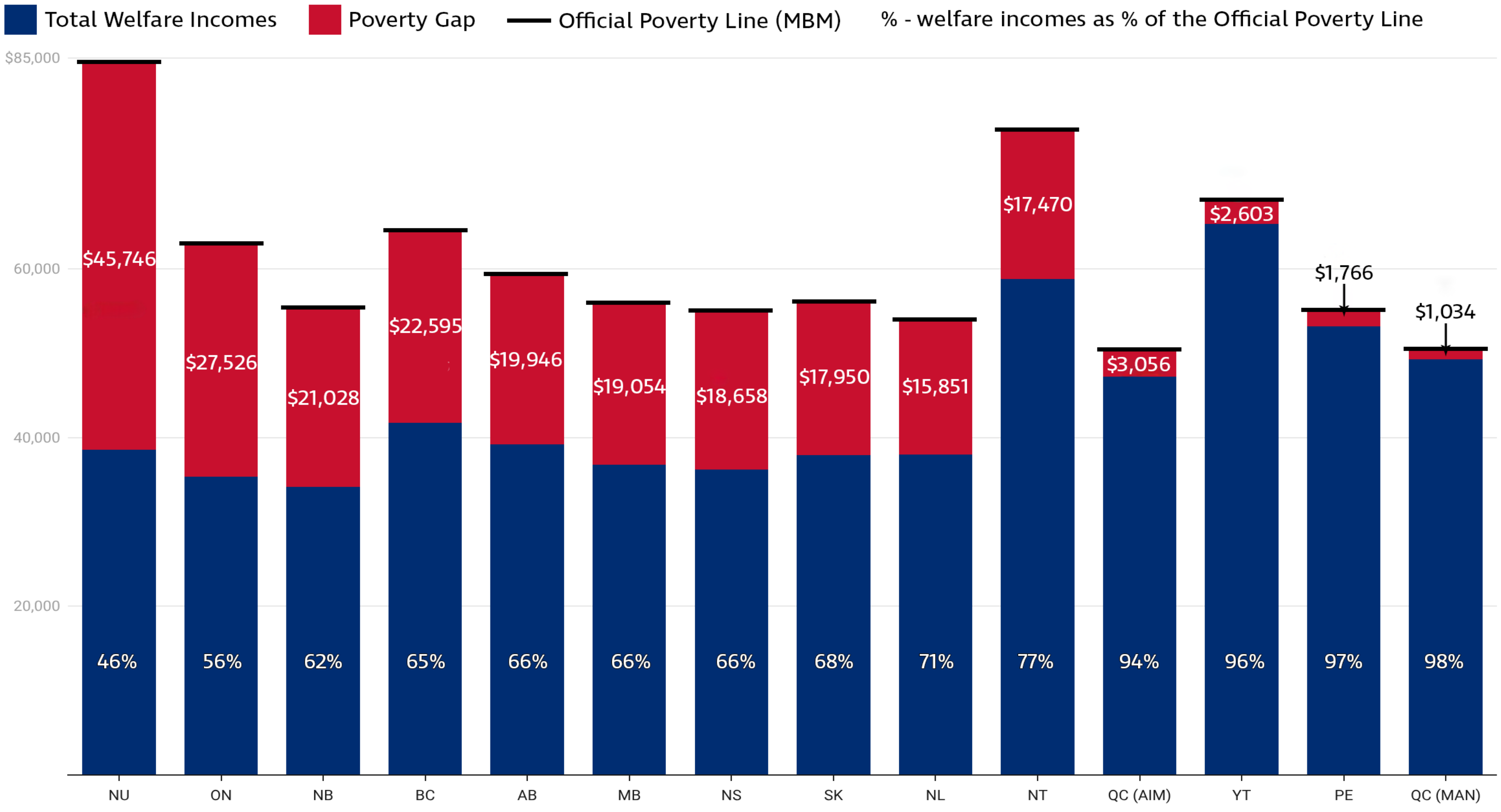


Note: BFE refers to the Barriers to Full Employment category of Alberta's Income Support program. AISH refers to Alberta's Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped program. MBFE refers to the Medical Barriers to Full Employment category of Manitoba's Employment and Income Assistance program. MSPD refers to the Manitoba Supports for Persons with Disabilities program.

Adequacy: Single parent with one child



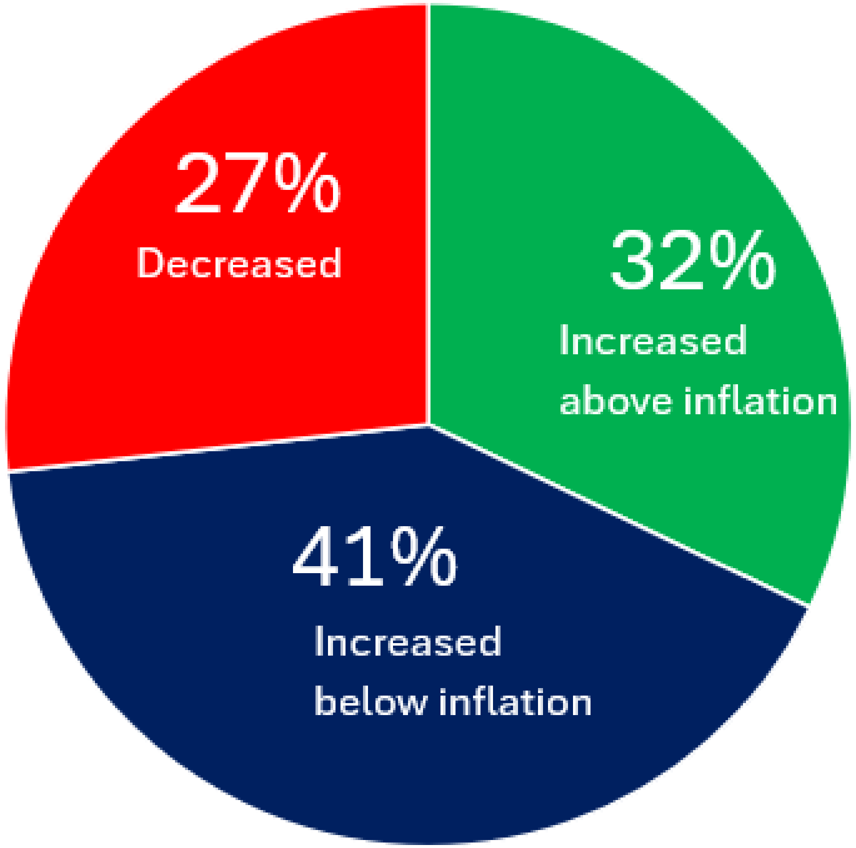
Adequacy: Couple with two children



Note: AIM refers to Quebec's Aim for Employment program. MAN refers to Quebec's Manpower Training measure.

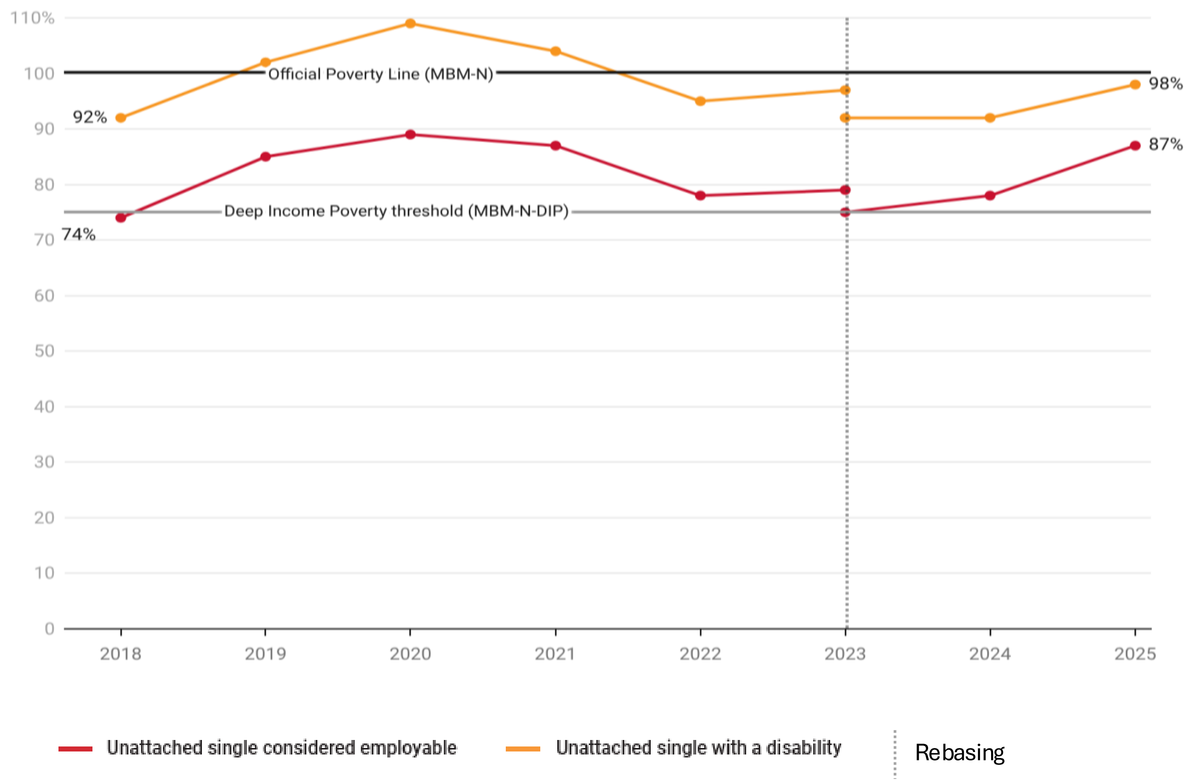
Adequacy 2024-2025: Changes relative to inflation

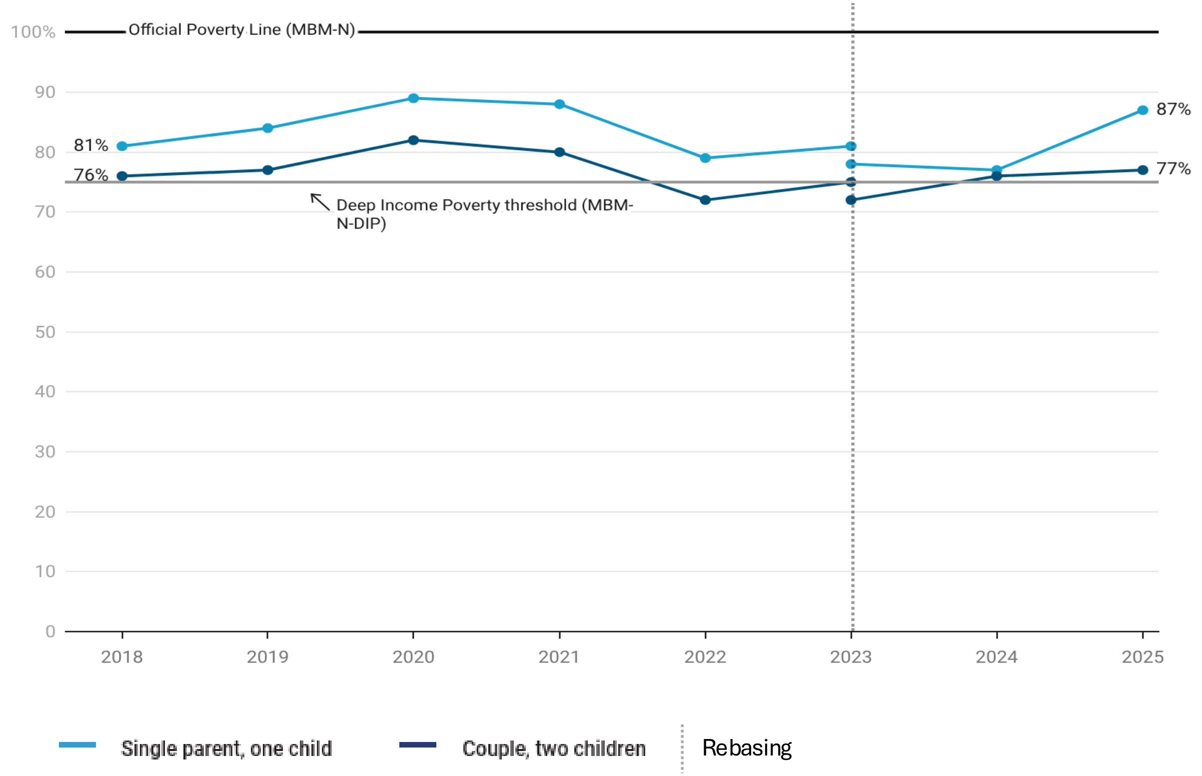
- Improvements to welfare incomes did not keep pace with the national rate of inflation in 2025 (2.1%)
- 15 of 56 households saw their total incomes decline
- 23 of 56 households had nominal income increases wiped out by inflation
- 18 of 56 households had their incomes increase at a rate higher than inflation



Adequacy over time

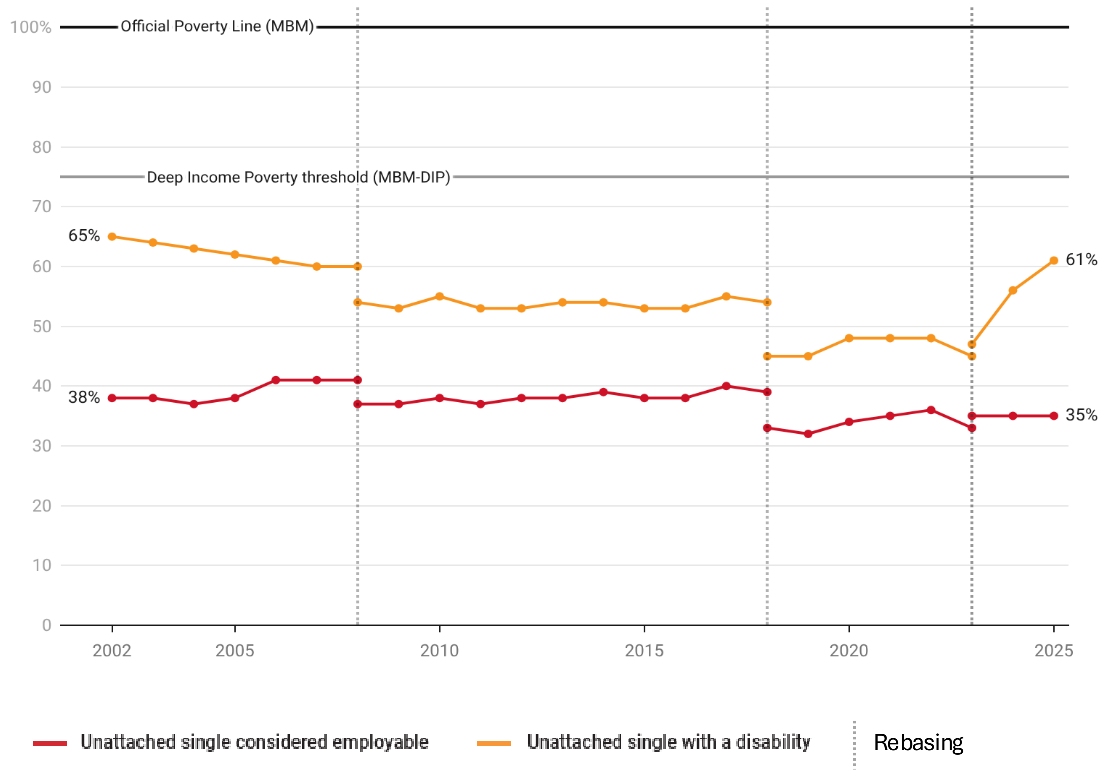
Northwest Territories



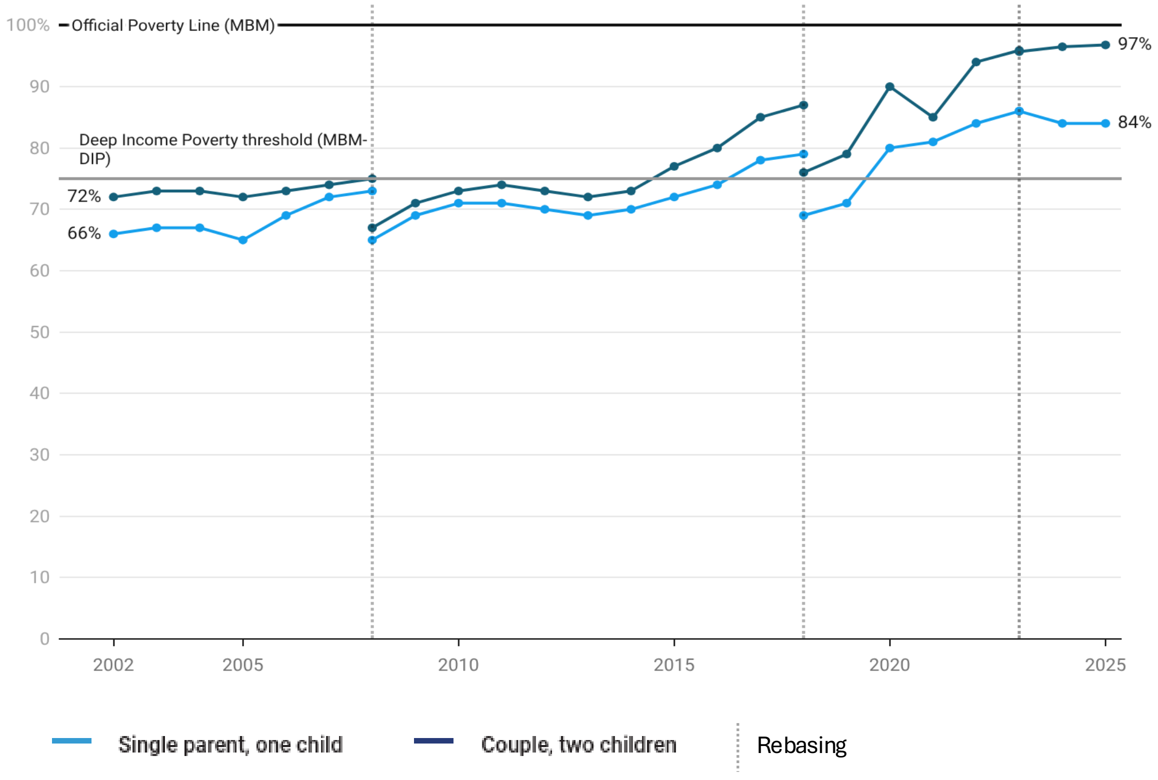


Adequacy over time

Nova Scotia

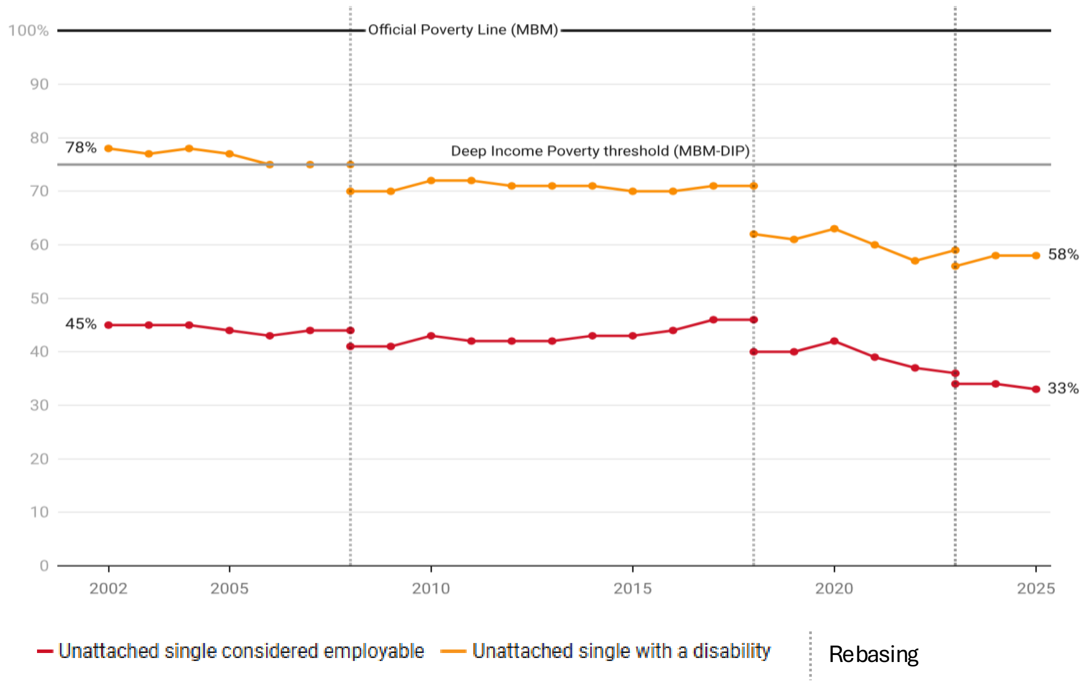


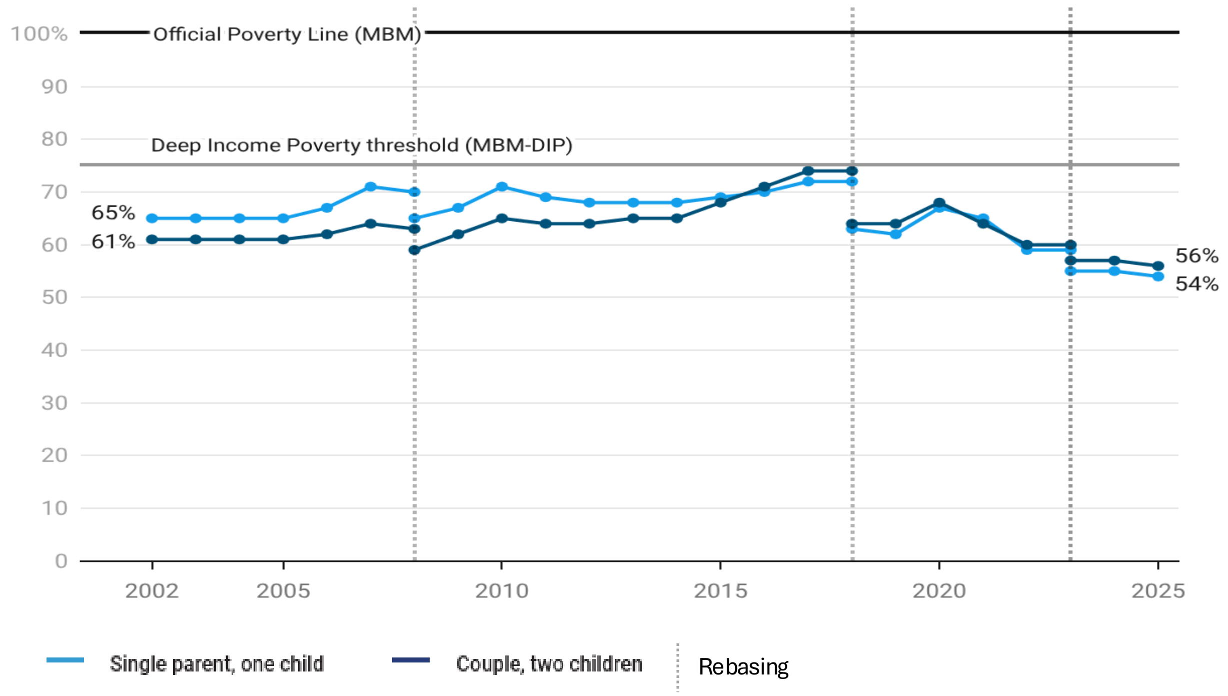
Prince Edward Island



Adequacy over time

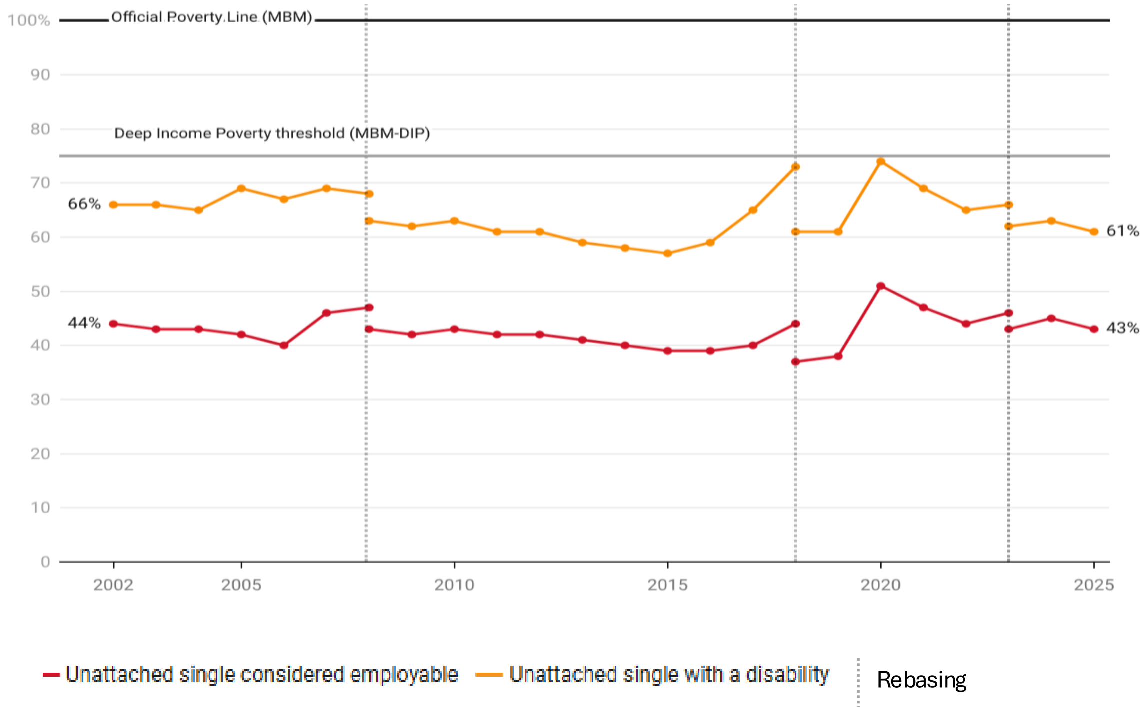
Ontario

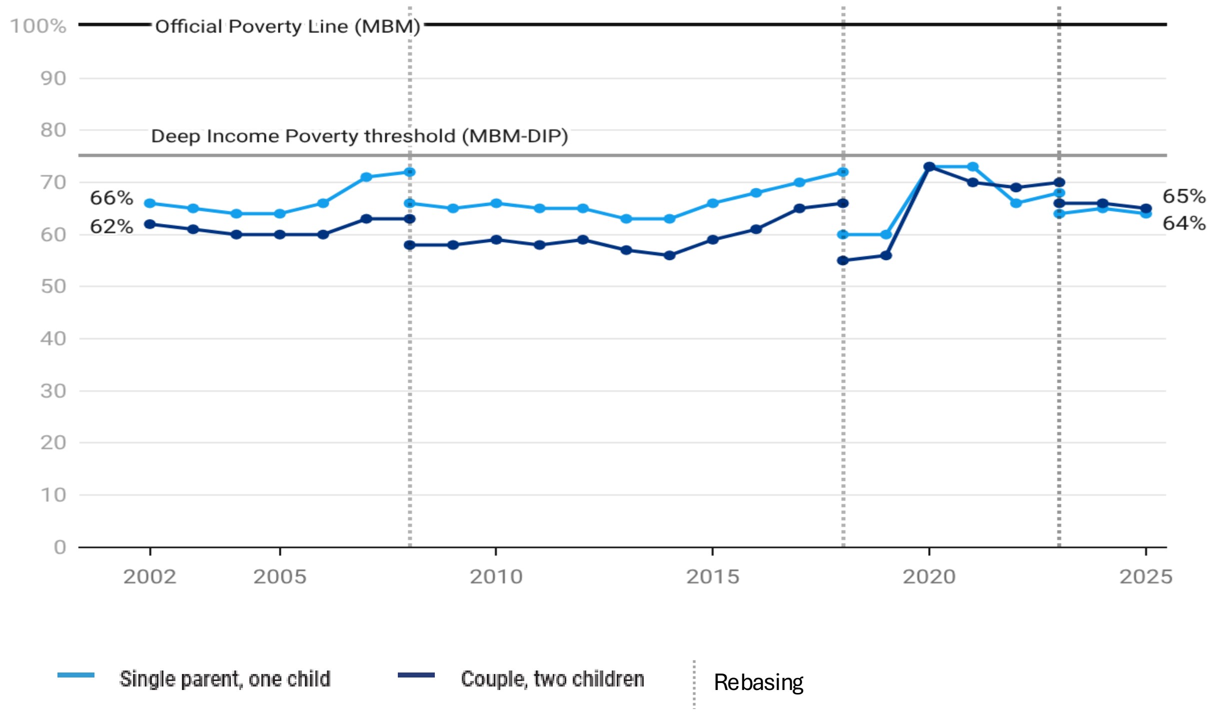




Adequacy over time

British Columbia





Carbon tax rebate losses in 2025

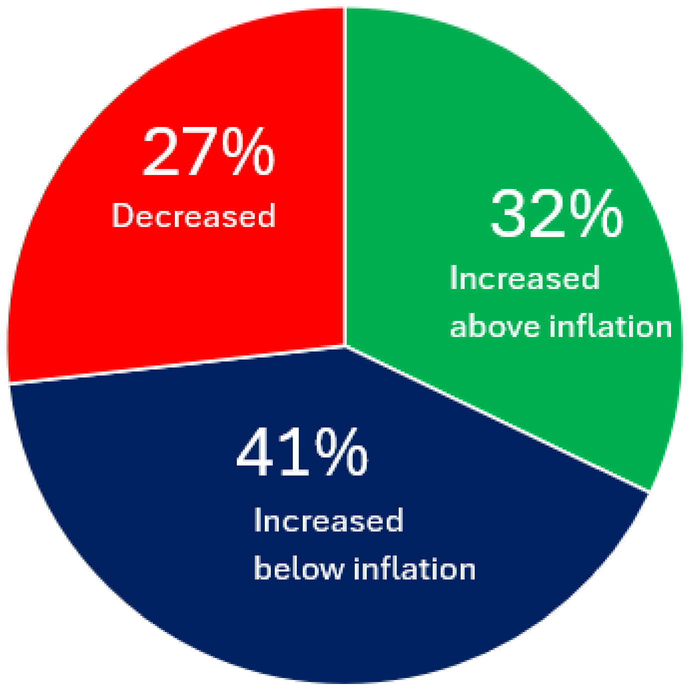
	Program	Loss in %	Loss in $		
			Single adults (both considered employable and with a disability)	Single parent with one child	Couple with two children
AB	Canada Carbon Rebate	48%	$415	$622.50	$830
BC	BC Climate Action Tax Credit	47%	$223.50	$335.25	$446.75
MB	Canada Carbon Rebate	48%	$282	$423	$564
NB	Canada Carbon Rebate	44%	$164	$246	$328
NL	Canada Carbon Rebate	51%	$313	$469.50	$626
NT	NT Cost of Living Offset	50%	$220.50	$467	$934
NS	Canada Carbon Rebate	51%	$220	$357	$440
NU	Nunavut Carbon Credit	75%	$154	$308	$616
ON	Canada Carbon Rebate	46%	$251	$376.50	$502
PE	Canada Carbon Rebate	51%	$230	$345	$460
SK	Canada Carbon Rebate	46%	$340	$510	$680
YT	Yukon Government Carbon Price Rebate	55%	$186	$372	$744

Amount of carbon rebate lost by each *Welfare in Canada* household in all jurisdictions, 2025 vs 2024, in dollars and percentages

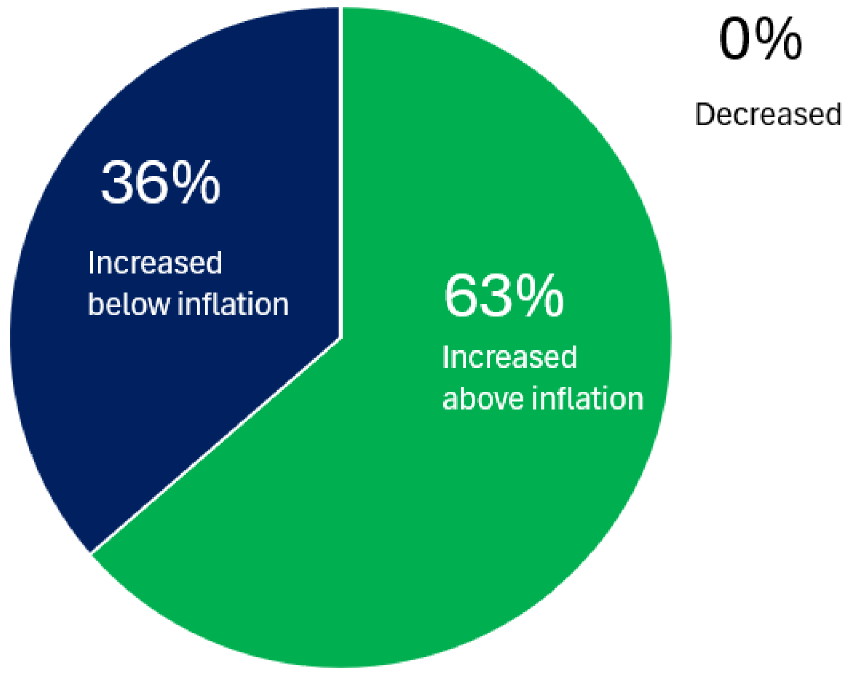
- Rebate programs ended in spring 2025
- Households received significantly less in 2025 compared to 2024
- By 2026, households will have lost the entire 2024 value of the rebate

Impact of carbon tax rebate losses in 2025

With loss of carbon tax rebates



Without loss of carbon tax rebates

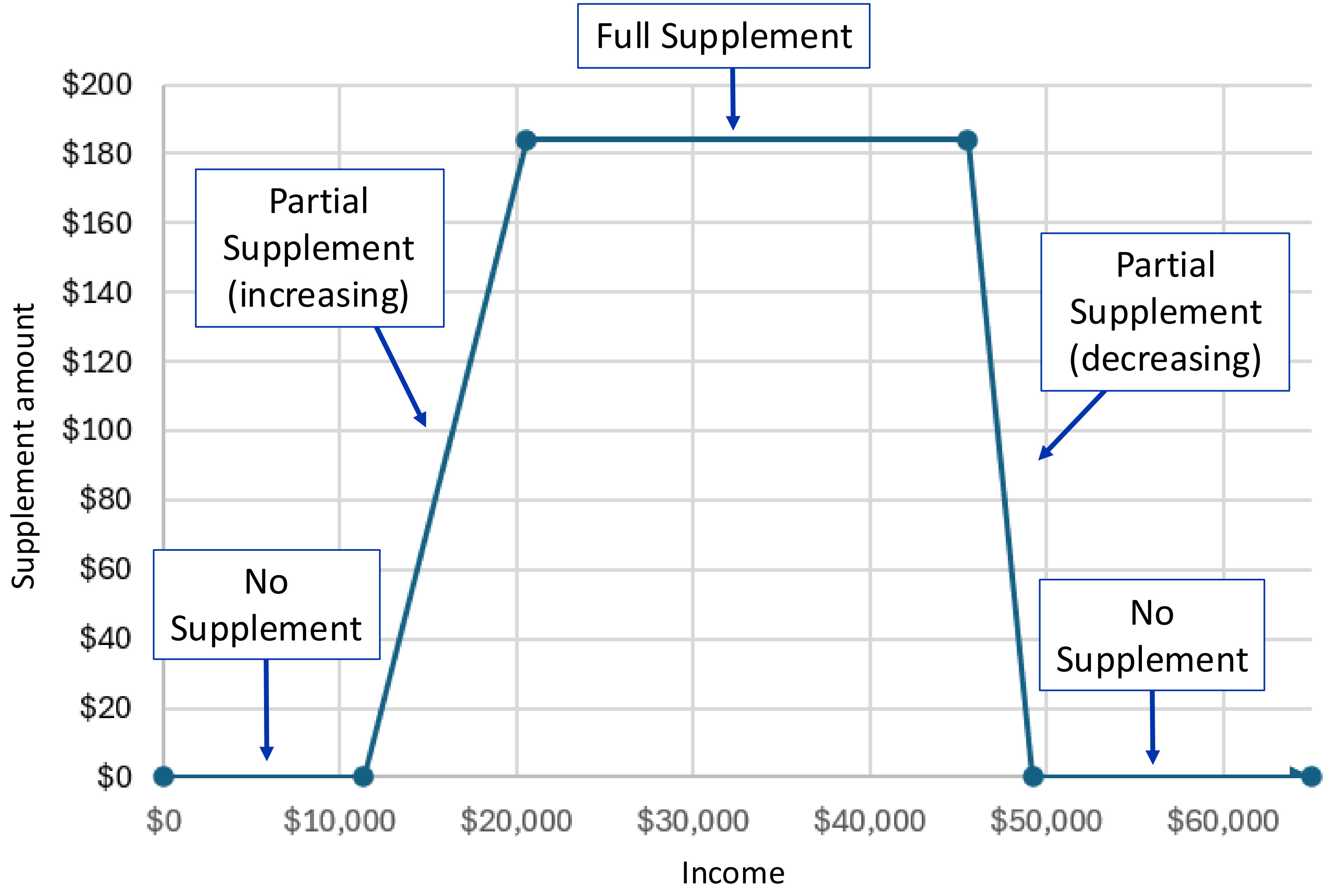


Note: This analysis assumes the same carbon tax rebate amounts for the last half of 2025 as were received in the first half

Federal tax credit design disadvantages lowest incomes

- **GST Credit**
  - "To offset the impact of the GST"
  - Base credit for tax filer + amount for spouse + amount for children
  - Supplement for single adults – help with costs of maintaining a separate household
  - Base credit in 2025 ~$345, Supplement ~$182
- **GST Credit → Canada Groceries and Essentials Benefit (CGEB) in 2026.**
  - "To support those most affected by the rising price of food"
  - 25% increase, 2026-2031
  - 50% top-up, 2026
- **But the lowest income single adults won't fully benefit due to a structural disadvantage carried over from the design of the GST Credit Supplement**

Design of GST Credit / CGEB Singles Supplement



Of 29 single adult households in *Welfare in Canada:*

- Only 4 will receive the full CGEB increase in 2026
- 20 will receive part of the 25% increase and 17 will receive part of the 50% top-up
- Five – those with the lowest incomes – will receive no additional benefit at all.

The vast majority of *Welfare in Canada* households will receive either no additional benefit or only a partial benefit because the structure of the Supplement favours those with higher incomes.

Shelter benefits and housing costs

Asking prices for a room versus monthly shelter or combined benefits for an unattached single considered employable, by CMA, 2025

Census Metropolitan Area (CMA)	Average of quarterly asking prices for a room	Social Assistance		Difference (Rent Gap)
		Maximum monthly shelter benefit	Maximum monthly combined benefit	
Calgary	$730	$373	-	-$357
Vancouver	$1,085	$500	-	-$585
Winnipeg	$592.50	$676	-	$83.50
Moncton	$682.50	-	$875	$192.50
St. John's	$685	$522	-	-$163
Halifax	$857.50	-	$726	-$132
Toronto	$842.50	$390	-	-$453
Montreal	$715	-	$829	$114
Saskatoon	$680	$660	-	-$20

Note: Average monthly asking prices for housing in smaller urban centres are not available so we can't show comparisons for the territories or for Prince Edward Island.

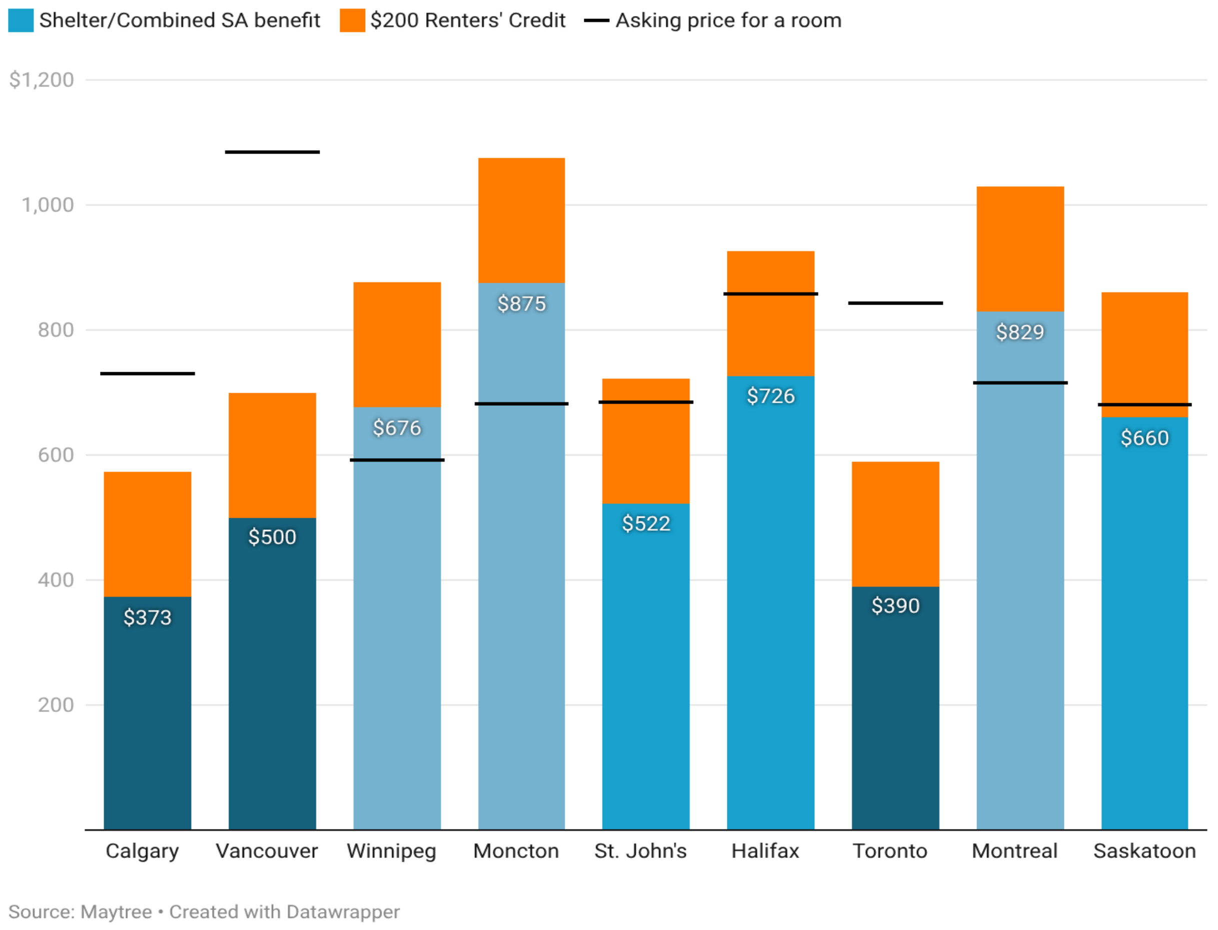
Separate shelter benefit (in white):

- 5 out of 6 are not enough to pay for a room

Combined benefit (in light blue):

- 1 out of 3 is not enough to pay for a room
- The other 2 leave only a small amount for all other needs

Maytree’s proposal: Canada Renters Credit



The CRC’s impact on affordability of a room for an unattached single considered employable, by CMA, 2025

- **The Canada Renters Credit:**
  - Up to $200 per month for single adult renter
  - Those with incomes below 75 per cent of the Low Income Measure (LIM) would get the full amount
  - Gradual reduction as incomes increase
- **The CRC would:**
  - Fill the gap in 3 of 6 CMAs
  - Help close the gap in 3 more

Look for "Proposal for a Canada Renters Credit" at maytree.com.

Canada Disability Benefit: changes needed

The Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) began rolling out in July 2025.

Design improvements are needed to address unnecessary barriers and unintended consequences – for example:

- The maximum benefit and the income threshold are far too low
- The benefit is being clawed back in Alberta
- Eligibility is overly restrictive.

Eligibility: People who have already qualified as a person with a disability for social assistance should be automatically eligible for the CDB.

A more **adequate** and **accessible** benefit would reduce the depth of poverty for many people with disabilities.

Look for "From screening out to welcoming in: Promoting access to federal disability benefits" at maytree.com.

Summary of major themes

- Total welfare incomes fail to provide income security
- Inadequacy has persisted over time
- Changes in other policy areas can have major impacts on income security
- The loss of small benefit amounts can have a big impact
- The structure of benefits makes a difference – structural disadvantage persists
- Shelter benefits aren't enough to pay for rent – direct transfers are required
- Access to federal disability benefits needs to improve
- The federal government can and should do more

Policy recommendations

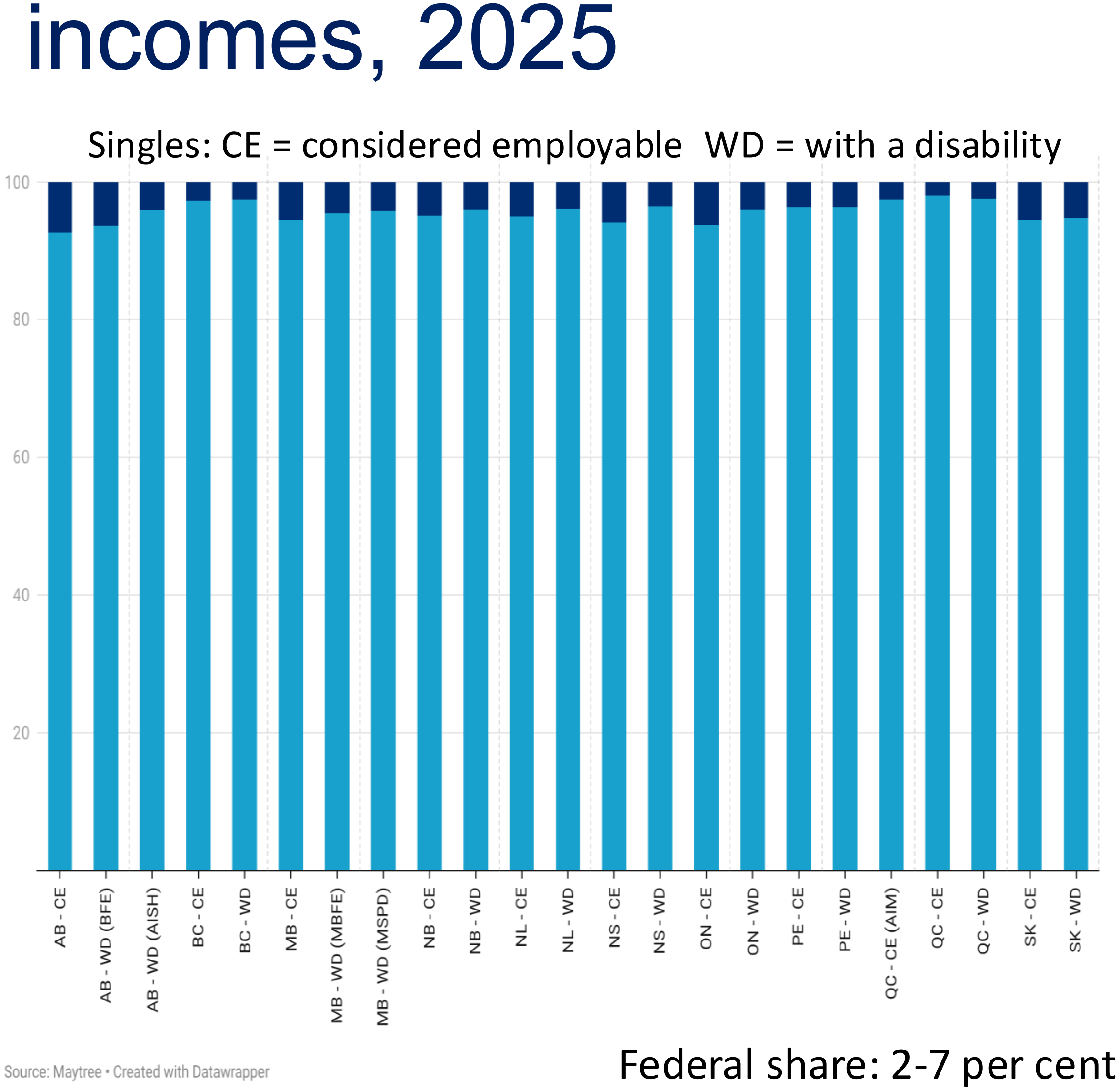
1. **The provinces and territories must invest in the adequacy of welfare incomes:**
   - Invest in higher social assistance benefits and tax-delivered income supports.
   - Index all social assistance benefits and tax-delivered income supports to inflation where they don't already do so.
2. **The federal government must do more to support people receiving social assistance:**
   - Change the structure of the Canada Groceries and Essentials Benefit so that the full Supplement amount goes to all low-income single adults
   - Provide a new federal direct housing transfer, like the proposed Canada Renters Credit, to help with housing affordability now

Policy recommendations: cont'd

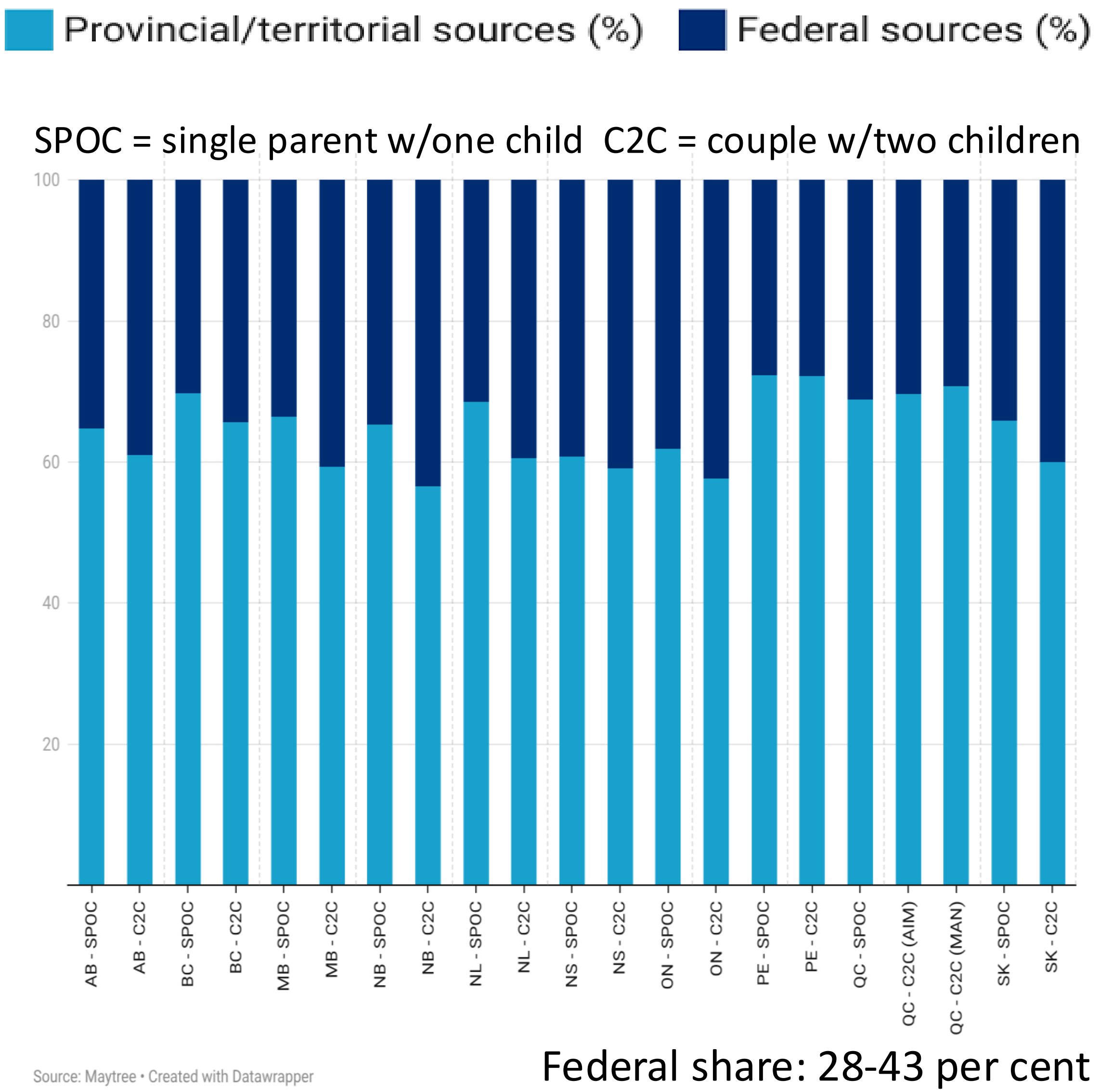
- **Fix the Canada Disability Benefit so that eligibility is granted automatically to anyone who qualifies for social assistance as a person with a disability in their province or territory.**
- **Use other policy levers at their disposal, such as:**
  - Increasing the Canada Social Transfer to assist provinces and territories to raise social assistance benefit rates
  - Increasing the value of existing refundable tax credits - Canada Workers Benefit, Canada Disability Benefit, Canada Child Benefit
  - Leading efforts to create a joint federal, provincial, and territorial plan to achieve adequate welfare incomes and an end to poverty.

Thank You!

Federal vs provincial / territorial share of total welfare incomes, 2025



Federal share: 2-7 per cent



Federal share: 28-43 per cent

Benefits for housed vs unhoused for unattached single considered employable households, 2025

	Unattached single considered employable		$ difference	% difference
	Housed	Unhoused		
AB	$824	$459	-$365	-44%
BC	$1,060	$635	-$425	-40%
MB	$883	$245	-$638	-72%
NB	$860	$660	-$200	-23%
NL	$931	$561	-$370	-40%
NT	$2,453	$573	-$1,880	-77%
NS	$704	$403	-$301	-43%
NU	$1,003	$914	-$89	-9%
ON	$733	$343	-$390	-53%
PE	$1,452	$577	-$875	-60%
QC	$829	$829	$0	0%
SK	$1,005	$355	-$650	-65%
YT	$1,725	$495	-$1,229	-71%