

Yukon Poverty Report Card 2025

What Data Does and Doesn't Tell Us About Poverty in the Yukon



CAMPAIGN **2000**
END CHILD & FAMILY
POVERTY

March 2026



Yukon Anti-Poverty
COALITION
anti-pauvreté du Yukon

About the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition

The Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition works to facilitate the elimination of poverty in the Yukon through awareness, education, advocacy, action, and community building. The Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition works on issues involving food, shelter, income and access to services with over 600 community members including representatives from non-governmental organizations, elected officials, and representatives from the business and faith communities.

The vision of the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition is that all people in the Yukon live in an inclusive community free from poverty where diversity is respected and human rights are upheld. The official mandate of the organization is to:

- Foster strategies, actions, and partnerships with organizations to reduce and prevent poverty in the Yukon
- Identify gaps, support collaboration, and facilitate the development of solutions to deal with the effects of poverty
- Provide specific programming to alleviate the impacts of poverty on individuals and families
- Provide safe and welcoming spaces for new ideas and solutions to be incubated and supported
- Increase awareness of the causes of poverty and its impacts on Yukon people
- Provide factual information on poverty based on research and lived experience
- Coordinate actions and information regarding poverty within and outside the Yukon
- Advocate and support individuals and families to navigate current systems
- Advocate for positive systemic change with partner organizations

For more information:

Visit: www.yapc.ca • Email: info@yapc.ca • Call: (867) 332-7450

About the authors

Kendall Hammond is a public policy researcher. He holds a Master of Public Administration from the University of Victoria and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of British Columbia.

Keitha Clark is a project coordinator with the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition. She holds a Master of Education from Athabasca University and a Bachelor of Journalism from the University of King's College.

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About Campaign 2000

Campaign 2000 is a cross-Canada public education movement to build Canadian awareness and support for the 1989 all-party House of Commons resolution to end child poverty in Canada by the year 2000.

Campaign 2000 began in 1991 out of concern about the lack of government progress in addressing child poverty. Campaign 2000 is non-partisan in urging all Canadian elected officials to keep their promise to Canada's children. The Campaign 2000 coalition consists of 120 partners committed to addressing the issue of child and family poverty and believe that the federal government has a responsibility to honour the all-party resolution to end child poverty.

One accountability tool used by Campaign 2000 and its coalition partners is producing poverty report cards for Canada and the provinces and territories as a means of highlighting the challenges specific to each province and territory.

The Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition is a partner in Campaign 2000 and produced this poverty report card for the Yukon.

Land Acknowledgement

This report was prepared on the traditional territories of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council in Whitehorse, Yukon.

Introduction

The Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition previously released Poverty Report Cards in 2020 and 2022 as part of their partnership with Campaign 2000. This report is the third Poverty Report Card for the Yukon and is organized into three sections:

Section 1: What We Do Know presents the available data on poverty in the Yukon, drawing from Statistics Canada, the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, and national reporting frameworks.

Section 2: What We Don't Know examines the significant gaps in Yukon poverty data. Limited territorial-level information makes it more difficult to fully understand who is most affected by poverty and how conditions are changing over time.

Section 3: What We Can Do identifies where improved data collection, frequency, framing and reporting can help better understand poverty in the Yukon and how we can address it.



Section 1: WHAT WE DO KNOW

How is Poverty Measured in the Yukon?

The Government of Canada enacted the *Poverty Reduction Act* in 2019. This legislation affirmed the Market Basket Measure as the official measure of poverty for Canada, set national targets for poverty reduction (a 20% reduction in poverty by 2020 and a 50% reduction by 2030 compared to 2015 levels), and established a National Advisory Council on Poverty to provide independent advice to the federal government in relation to programs, funding, and activities that contribute to poverty reduction.¹

The Market Basket Measure establishes thresholds of poverty based on the cost of a defined basket of food, clothing, shelter, transportation, communications services, and other items that reflect a modest, basic standard of living. To purchase the market basket, the household must have an income sufficient to: eat a nutritious diet; buy clothing for work and social occasions; house themselves in their community; and pay for other necessary expenditures such as transportation, personal care, household needs, furniture, reading, recreation, entertainment, and school supplies. Any household with a level of disposable income lower than the cost of the basket for its household size in their region is considered to be experiencing poverty.²

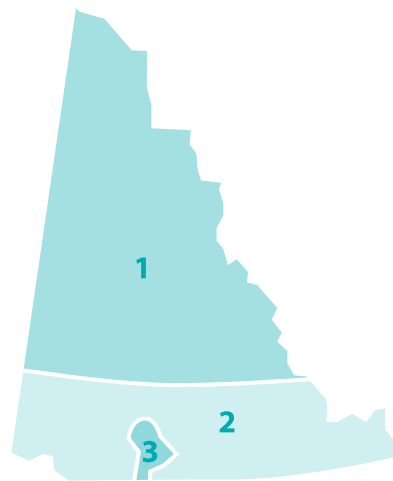
The Northern Market Basket Measure is an adaptation of the Market Basket Measure that reflects life and conditions in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, available data sources, and consideration of the logistical challenges associated with data sampling in the two territories. For example, the clothing and footwear basket for the Northern Market Basket Measure is modified to account for the colder climate in the territories.³ Statistics Canada first released public data in 2018 regarding the prevalence of poverty in the Yukon using the Northern Market Basket Measure and releases updated data each year through the Canadian Income Survey.

What is the “Poverty Line” for the Yukon?

As noted above, the Northern Market Basket Measure establishes poverty thresholds based on the cost of a defined basket of goods and services for a particular region. The thresholds are based on the costs incurred by a reference household of four consisting of two adults (one male and one female both between the ages of 25 and 49) and two children (a girl age 9 and a boy age 13).

Statistics Canada calculates poverty thresholds using the Northern Market Basket Measure for three regions in the Yukon:

- 1. Rural North** (includes communities north of the 62nd parallel as well as the community of Ross River as its costs are more similar to other communities in the Rural North region)
- 2. Rural South** (includes communities south of the 62nd parallel except Whitehorse)
- 3. Whitehorse**



It is also worth noting that Statistics Canada does not calculate the Northern Market Basket Measure for the community of Old Crow, which would likely have a substantially higher poverty threshold due to the significantly higher cost of living compared to other Yukon communities.⁴

Statistics Canada most recently reported poverty thresholds for the three Yukon regions for 2024. In 2024, the poverty thresholds for all three regions were quite similar with the Rural North being the lowest at \$63,265 and Whitehorse being the highest at \$65,929. Whitehorse had the highest poverty threshold of the three regions in each year since 2020 due to significantly higher shelter costs even though the cost of all other component goods and services were higher in the Rural North and Rural South regions.⁵

Northern Market Basket Measure poverty thresholds (2023 base year), by Yukon region, by year since 2020.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Whitehorse	\$56,631	\$58,227	\$62,317	\$65,089	\$65,929
shelter	\$20,561	\$21,234	\$22,671	\$23,772	\$24,246
food	\$13,673	\$13,857	\$15,102	\$16,367	\$16,816
clothing	\$3,502	\$3,587	\$3,673	\$3,745	\$3,608
transportation	\$7,079	\$7,586	\$8,423	\$8,601	\$8,680
communication services	\$3,167	\$3,029	\$2,910	\$2,603	\$2,379
other expenses	\$8,650	\$8,932	\$9,537	\$10,000	\$10,199
Rural South	\$55,774	\$57,273	\$61,386	\$64,242	\$65,071
shelter	\$12,819	\$13,238	\$14,134	\$14,820	\$15,115
food	\$17,673	\$17,911	\$19,520	\$21,155	\$21,736
clothing	\$3,882	\$3,977	\$4,072	\$4,153	\$4,000
transportation	\$7,437	\$7,970	\$8,850	\$9,037	\$9,119
communication services	\$3,190	\$3,051	\$2,931	\$2,622	\$2,397
other expenses	\$10,773	\$11,125	\$11,878	\$12,455	\$12,703
Rural North	\$54,320	\$55,823	\$59,807	\$62,496	\$63,265
shelter	\$14,011	\$14,470	\$15,449	\$16,199	\$16,522
food	\$15,676	\$15,887	\$17,314	\$18,765	\$19,279
clothing	\$3,922	\$4,019	\$4,115	\$4,196	\$4,042
transportation	\$7,786	\$8,344	\$9,265	\$9,460	\$9,547
communication services	\$3,190	\$3,051	\$2,931	\$2,622	\$2,397
other expenses	\$9,734	\$10,052	\$10,733	\$11,254	\$11,478

It is worth noting that the reference household developed by Statistics Canada does not reflect the diversity of living situations in the Yukon. To address this limitation, Statistics Canada uses a square root equivalence scale to determine the poverty thresholds for other household sizes. To calculate the poverty thresholds for various household sizes, the poverty threshold for the reference household is divided by the square root of the comparison household size. For example, a household of four requires twice as much income as a single person. This is a common approach used internationally to compare income inequality and poverty across countries.⁶

Statistics Canada uses a square root equivalence scale to determine the poverty thresholds for other household sizes.

Household Size	Square Root Scale	Threshold Multiplier
1	1.0	0.5
2	1.4	0.7
3	1.7	0.9
4	2.0	1.0
5	2.2	1.1
6	2.4	1.2
x	\sqrt{x}	$\sqrt{x}/2$

Source: Djidel, S., Gustajtis, B., Heisz, A., Lam, K., Marchand, I., and McDermett, S. (2020). Report on the second comprehensive review of the Market Basket Measure. *Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 75F0002M*

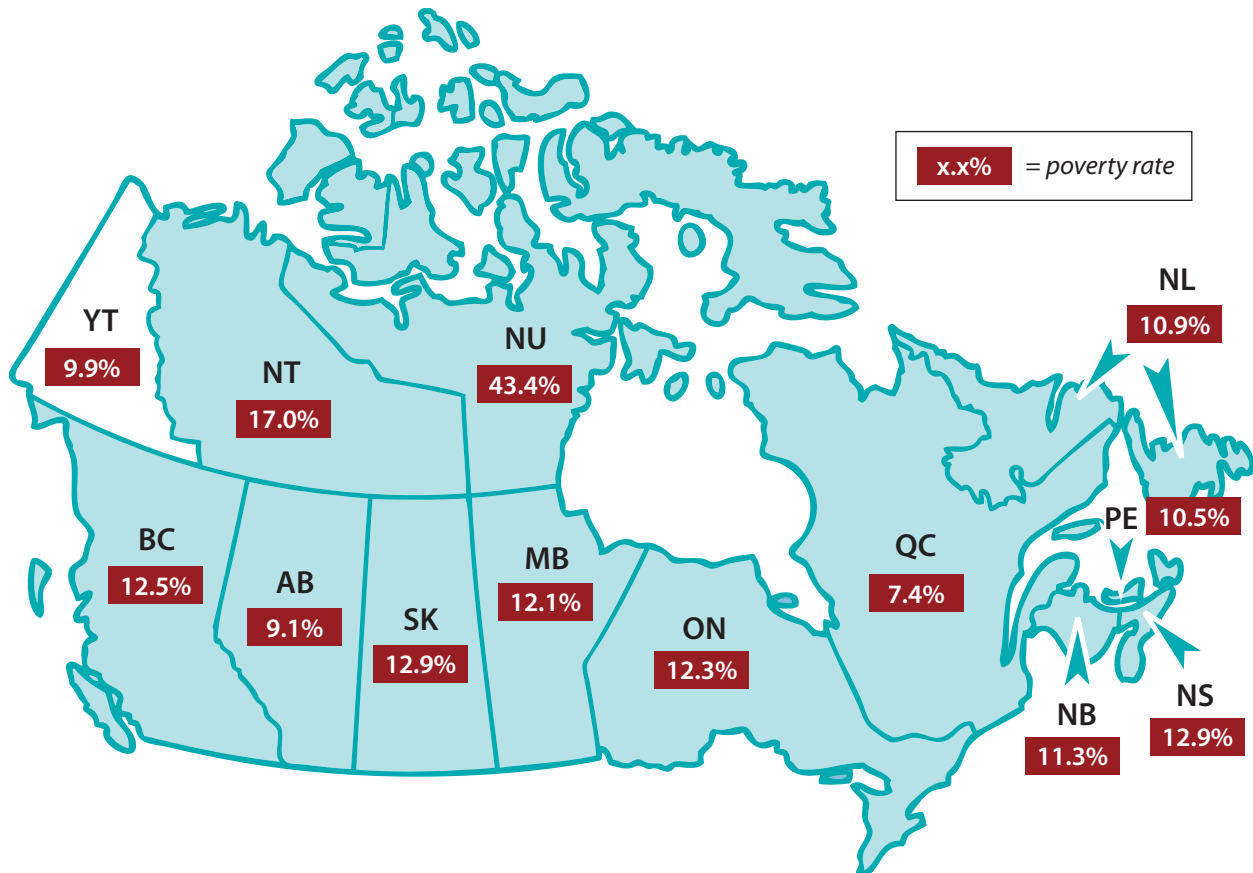
Using the square root equivalence scale, the poverty threshold in 2024 for a household of five living in Watson Lake (located in the Rural South region) equaled \$71,578 while the poverty threshold for a household of three in Dawson (located in the Rural North region) equaled \$56,539.

Other Indicators of Low Income

Statistics Canada also produces the Low Income Measure, which serves as an additional indicator of poverty in Canada. The Low Income Measure is defined as half the median household income (income is adjusted to account for household size). The Low Income Measure is the most frequently used measure internationally, particularly when making comparisons between countries. However, the primary reason for its popularity is its simplicity of calculation, not because of a sound scientific justification.⁷ The Low Income Measure fails to take into consideration the material needs of a person, family, or household to avoid the adverse health and social outcomes associated with poverty and does not account for regional differences in the cost of living, a major factor contributing to poverty in the Yukon. For example, the “Low Income Line” for a household of four based on the Low Income Measure (after-tax) equaled \$60,510 in 2023⁸, considerably lower than the poverty thresholds for each of the three Yukon regions at that time based on the Northern Market Basket Measure.

How Many People Experience Poverty in the Yukon?

Statistics Canada most recently reported that approximately 3,415 Yukoners experienced poverty in 2023 based on the Northern Market Basket Measure.⁹ The poverty rate for the Yukon equaled 9.9% in 2023, slightly below the national average of 10.2% and the lowest of the three territories.



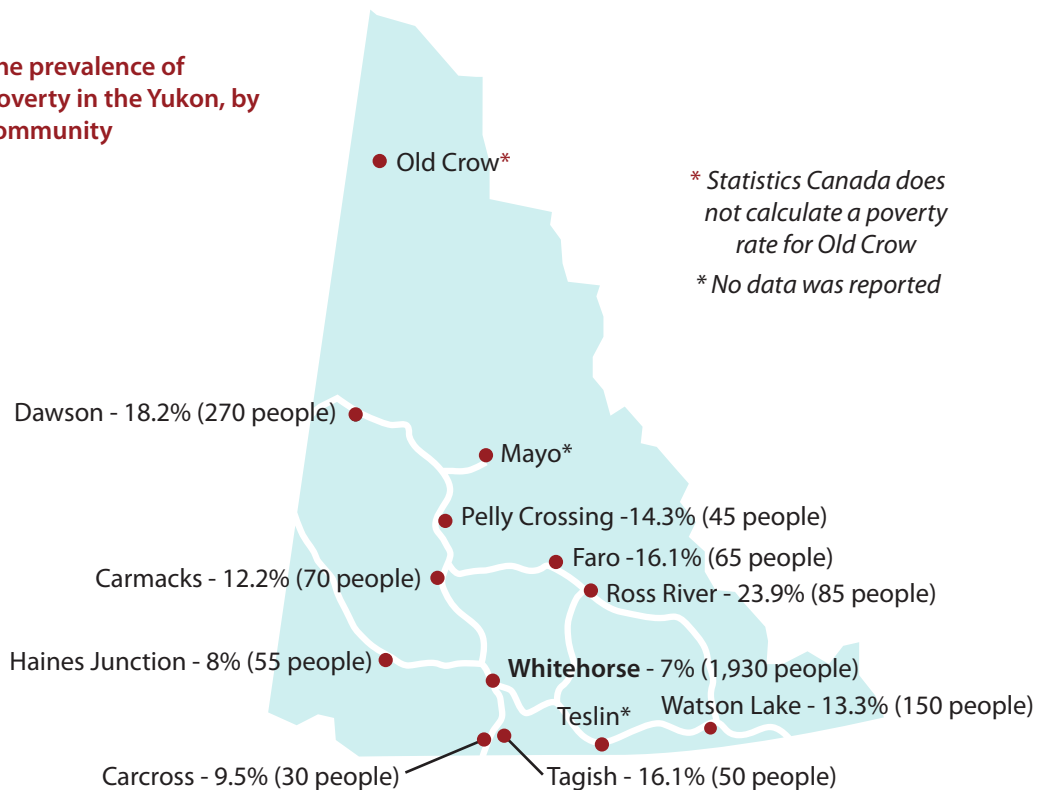
The Yukon poverty rate was slightly lower than the national average in 2023 largely due to higher labour force participation, lower unemployment, and higher average and median household earnings in the Yukon compared to the rest of Canada.^{10,11,12}

Although the Yukon has a marginally lower poverty rate compared to the rest of Canada, available data highlight the substantial inequities that exist in the Yukon based on location, age, household type, and other demographic characteristics. It is important to take a deeper look at the available data to identify who disproportionately experiences poverty in the territory and also to be aware of current data limitations that prevent us from fully understanding what other inequities may exist.

Poverty in Rural Communities

Statistics Canada reports that every Yukon community had a higher poverty rate than Whitehorse. In Ross River, nearly one in four residents experienced poverty. In Carmacks, Dawson, and Watson Lake, rates were more than double that of Whitehorse. These figures demonstrate that poverty in the Yukon is not evenly distributed, and that smaller and more remote communities experience significant inequities.

The prevalence of poverty in the Yukon, by community



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0109-01, 2021

Available data such as the Community Spatial Index produced by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics each quarter¹³ and the Food Cost Monitoring Study conducted by the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition in 2017¹⁴ suggest that the cost of goods and services are typically much higher in rural Yukon communities than in Whitehorse. Additionally, household incomes tend to be lower in rural Yukon communities than in Whitehorse due to higher rates of unemployment while most government transfers to individuals do not account for regional differences in the cost of living. These factors contribute to the higher poverty rates in rural Yukon communities compared to Whitehorse.

Poverty Among Young Adults

Young adults aged 18 to 24 experience the highest poverty rate of any age group in the Yukon. In 2021, 14.0% of people in this age range lived in poverty. Several structural factors may contribute to higher poverty rates among young adults in the Yukon. Compared to children, youth, and seniors, there are fewer income supports available to young adults that offer a similar level of assistance as provided to recipients of the Canada Child Benefit, the Yukon Child Benefit, the Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, and the Guaranteed Income Supplement. These income sources afford many recipients the opportunity to maintain a basic standard of living and stay out of poverty.¹⁵ Additionally, young adults typically have lower incomes relative to older working adults.¹⁶ Together, this contributes to the higher rates of poverty experienced by young adults.

Prevalence of poverty in the Yukon in 2021, by age

Age	Percentage (%)	Number of people experiencing poverty
0 to 5 years	11.3	305
6 to 17 years	7.7	420
18 to 24 years	14.0	390
25 to 54 years	7.1	1,230
55 to 64 years	10.2	575
65 years and over	8.7	500

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0109-01

People Living Alone

Statistics Canada reports the prevalence of poverty among different household living situations every five years as part of the census. **In 2021, 4.0% of couples without children experienced poverty compared to 18.3% of people living alone and 26.2% of people living with non-relatives only.**¹⁷ Available data suggest that the cost of living for a single person is typically much higher than for two income households. The most recent living wage report produced by the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition found that the living wage in Whitehorse for a single person equalled \$31.22 per hour and for a lone parent it equalled \$33.95 per hour/person while a two income household needed to earn \$25.91 per hour/person to meet their basic needs.¹⁸ This is a significant contributor to the higher rates of poverty among single person households.

Lone-Parent Families

Children living in lone-parent households face a significantly higher risk of poverty than those living in dual-parent families, both nationally and in the Yukon. Census data confirm that family structure remains one of the strongest predictors of economic vulnerability as Statistics Canada reported that one-parent households were approximately four times more likely to experience poverty than households with two parents in the Yukon in 2021. Female-led single-parent households experienced the highest poverty rates, reflecting persistent gender-based inequities in wages, caregiving responsibilities, and access to secure employment.

Poverty rate among households with children in the Yukon in 2021, by family status

Family Status	Percentage (%)
Dual-parent households with children	3.7
Persons living in one-parent economic families	14.0
Persons living in one-parent female-led economic families	14.2
Persons living in one-parent male-led economic families	13.6

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0109-01

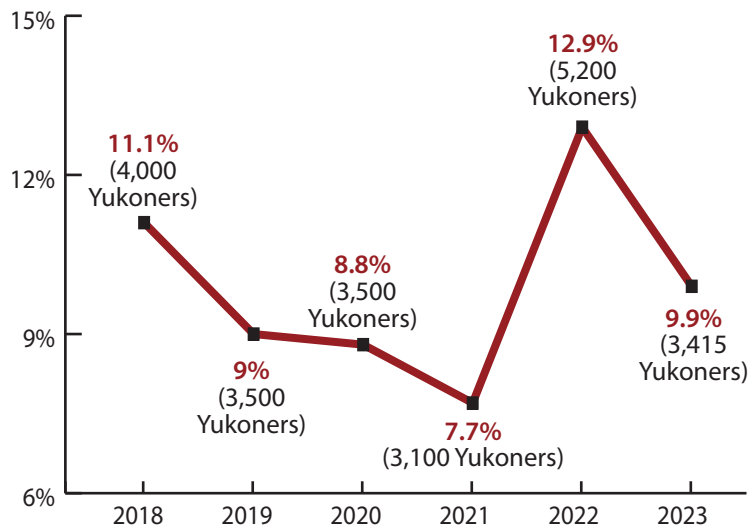
Indigenous Peoples

A current limitation of the Northern Market Basket Measure is that Statistics Canada does not report the rate of poverty experienced by Indigenous Peoples in the Yukon. However, Statistics Canada does report the rate of low-income among Indigenous Peoples using the Low Income Measure and most recently reported that Indigenous people (11.8% or approximately 1,140 people) were nearly twice as likely to experience low income than other Yukon residents (6.3% or approximately 1,950 people).¹⁹ Experiences of wage discrimination²⁰ coupled with a higher cost of living in rural and remote communities also contribute to the higher rate of low income experienced by Indigenous Peoples in the Yukon.

Poverty Over Time in the Yukon

Statistics Canada first produced data on the rate of poverty in the Yukon using the Northern Market Basket Measure in 2018 when it reported that approximately 4,000 Yukoners (or 11.1% of the total population) experienced poverty. Since then, the poverty rate has fluctuated in response to major policy and economic changes.

The prevalence of poverty in the Yukon since 2018, by year.



Source: Statistics Canada, *Canadian Income Survey: Territorial estimates, [2018-2023]*

Between 2018 and 2021, the number of Yukoners living in poverty declined by approximately 900 people, despite sustained population growth. Significant successes during this period that contributed to poverty reduction included the introduction of the Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit, the enhancement of the Canada Child Benefit, and sustained increases to the minimum wage. Most notably, a significant decrease in poverty occurred during the early phase of the COVID-19 pandemic following the introduction of temporary income supports such as the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit and enhancements to the Goods and Services Tax Credit. These successes demonstrate how good public policy can lift people out of poverty and directly improve the lives and conditions of low- and modest-income Yukoners.

In contrast, a sharp increase in the prevalence of poverty occurred in 2022 following the elimination of pandemic-era income supports coupled with a period of high inflation that saw food, housing, and transportation costs increase faster than household incomes.

Although still higher than before the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Yukon poverty rate declined to 9.9% in 2023. Factors contributing to recent reduction in poverty include increased employment following the easing of public health measures intended to address the pandemic.²¹

Section 2: WHAT WE DON'T KNOW

Incomplete Understanding of Who Experiences Poverty

A barrier to effective poverty reduction in the Yukon is the lack of reliable, disaggregated data about who experiences poverty and how it is distributed across different populations. For example, Statistics Canada does not consistently publish territorial-level poverty data disaggregated by:

- Immigration or newcomer status
- Sexual orientation or gender identity
- Disability status

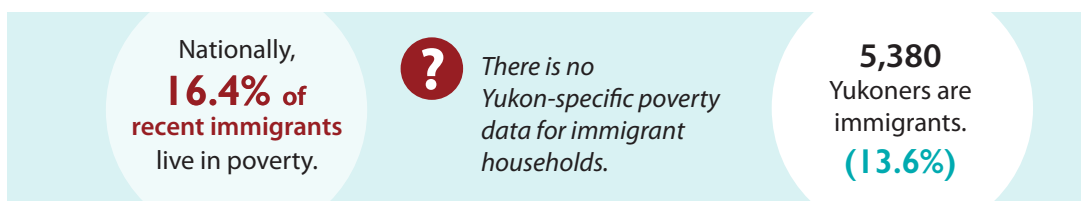
Small population sizes, confidentiality rules, and limited survey participation often result in data being suppressed or not released at the territorial level. As a result, many communities and groups remain statistically invisible within official poverty reporting.

Immigrants and Newcomers

Immigrants represent a growing part of Yukon's population. According to recent census and territorial data, immigrants account for more than 13% of Yukon's population ²². Despite this growth, there is no publicly available Yukon-specific poverty data for immigrant households. As a result, policymakers and service providers lack basic information about:

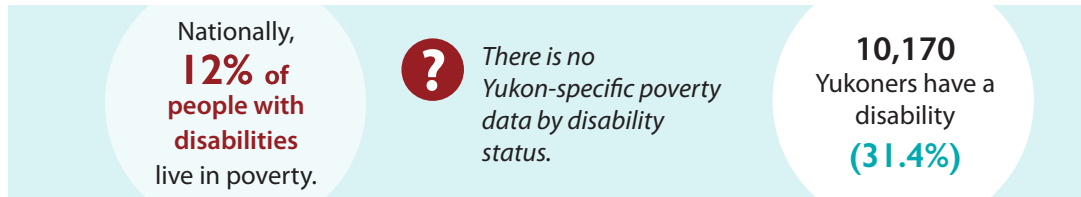
- How many immigrant families are living in poverty
- Whether newcomer children face higher poverty risks
- How housing and food insecurity affect immigrants
- How income trajectories change over time after arrival
- Which immigration streams are associated with higher vulnerability

This represents a major gap in the Yukon's poverty data. National data clearly shows that immigrants, especially recent immigrants, have higher poverty rates than other residents. According to Statistics Canada, the poverty rate among immigrants who arrived in Canada within the last five years was 16.4% in 2022. ²³



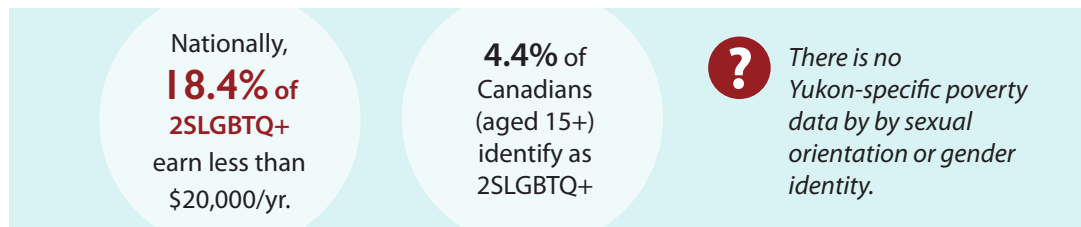
People Living with Disabilities

According to Statistics Canada's 2023 data, about 12% of Canadians aged 15 and over with a disability lived in poverty, compared with 7.7% of people without a disability.²⁴ Statistics Canada does not report territorial level-data regarding the prevalence of poverty in the Yukon based on disability status. According to findings from the 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability, 10,170 Yukoners age 15 years and older had one or more disabilities that limited them in their daily activities. Approximately 31.4% of Yukoners age 15 years and older had a disability compared to 27.0% of the population in the rest of Canada.²⁵



2SLGBTQ+ Communities

About 1.3 million Canadians aged 15 and older (4.4% of the population) identify as 2SLGBTQ+.²⁶ A higher share of 2SLGBTQ+ people (18.4%) are among the lowest-income earners compared to non-2SLGBTQ+ people (13.5%).²⁷ However, Statistics Canada does not provide territorial data showing poverty rates in the Yukon based on sexual orientation or gender identity.



Section 3: WHAT WE CAN DO

Better evidence can enable more effective policies and programs, helping resources reach the people and communities who need them most and improving outcomes for Yukoners.

Lack of Timely Access to Data

An important data barrier in the Yukon is a lack of timely access to information. For example, Statistics Canada reports territorial-level data on the prevalence of poverty in the Yukon each year as part of the Canadian Income Survey, however, the most recent data was reported for 2023 and released in May 2025.

Additionally, Statistics Canada only reports available data regarding the prevalence of poverty in the Yukon disaggregated by location and various demographic characteristics every five years as part of the census whereas this information is typically reported more frequently for provinces. As such, the most recent data available regarding who experiences poverty in the territory is from the 2021 census and much of this information was not released until November 2023.

What we can do:

Create more frequent measurement and more timely reporting to ensure that interventions are designed and implemented in a timely manner that meets the needs of Yukoners experiencing poverty.

Incomplete Understanding of Who Experiences Poverty

Another challenge is the lack of available disaggregated data regarding who experiences poverty in the Yukon. As noted above, Statistics Canada does not report territorial-level data regarding the prevalence of poverty in the Yukon based on disability status, immigration status, gender identity, sexual orientation, or race and ethnicity including Indigenous identity.

What we can do:

Create more robust data regarding which populations are experiencing poverty so supports can better reach the people and communities most affected.

Incomplete Understanding of Well-Being

The Northern Market Basket Measure provides an accurate measure of poverty based on the cost of the goods and services required to support the material necessities of life. However, the Northern Market Basket Measure is rooted in a colonial understanding of material need and does not necessarily reflect Indigenous perspectives of health and well-being. In 2018, the Government of Canada committed to “work[ing] with National Indigenous Organizations and others to identify and co-develop indicators of poverty and well-being, including non-income-based measures of poverty, that reflect the multiple dimensions of poverty and well-being experienced by First Nations, Inuit and Métis.”²⁸ Additional indicators should take a strengths-based approach that reflects well-being as defined by Indigenous Peoples and communities.

What we can do:

Follow the lead of Indigenous Peoples to develop additional indicators of poverty that provide a more holistic understanding of well-being to develop additional indicators of poverty that provide a more holistic understanding of well-being and can inform the efforts of all levels of government to address poverty in a way that support the needs of Indigenous Peoples and advance reconciliation.

Incomplete Understanding of Food Insecurity

As part of Canada’s Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Government of Canada identified household food insecurity as a key indicator for its Official Poverty Dashboard. In 2019, Statistics Canada added the Household Food Security Survey Module to the Canadian Income Survey, as part of monitoring the strategy’s progress (the module was previously administered as part of the Canadian Community Health Survey). Statistics Canada made the change to support food insecurity measurement using the Canadian Income Survey because the Canadian Income Survey enables annual estimates of food insecurity that may be more representative of the population than the Canadian Community Health Survey due to higher response rates.²⁹

However, since the start of monitoring food insecurity on the Canadian Income Survey, Statistics Canada has reported data on the territories separately from the provinces and at a later date. Statistics Canada most recently reported the percentage of people living in food-insecure households in the territories in June 2023 using Canadian Income Survey data and indicated that 12.8% of people in the Yukon lived in food insecure households in 2021 compared to 46.1% of people in Nunavut and 22.2% of people in the Northwest Territories.³⁰ Meanwhile, Statistics Canada reported in March 2022 the number of households experiencing food insecurity in the provinces in 2021.³¹

What we can do:

Create more comprehensive food insecurity monitoring and ensure more timely access to data that allows for reliable comparisons to the rest of Canada.

Incomplete Understanding of the Cost of Living in the Yukon

Available data such as the Northern Market Basket Measure poverty thresholds reported by Statistics Canada, the annual living wage reports produced by the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, and the Yukon Rent Survey and the Community Spatial Index produced by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics provided a good understanding of the cost of living in the Yukon. However, there are some gaps in data assets that can be addressed to provide a more accurate reflection of food and shelter costs in the Yukon.

Limited data exists regarding the cost of food in Yukon communities outside of Whitehorse. In 2010, the Yukon Department of Health and Social Services released the Yukon Nutrition Framework that included a proposal to “create a Yukon-wide cost monitoring program based on the cost of a nutritious food basket.”³² The Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition conducted a food cost monitoring study in 2017 that determined the cost of healthy eating in all Yukon communities based on the Revised Northern Food Basket, but robust food cost monitoring has not occurred since. The Yukon Bureau of Statistics does report the Community Spatial Index, which provides a relative measure of the cost of select food items in Yukon communities compared to the cost of the same goods in Whitehorse. However, the Community Spatial Index does not provide a complete measure of the cost of healthy eating in Yukon communities and only covers approximately half of the food items included in a standardized survey tool such as the Revised Northern Food Basket or the National Nutritious Food Basket. The Yukon Bureau of Statistics is well positioned to implement a territorial food cost monitoring program by expanding its data collection tool used for the Community Spatial Index to include all food items in the Revised Northern Food Basket.

In addition, the Yukon Bureau of Statistics reports the cost of rental housing in Yukon communities twice per year as part of the Yukon Rental Survey. However, the Yukon Bureau of Statistics no longer reports the rate at which utilities are included in the cost of rent and last reported this information in December 2013.

What we can do:

Develop a more comprehensive territory-wide food cost monitoring program and improve the Yukon Rent Survey to provide a more robust understanding of the cost of living in the Yukon and issues related to affordability.

Conclusion

Poverty continues to affect a significant number of Yukoners. Existing territorial frameworks, including the *Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy* (2012) and the *Putting People First Report* (2020), provide an important foundation for advancing social well-being and addressing inequities.

Strengthening how poverty is measured and understood can build on this work and inform more effective policy and program responses.

Improvements to how poverty data are collected, reported, and interpreted would support more targeted allocation of resources to areas where they can have the greatest impact and better respond to the realities faced by Yukoners experiencing poverty.

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