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## POVERTY IN CANADA

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"Not Doing Enough to Help the Poor People in this  
Country" --**

**-- The Majority (60%) of Canadians Say Poverty in Canada is  
Worse than it was 5 Years Ago --**

**-- Most Canadians (84%) Support 'Workfare' Programs --**

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This Angus Reid Group/Globe and Mail/CTV poll is based on a national telephone survey conducted between November 18<sup>th</sup> and November 26<sup>th</sup>, 1999 among a representative cross-section of 1,515 Canadian adults. These data are statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional, age and sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to 1996 Census data.

With a national sample of 1,515, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the overall results are within  $\pm 2.5$  percentage points of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger for other sub-groupings of the survey population.

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Homelessness and poverty is a growing concern for Canadians. An Angus Reid Group/ Globe and Mail / CTV poll released tonight indicates that seven in ten (68%) Canadians say Canada's governments are "not doing enough to help the poor in this country". Indeed, the majority (60%) believes that poverty is worse in Canada than it was five years ago. Some provinces have instituted programs such as Ontario's 'Workfare' program and most (84%) Canadians support these types of initiatives.

*These are the highlights gleaned from a national Angus Reid Group/Globe and Mail/CTV telephone survey of 1,515 Canadian adults. Interviews were conducted between November 18<sup>th</sup> and November 26<sup>th</sup>, 1999. A sample size of 1,515 is said to have a corresponding margin of error of  $\pm 2.5$  percentage points, nineteen times out of twenty.*

### **Seven in Ten (68%) Says Canadian Governments are "Not Doing Enough To Help the Poor People in this Country"**

Seven in ten (68%) Canadians think that overall, the governments in Canada are not doing "enough to help poor people in this country". One quarter (25%) say Canada's governments are doing "about the right amount" and only 5% believe that there has been "too much to help poor people in this country".

- ♦ Atlantic Canadians (76%) and Québecers (73%) are most likely to suggest that not enough has been done to help the poor in Canada.

- ◆ Women (75%), lower-income Canadians (77%), those with less than a high school education (75%), the unemployed (75%) and Canadians who are currently out of the workforce (72%) as well as single parents (76%) are more likely to suggest that not enough is being done to help the poor in Canada.

### **The Majority (60%) of Canadians Say Poverty in Canada is Worse than 5 Years Ago**

Six in ten (60%) Canadians believes that “the overall poverty situation in Canada today is worse than it was 5 years ago”. Another third (29%) say it is “about the same,” while only 10% suggest that it is “better than 5 years ago”.

- ◆ Regionally, Canadians living in Saskatchewan/Manitoba (48%) are least likely to say that poverty is worse than it was 5 years ago, while Québécois (72%) are most likely to say poverty in Canada is worse than 5 years ago.
- ◆ Canadians aged 18 to 34 (53%), men (54%), those earning over \$60k (52%) and singles without children who live with their parents (49%) are least likely to suggest that poverty is getting worse in Canada.
- ◆ Based on employment, it is clear that those who are either employed full-time (56%) or self-employed (54%) are less likely to see poverty as a worsening problem for Canada.

### **Most Canadians (84%) Support ‘Workfare’ Programs**

Most Canadians (84%) say they support ‘Workfare’ programs, when they are told that “certain provinces have introduced programs, such as ‘Workfare’ in Ontario, where some people who receive social assistance are required to work a certain number of hours per week or attend training programs in order to receive their welfare benefits”. The strength of support is witnessed in the fully 58% who are “strongly supportive” of these types of programs – 26% “somewhat supportive”. Only 15% of Canadians oppose programs like Ontario’s ‘Workfare’ and of those, merely 8% are “strongly opposed”.

- ◆ Strong support for ‘Workfare’ types of programs is consistent across all demographic groupings.

## **The Poor in Canada became that Way through No Fault of their Own Says Half (51%) of Canadians**

When asked how the poor became that way, half (51%) say that it is “mainly through no fault of their own”. Nearly one third (30%) say that poverty is caused “mainly because of their own choices and actions”.

## **Half (50%) Think Canada’s Government’s are Primarily Responsible for Helping the Poor**

Half (50%) of Canadians say they hold the country’s governments “mainly responsible for helping poor people in Canada”. Others are divided between saying that the poor people themselves and their families (14%), charitable organizations and community associations (11%), the business sector (6%) and church and religious groups (2%) should be primarily responsible for helping the poor in Canada. Another 15% hold all of these parties equally responsible.

- ♦ Canadians with an annual household income of less than \$30k (57%), Québécois (56%) and Canada’s unemployed (74%) are the most likely to hold Canada’s government’s responsible for helping the poor.

## **The Federal (48%) and Provincial Governments (39%) Should be More Responsible for Helping the Poor in Canada than Municipal Governments (11%)**

Canadians who believe Canada’s governments are responsible were asked “which specific level of government” they “think should be mainly responsible for helping the poor people in Canada”. Nearly half (48%) say the federal government is responsible. Four in ten (39%) say poverty is the responsibility of provincial governments, while only 11% hold municipal governments mainly responsible for helping the poor.

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