



PARKLAND
INSTITUTE

PARKLAND INSTITUTE

Women's Equality a Long Way Off in Alberta

Alberta most unequal province in Canada

Alberta ranks last in Canada on a number of measures of women's economic equality. Alberta is also the only province in Canada where there is no voice for women, either through a ministry responsible for the status of women, women's directorate, or advisory council on the status of women.

Alberta's Wage Gap Persists

Canada-wide, women's full-time, full-year median earnings were 74% of men's. But in Alberta in 2007, the median income for women working full-time, full-year - in good, stable jobs - was 66% of what men earned. Alberta has the largest pay gap in Canada between women and men (Table 1).

Other provinces are beginning to treat the wage gap between women and men as a serious economic problem, as the wage gap has an impact on private and public sector productivity and retention of skilled female workers. New Brunswick, for example, has launched a Wage Gap Initiative to narrow the gap over the next decade.

A Growing Pay Gap Among University Graduates

The pay gap between Alberta women and men is particularly acute for university graduates who work full-year, full-time. Women with university degrees in Alberta have more unequal earnings in 2007 now than any time since the 1980s. In 2007, Women with university degrees earned a median 67% of what men earned. The gender gap in earnings for women with university degrees increased during the oilsands boom. In 2002, the median earnings gap in Alberta was 79%.

Family Leave

Alberta allows the bare minimum under federal law for maternity and parental leave benefits. All other provinces, save Alberta and the two smallest (New Brunswick and PEI) allow for extra leave beyond the federally-mandated 50 weeks. In all other provinces, both parents may take concurrent or consecutive parental leave – meaning both parents can take some time off during the first two years of a child's life.

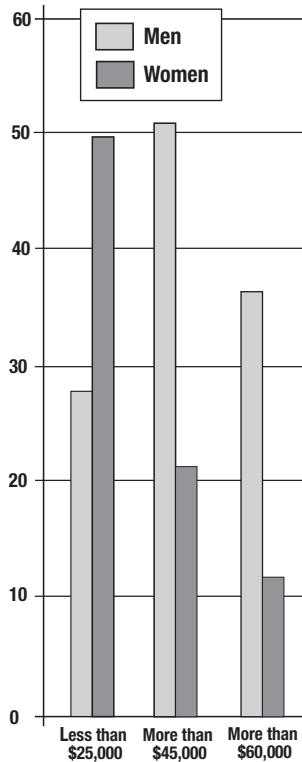
Child Care and Early Learning

The government of Alberta allocates the lowest number of dollars for regulated child care spaces, per 0-12 aged child, in Canada, and has done since 2003. Only 17% of children aged 0-5 in Alberta have access to a regulated child care space; Alberta is in the bottom 3 in Canada.

Table 1
**Women's Median
Full-Year, Full-Time
Earnings as a
Percentage
of Men's, 2007**

Year	2007
Canada	74.4
Atlantic	70.9
QC	81
ON	75.8
MB	77.8
SK	69.5
AB	65.9
BC	75.8

Table 2
Income Distribution



Sources:

Median Earnings Gap.
Statistics Canada, CANSIM. Canada/Atlantic/Quebec/Ontario/Manitoba/Saskatchewan/Alberta/British Columbia; Female-to-male median earnings ratio (Percent); Full-year full-time workers.
v41902120; v41902132;
v41902192; v41902204; v41902228;
v41902240; v41902252; v41902264.
Income Distribution/Alberta Males/Females 2007. Statistics Canada, CANSIM.
v1541091-v1541121.
Canada/Alberta; Low income cut-offs after tax, 1992 base; Percentage of families in low income; Female lone-parent families, one earner.
Statistics Canada, CANSIM.
V1564341; v1566003.
Part Time Workers. Alberta Employment and Immigration.
Alberta Profiles: Women in the Labour Force 2007, p. 14

Alberta's total number of regulated child care spaces has not grown appreciably since 1992, though the population and the economy have both grown substantially. In 2007-08, the Government of Alberta spent slightly less than the province of Manitoba on child care, despite Alberta's much larger population, demand for workers, and size of the economy

Female Lone Parents

Female lone parents are worse off in Alberta than in the rest of Canada. Female lone parent market incomes (the income they earn by participating in the workforce) dropped in Alberta during the oilsands boom, but increased in the rest of Canada.

Families headed by female lone parents who work are more likely to live in low-income in Alberta (24%) than in the rest of Canada (16%). Alberta's female lone parents also, on average, pay higher taxes than in BC and Ontario. Alberta also has the lowest social assistance rates in Canada for a single parent with children.

Alberta in a Minority of Provinces Without a Child Benefit

Alberta is among a shrinking group of provinces that does not have a provincial child benefit for low-income families. Many provinces are investing in child benefits as part of an overall strategy to address women's economic inequality. Child benefits exist in Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Yukon, NWT, Nunavut. Alberta's Family Employment Tax Credit depends on employment income; other provinces have these programs in addition to a provincial child benefit.

Low-Wage and Part-Time Work

Alberta women form the vast majority of the low-wage workforce. Two-thirds of minimum wage earners are women. Half of women earn less than \$25,000, where only 28% of men earn less than \$25,000. Over half of men earn more than \$45,000, where only 23% of women fall into this category.

Women are the majority of Alberta's part-time workforce, particularly in the highest-earning years of 25-44, where women are 83% of part-time workers and only 39% of the full-time workforce. Overall, women were 70% of the 2007 part-time workforce in Alberta.

Political Representation

Alberta is the only jurisdiction in Canada without a minister responsible for the status of women or an advisory council to government on the status of women. Of all the provinces and territories, Alberta is alone in having no mechanisms for gender analysis of social and economic policy, or even a council acting in an advisory capacity to government.