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## **Women's Income and Poverty in Canada Revisited (2004)**

### **Executive Summary**

- Income disparities between women and men persist. According to Census 2000, the average annual pre-tax income of women from all sources including government transfers was \$22,885, or 62% that of men.
- Income disparities vary depending upon where women live. The widest gap between women's and men's average income among the provinces is in Alberta, the lowest in Prince Edward Island. The income gap between women and men is narrower in the territories.
- Female lone-parent families have by far the lowest average total incomes among families in Canada.
- In terms of the income which women receive from earnings, the ratio of women's earnings to men has changed little in the last ten years. A key reason for difference between women's and men's earnings, when comparison is based on average annual earnings, is related to the hours worked.
- While the ratio of employment income of immigrant women to immigrant to immigrant men seems to be similar to other women in Canada, a larger percentage of immigrant women are without employment income.
- The average employment income of visible minority women and men is lower than other women and men but the gap between visible minority women and men is not as wide.
- Women continue to be among the poorest of the poor in Canada. They make up a disproportionate share of the population with low incomes – 2.4 million in 2001 compared to 1.9 million men.
- Family status has a profound effect on poverty. In 2001, 42% of unattached women ages 18-64 lived in poverty compared to 12% in families.

- While the incidence of poverty among women declined from 18% in 1992 to 16% in 2001, the depth of poverty (i.e., the gap between poverty line and the average income of women) remained quite deep and in some cases worsened. The gap for non-elderly unattached women in 1992 was \$8094. The gap in 2001 was \$8546.
- After tax income marginally improves the level of income for low income individuals and moderates the incidence as well as the depth of poverty. It does not fundamentally affect the relative position of women who remain among the poorest of the poor.

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