

# Data on the current state of poverty in Ottawa, September 2024

## Table of Contents

- Introduction ..... 1
- Key findings ..... 3
  - Meeting basic needs ..... 3
    - Poverty rates ..... 3
    - Economic barriers..... 9
    - Housing insecurity ..... 10
    - Food insecurity ..... 13
    - Government benefits ..... 16
- Participation in society..... 18
  - Participation in the labour force ..... 19
  - Gender, race, and the labour force ..... 22
  - Youth and the labour force ..... 25
- People living to their full potential..... 30
  - Education ..... 30
  - Impacts of COVID-19 on education ..... 32
- Endnotes ..... 36

## Introduction

This report provides supplemental information to support the Poverty Reduction Strategy. It aims to summarize data about the current state of poverty in Ottawa, describe people’s experiences of poverty, and highlight disparities between populations across indicators of poverty.

Poverty is the deprivation of resources, choices, and power necessary for civic, cultural, economic, political and social participation in society.<sup>1</sup> Deprivation creates barriers for people to

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

meet their basic needs and achieve their full potential. People who experience poverty are more exposed to harmful conditions that increase their risk of adverse outcomes related to health and well-being. Cumulative exposure to these conditions over the course of life creates disadvantage and contributes to disparities in health and well-being between populations.

Disparities in health and well-being are influenced by social determinants health – the socioeconomic factors that shape the circumstances in which people are born, grow, live, work, play, and age. The Canadian Public Health Association identifies the following social determinants of health that are amenable to interventions:<sup>2</sup>

- Income and income distribution
- Education
- Unemployment and job security
- Food insecurity
- Housing
- Health services
- Social exclusion
- Early childhood education
- Social safety net

Social determinants of health intersect sociodemographic characteristics in ways that increase the risk of adverse outcomes for some populations by way of systemic discrimination, marginalization, and racism. These populations, including Indigenous, racialized, newcomer, those living with disabilities, and single-parent households, also have a higher percentage of people living in poverty.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy is grounded in an understanding that poverty is related to the following concerns: meeting basic needs, participation in society, and people living to their full potential. In recognition that these aspects of poverty are complex and influenced by inter-related socio-economic factors, the Poverty Reduction Strategy is informed by key elements of the population health approach:<sup>3</sup>

- The interaction between social determinants of health and their influence on well-being
- Disparities in health and well-being across populations
- The need for evidence-based policies and interventions to address disparities and improve the health and well-being of targeted populations

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

The remainder of this report summarizes key findings about the current state of poverty in Ottawa. Data at the Ontario and Canada levels of geography are included for additional context. Key findings are grouped by aspects of poverty as they relate to meeting basic needs, participation in society, and living to one's full potential. Links to additional information, tables, and graphs are included in the key findings.

## Key findings

### Meeting basic needs

Material poverty occurs when people do not have the financial resources to satisfy their basic needs for items like food, shelter, and clothing. Structural barriers to resources and opportunities contribute to disparities in the poverty rate between populations. Poverty reduction efforts that target basic needs support life stabilization by reducing daily financial pressures.

- Racial disparities in the ability to afford the cost of living in Ottawa have widened over time. While the percentage of racialized residents who said paying for their daily expenses was easy remained steady in 2018 (20.0 per cent) and 2021 (20.1 per cent), the share of non-racialized residents reporting ease grew over the same time period from 25.5 per cent to 29.8 per cent. The difference in results between populations increased from 5.5 percentage points in 2018 to 9.7 percentage points in 2021.<sup>4</sup>
- Transport poverty refers to circumstances where transportation options to reach essential services and employment are insufficient. Rural populations are more likely to experience higher transportation costs due to longer travel distances, and the need to purchase and pay for the maintenance of a vehicle.<sup>5</sup>

### Poverty rates

**The percentage of people experiencing poverty in Ontario and Canada increased overall since 2020 and was higher for populations that are more likely to be impacted by discrimination, marginalization, and racism.**

In Ontario, the percentage of people experiencing poverty increased from 6.8 per cent in 2020 to 7.7 per cent in 2021 (Figure 1).<sup>6</sup> At a national level, provisional estimates released by Statistics Canada show continued increases in 2022 (9.0 per cent) and 2023 (10.2 per cent).<sup>7</sup>

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

Figure 1: Percentage of people experiencing poverty (Market Basket Measure), Ontario and Canada, 2015 to 2022<sup>8,9</sup>

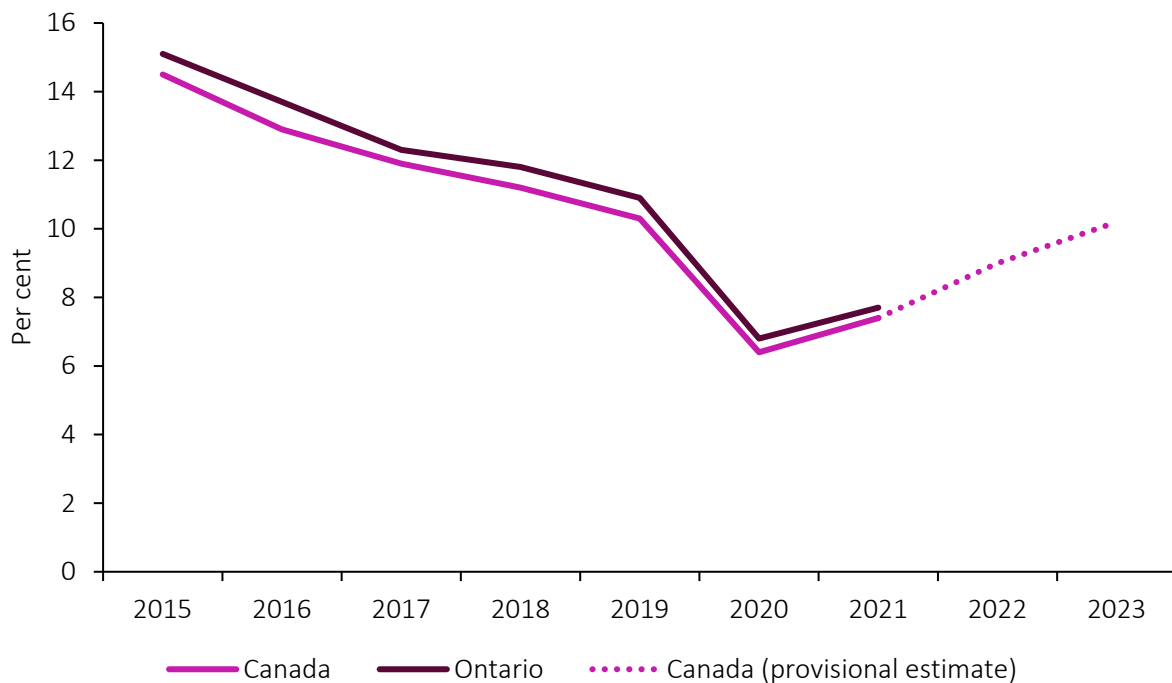


Table 1: Data for Figure 1 – Percentage of people experiencing poverty (Market Basket Measure), Ontario and Canada, 2015 to 2022

Area	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Canada	14.5	12.9	11.9	11.2	10.3	6.4	7.4		
Ontario	15.1	13.7	12.3	11.8	10.9	6.8	7.7		
Canada (provisional estimate)							7.4	9	10.2

The rate of increase in child poverty between 2020 and 2021 in Canada was greater than that of the general population (up 2.6 percentage points from 15.2 per cent).<sup>10</sup> Children are especially vulnerable to poverty because, unlike adults, they are unable to earn income. Factors contributing to child and adult poverty are strongly correlated. Childcare costs, job losses, family separation, and disability increase the risk of poverty among families.<sup>11</sup> In 2021, the percentage of children experiencing poverty in Ottawa was more than five times higher among children living with single parents (37.6 per cent) compared to those living with two parents (6.9 per cent).<sup>12</sup> This is also reflected by the percentage of families in Ottawa who became low-income in

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

2021.<sup>1</sup> Among households with at least one child under 17 years old, the percentage of single-parent families who became low-income was more than three times higher (10.4 per cent) than couple families (3.0 per cent).<sup>13</sup>

Indigenous and racialized populations experience higher rates of poverty due to structural barriers that limit access to resources and opportunities. In 2020, the poverty rate for Indigenous people in Ottawa (11.2 per cent) and racialized residents (12.6 per cent) was at least double that of non-racialized residents (5.7 per cent) (Figure 2).<sup>14 15</sup> Child poverty also varied by racial and Indigenous identity (Figures 3-4).<sup>16 17</sup>

Figure 2: Percentage of people experiencing poverty by race (Market Basket Measure), Ottawa, 2020<sup>18</sup>

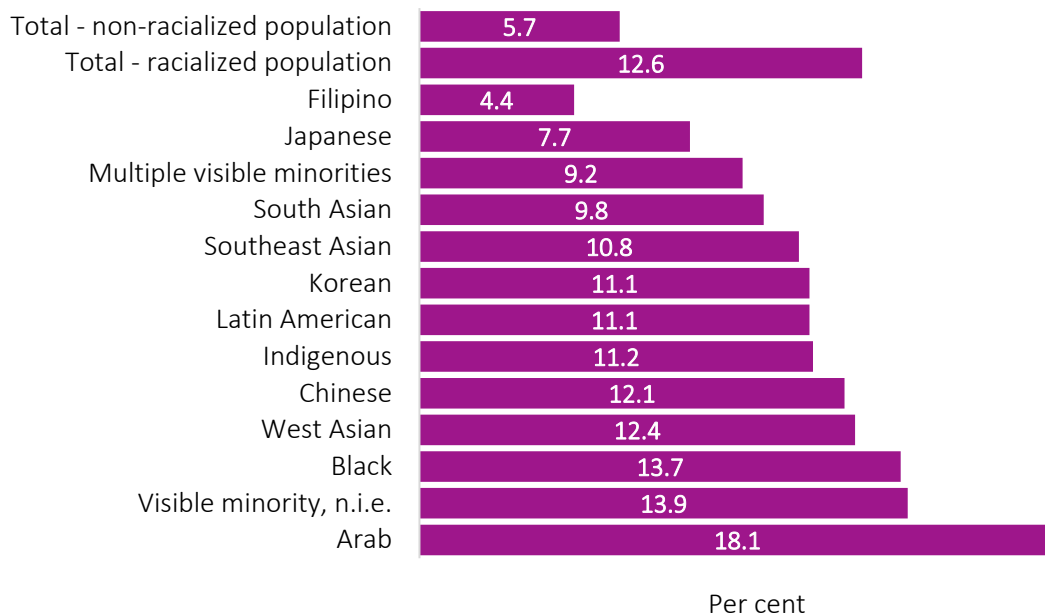


Table 2: Data for Figure 2 – Percentage of people experiencing poverty by race (Market Basket Measure), Ottawa, 2020

Racial identity	Total population
Arab	18.1

<sup>1</sup> ‘Low income’ is defined using the Census Family Low Income After-Tax Measure (CFLIM-AT). People meet the definition of low income if their after-tax income is less than 50% of the adjusted median population after-tax income. The adjustment is calculated by dividing the census family income by the square root of the number of people in the census family.

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

<b>Racial identity</b>	<b>Total population</b>
Visible minority, n.i.e. <sup>2</sup>	13.9
Black	13.7
West Asian	12.4
Chinese	12.1
Indigenous	11.2
Latin American	11.1
Korean	11.1
Southeast Asian	10.8
South Asian	9.8
Multiple visible minorities	9.2
Japanese	7.7
Filipino	4.4
Total - racialized population	12.6
Total - non-racialized population	5.7

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<sup>2</sup> The response category 'visible minority, not included elsewhere (n.i.e.)' includes respondents who wrote in a response that is designated as a visible minority, but cannot be classified elsewhere.

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

Figure 3: The percentage of Indigenous children experiencing poverty (Low Income Measure, After-Tax), Ottawa, 2020<sup>19</sup>

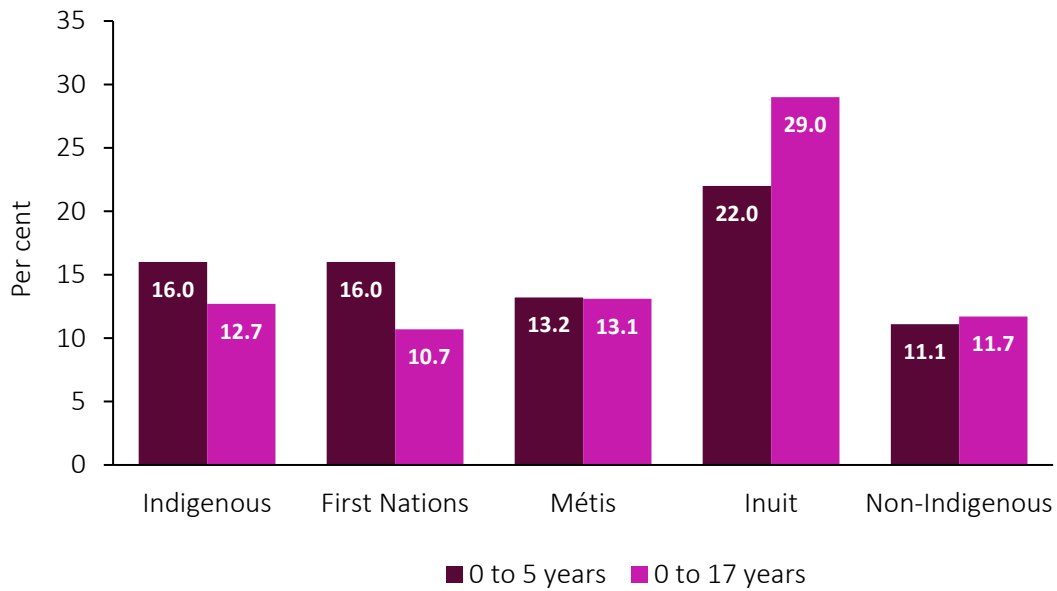


Table 3: Data for Figure 3 – The percentage of Indigenous children experiencing poverty (Low Income Measure, After-Tax), Ottawa, 2020

<b>Racial identity</b>	<b>0 to 5 years</b>	<b>0 to 17 years</b>
Indigenous	16	12.7
First Nations	16	10.7
Métis	13.2	13.1
Inuit	22	29
Non-Indigenous	11.1	11.7

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

Figure 4: Percentage of children experiencing poverty by race and age (Market Basket Measure), Ottawa, 2020<sup>20</sup>

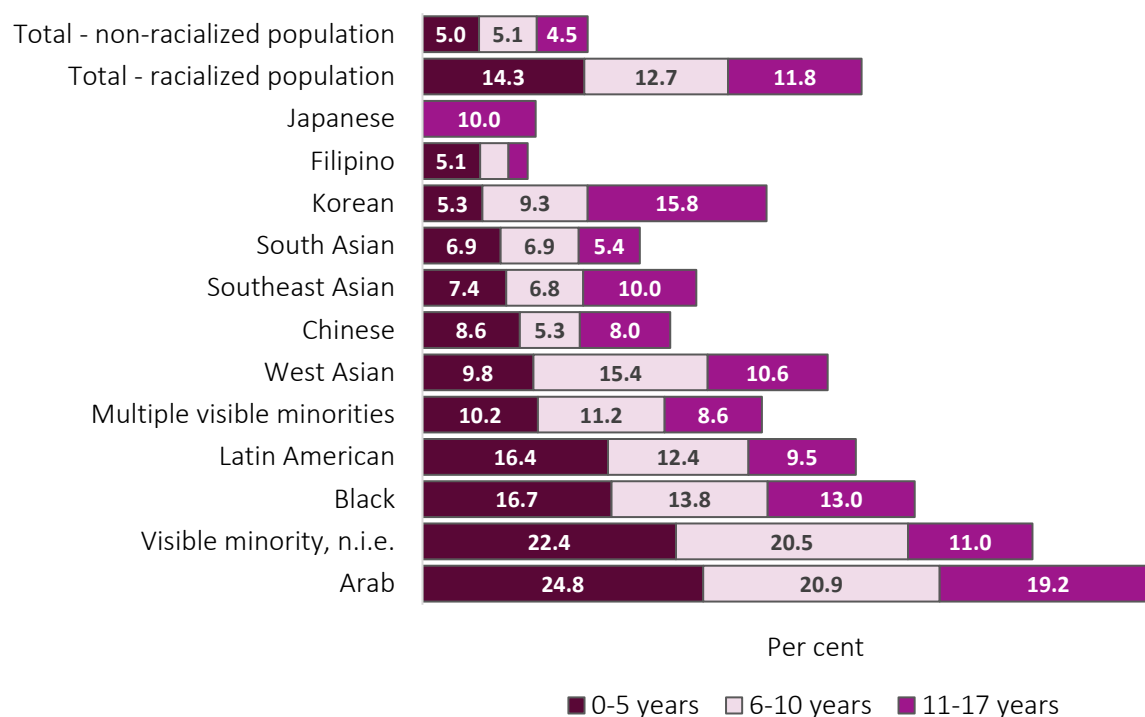


Table 4: Data for Figure 4 – Percentage of children experiencing poverty by race and age (Market Basket Measure), Ottawa, 2020

Racial identity	0-5 years	6-10 years	11-17 years
Arab	24.8	20.9	19.2
Visible minority, n.i.e. <sup>3</sup>	22.4	20.5	11.0
Black	16.7	13.8	13.0
Latin American	16.4	12.4	9.5
Multiple visible minorities	10.2	11.2	8.6
West Asian	9.8	15.4	10.6
Chinese	8.6	5.3	8.0
Southeast Asian	7.4	6.8	10.0
South Asian	6.9	6.9	5.4

<sup>3</sup> The response category 'visible minority, not included elsewhere (n.i.e.)' includes respondents who wrote in a response that is designated as a visible minority, but cannot be classified elsewhere.



## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

Racial identity	0-5 years	6-10 years	11-17 years
Korean	5.3	9.3	15.8
Filipino	5.1	2.5	1.7
Japanese	0.0	0.0	10.0
Total - racialized population	14.3	12.7	11.8
Total - non-racialized population	5.0	5.1	4.5

### Economic barriers

**Among Ottawa residents in 2023, almost three-quarters (73 per cent) reported having reduced their expenses because of inflation and nearly one-quarter (23 per cent) indicated that their household financial situation was poor or very poor.<sup>21</sup>**

Economic disruptions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, wage instability, and high inflation contributed to greater difficulty among low-income households to purchase essential goods and services such as food, shelter, and clothing. In the context of stagnant or low wage growth, inflation acts as an additional tax on low-income households as they must spend a larger share of their disposable income on daily necessities. Higher than expected levels of inflation place additional strain on their capacity to maintain their current standard of living.

Between 2021 and 2022, the share of disposable income spent on daily essentials increased by 25 per cent among the lowest income households in Canada. Low-income households also expressed high levels of concern about gasoline prices, their ability to meet daily expenses, and afford housing (Table 5).

Table 5: Percentage of people in Canada reporting concerns about the rise in costs of goods and services by income quintile, 2022<sup>22</sup>

Concern	Income quintile				
	Bottom	Second	Third	Fourth	Highest
Very concerned with the impact that rising prices may have on ability to meet day-to-day expenses over the next 6 months	63.0	57.6	41.7	37.1	18.7

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

Concern	Income quintile				
	Bottom	Second	Third	Fourth	Highest
Due to rising food prices, very likely to obtain food or meals from a community organization over the next 6 months	17.0	7.9	4.8	4.9	1.2
Very concerned with ability to afford housing or rent because of rising housing prices	46.4	34.0	35.5	18.7	16.8
Very concerned about rising gasoline prices	73.3	75.0	74.6	67.2	47.0
In the past 6 months, due to rising prices, often had to borrow money to meet day-to-day expenses	19.2	14.9	6.6	7.0	2.1
Most of the days are extremely stressful due to financial issues	22.9	17.6	4.9	8.4	5.8

### Housing insecurity

**Pathways to homelessness are complex and highlight the unique challenges faced by different populations. In 2023, a total of 8,656 people used the emergency shelter system in Ottawa.**

An experience of homelessness, even in the distant past, increases the risk of financial insecurity and interruptions to school and employment later in life.<sup>23</sup> Since 2021, the number of single people in emergency shelters has increased by 28 per cent from 4,051 people in 2021 to 5,188 people in 2023 (Figure 5). Of the 1,016 families in emergency shelters, almost two-thirds (63.1 per cent) were headed by single mothers. In addition, a total of 2,381 children were in the

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

shelter system in 2023 representing approximately one in four shelter users (27.5 per cent) (Figure 6).

Figure 5: Number of people using emergency shelters, Ottawa, 2014 to 2023

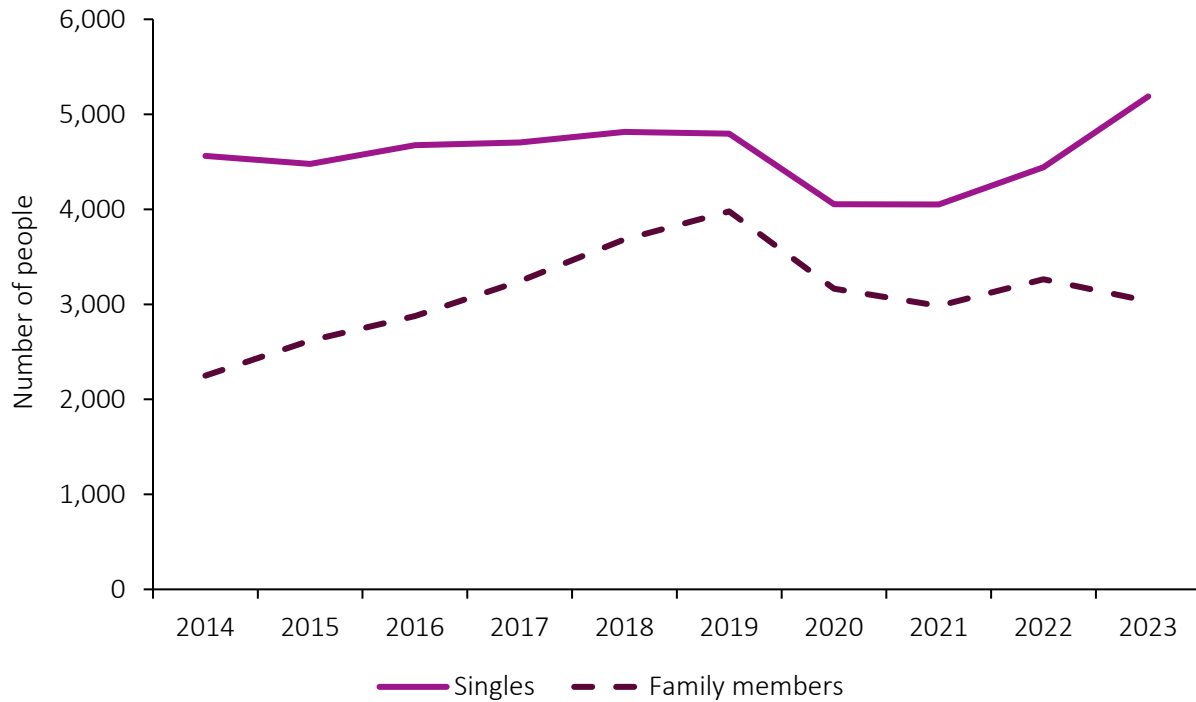


Table 6: Data for Figure 5 – Number of people using emergency shelters, Ottawa, 2014 to 2023

Year	Singles	Family members
2014	4562	2249
2015	4478	2618
2016	4675	2876
2017	4704	3244
2018	4814	3683
2019	4796	3978
2020	4054	3165
2021	4051	2984
2022	4443	3263
2023	5188	3033

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

Figure 6: Number of children in emergency shelters in Ottawa by age and average length of stay, 2014 to 2023

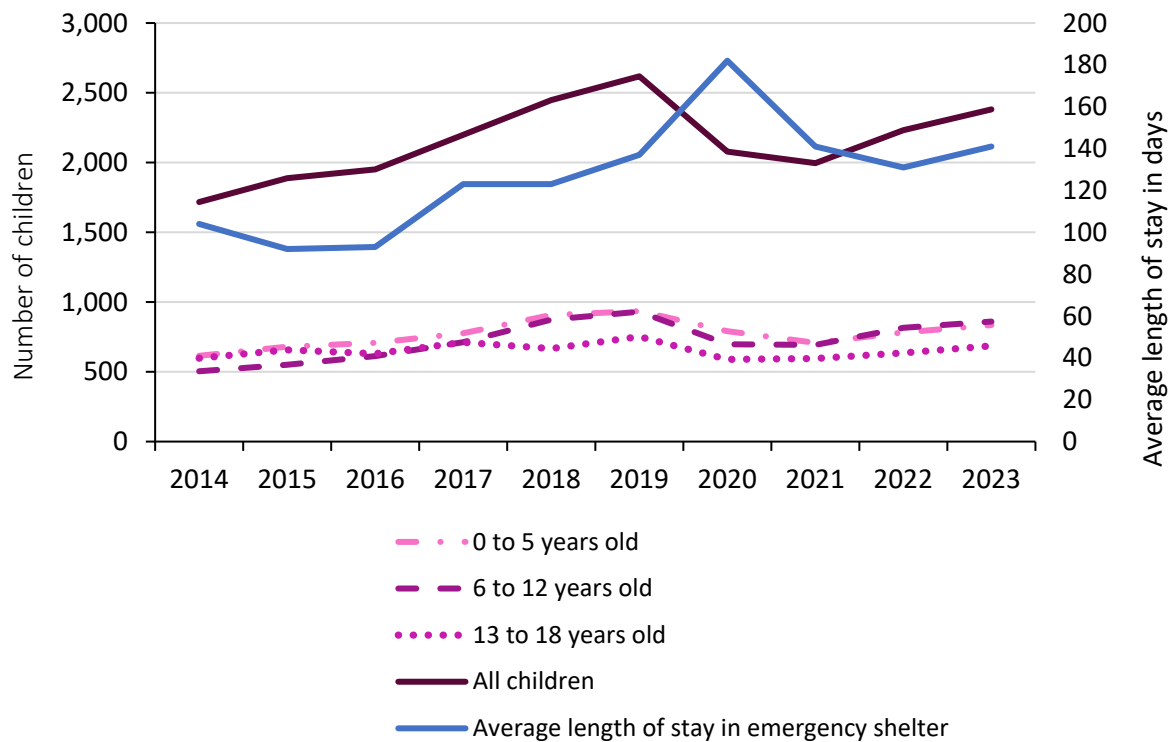


Table 7: Data for Figure 6 – Number of children in emergency shelters in Ottawa by age

Year	0 to 5 years old	6 to 12 years old	13 to 18 years old	All children	Average length of stay in emergency shelter in days
2014	615	504	598	1717	104
2015	680	551	657	1888	92
2016	708	613	630	1951	93
2017	776	712	711	2199	123
2018	907	874	667	2448	123
2019	935	931	752	2618	137
2020	792	697	589	2078	182
2021	708	693	595	1996	141
2022	782	815	635	2232	131
2023	835	860	686	2381	141

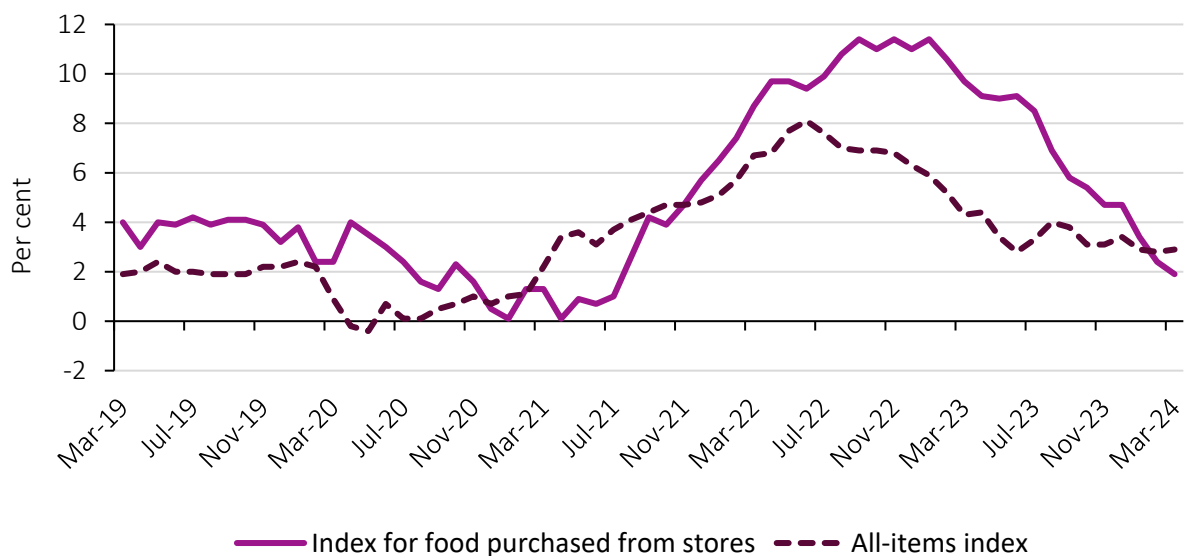
## Food insecurity

**Over one million more people in Canada experienced food insecurity in 2021 and almost three-quarters of them (72.9 per cent) were people who lived in families with children.<sup>24</sup>**

Food insecurity refers to the uncertainty or inability to afford sufficient quantities of food, and barriers to accessing quality food to maintain a healthy diet.<sup>25</sup> It is an indicator of material deprivation and a function of household income.<sup>26</sup> Over one million more people in Canada experienced food insecurity in 2021 and almost three-quarters of them (72.9 per cent) were people who lived in families with children.<sup>27</sup> Relative to other household composition types, a higher percentage of single mothers, particularly those who identify as Indigenous or Black, experience food insecurity. Furthermore, one in four (26 per cent) newcomer families in Canada are food insecure.<sup>28</sup>

Between March 2022 and November 2023, the average annual increase in the cost of food purchased from stores in Canada was considerably higher than overall measures of inflation (Figure 7).<sup>29</sup> Despite high inflation, however, people in Canada spent less than anticipated on food in 2023. While the expected annual cost of a healthy food basket for a couple with two children was \$16,288.40; the actual amount families spent on food was \$15,595 or \$693 less. This suggests that in the context of higher shelter costs, interest rates and levels of personal debt, people changed their spending habits by either buying less food and/or opting for cheaper lower quality food.<sup>30</sup>

Figure 7: Consumer Price Index: Average 12-month change in the cost of food purchased from stores, Canada, March 2019 to March 2024<sup>31</sup>



Current state of poverty in Ottawa

Table 8: Data for Figure 7 – Consumer Price Index: Average 12-month change in the cost of food purchased from stores, Canada, March 2019 to March 2024

<b>Date</b>	<b>Index for food purchased from stores</b>	<b>All-items index</b>
<b>Mar-19</b>	4	1.9
<b>Apr-19</b>	3	2
<b>May-19</b>	4	2.4
<b>Jun-19</b>	3.9	2
<b>Jul-19</b>	4.2	2
<b>Aug-19</b>	3.9	1.9
<b>Sep-19</b>	4.1	1.9
<b>Oct-19</b>	4.1	1.9
<b>Nov-19</b>	3.9	2.2
<b>Dec-19</b>	3.2	2.2
<b>Jan-20</b>	3.8	2.4
<b>Feb-20</b>	2.4	2.2
<b>Mar-20</b>	2.4	0.9
<b>Apr-20</b>	4	-0.2
<b>May-20</b>	3.5	-0.4
<b>Jun-20</b>	3	0.7
<b>Jul-20</b>	2.4	0.1
<b>Aug-20</b>	1.6	0.1
<b>Sep-20</b>	1.3	0.5
<b>Oct-20</b>	2.3	0.7
<b>Nov-20</b>	1.6	1
<b>Dec-20</b>	0.5	0.7
<b>Jan-21</b>	0.1	1
<b>Feb-21</b>	1.3	1.1
<b>Mar-21</b>	1.3	2.2
<b>Apr-21</b>	0.1	3.4
<b>May-21</b>	0.9	3.6
<b>Jun-21</b>	0.7	3.1
<b>Jul-21</b>	1	3.7
<b>Aug-21</b>	2.6	4.1
<b>Sep-21</b>	4.2	4.4

Current state of poverty in Ottawa

<b>Date</b>	<b>Index for food purchased from stores</b>	<b>All-items index</b>
<b>Oct-21</b>	3.9	4.7
<b>Nov-21</b>	4.7	4.7
<b>Dec-21</b>	5.7	4.8
<b>Jan-22</b>	6.5	5.1
<b>Feb-22</b>	7.4	5.7
<b>Mar-22</b>	8.7	6.7
<b>Apr-22</b>	9.7	6.8
<b>May-22</b>	9.7	7.7
<b>Jun-22</b>	9.4	8.1
<b>Jul-22</b>	9.9	7.6
<b>Aug-22</b>	10.8	7
<b>Sep-22</b>	11.4	6.9
<b>Oct-22</b>	11	6.9
<b>Nov-22</b>	11.4	6.8
<b>Dec-22</b>	11	6.3
<b>Jan-23</b>	11.4	5.9
<b>Feb-23</b>	10.6	5.2
<b>Mar-23</b>	9.7	4.3
<b>Apr-23</b>	9.1	4.4
<b>May-23</b>	9	3.4
<b>Jun-23</b>	9.1	2.8
<b>Jul-23</b>	8.5	3.3
<b>Aug-23</b>	6.9	4
<b>Sep-23</b>	5.8	3.8
<b>Oct-23</b>	5.4	3.1
<b>Nov-23</b>	4.7	3.1
<b>Dec-23</b>	4.7	3.4
<b>Jan-24</b>	3.4	2.9
<b>Feb-24</b>	2.4	2.8
<b>Mar-24</b>	1.9	2.9

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

The risk of food insecurity is influenced by factors such as income stability, debts and assets, access to family and social supports, and the cost of living. The percentage of Ottawa residents experiencing food insecurity increased by 5.4 percentage points between 2020 (11.2 per cent) and 2022 (16.6 per cent).<sup>32</sup> In 2023, nearly one third (31 per cent) of Ottawa residents worried about running out of food and approximately one in five residents (22 per cent) occasionally or regularly ran out of food before they had money to buy more.<sup>33</sup>

Among those in Canada with household incomes above the poverty line, the percentage of Indigenous families who were food insecure (31 per cent) was more than double that of non-Indigenous families (15 per cent). Among First Nations off-reserve and Métis families, 34 per cent and 28 per cent were food insecure, respectively. One in five (21 per cent) racialized families above the poverty line experienced food insecurity compared to 14 per cent of non-racialized and non-Indigenous families. Levels were highest among Black (33 per cent), Filipino (28 per cent), Arab (21 per cent), and South Asian (19 per cent) families.<sup>34</sup>

### **Government benefits**

**For households in Ottawa that rely on government transfers as their main source of income, the average cost of housing and healthy food equals or surpasses total monthly income.<sup>35</sup>**

Monthly benefit amounts under Ontario Works have remained unchanged for the past six years and benefits administered under the Ontario Disability Support Program were recently indexed to inflation in 2023. In Ottawa, the average cost of housing and healthy food equals or exceeds total monthly income among those who rely on government transfers as their main source of income. In addition, people earning full-time minimum wage are left with limited funds to cover other essential costs such as transportation, utilities, and clothing (Figure 8).



## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

Figure 8: Average monthly cost of nutritious food and housing relative to total monthly income by household composition, Ottawa, 2023<sup>36</sup>

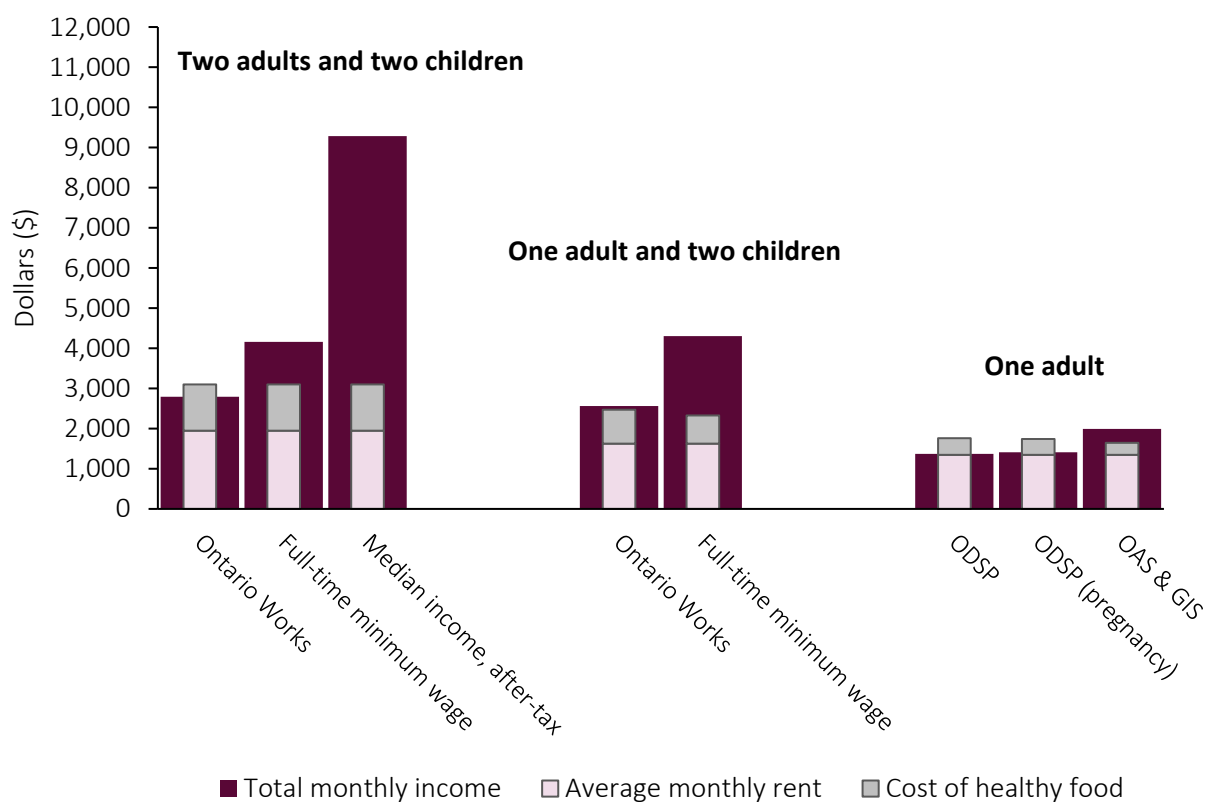


Table 9: Data for Figure 8 – Average monthly cost of nutritious food and housing relative to total monthly income by household composition, Ottawa, 2023

Household composition	Income source	Total monthly income	Average monthly rent	Cost of healthy food
Two adults and two children	Ontario Works	2793	1947	1153
	Full-time minimum wage	4160	1947	1153
	Median income, after-tax	9284	1947	1153
One adult and two children	Ontario Works	2560	1625	847
	Full-time minimum wage	4250	1625	847
One adult	ODSP	1400	1400	800
	ODSP (pregnancy)	1400	1400	800
	OAS & GIS	1900	1400	800

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

Household composition	Income source	Total monthly income	Average monthly rent	Cost of healthy food
	Full-time minimum wage	4302	1625	701
One adult	Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)	1369	1347	416
	Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP; pregnancy)	1409	1347	395
	Old Age Security Pension (OAS) & Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)	1993	1347	297

### Participation in society

Social exclusion marginalizes populations based on their sociodemographic characteristics such as gender, race, immigration, or language. Poverty reduction efforts address disparities in employment and wages by removing structural barriers that prevent populations from accessing opportunities and resources.

For low-income populations in Canada, filing income tax returns grants access to tax credits and refunds that can positively impact household incomes. Compared to other provinces, the percentage of non-tax filers is highest in Ontario (15.9 per cent).<sup>37</sup> Challenges at the individual, institutional, and systems level can impede access to benefit entitlements. The prevalence of

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

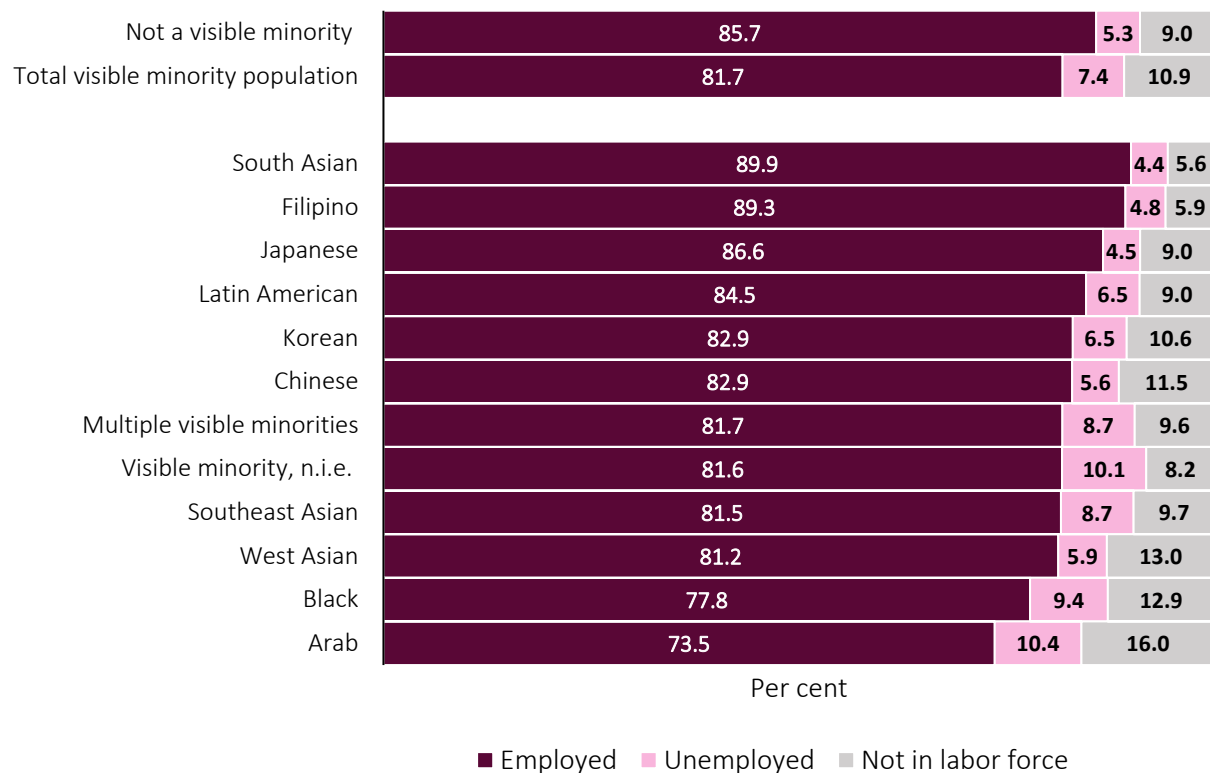
non-tax filers is estimated to be higher among groups that can potentially benefit the most from redistribution policies.<sup>38</sup>

### Participation in the labour force

**Factors such as caregiver roles and lack of affordable child care contribute to the gender gap in employment. Relative to men aged 25 to 54 years old, women of core working age in Ottawa had higher rates of non-participation in the labor force.<sup>39</sup>**

Disaggregated data on labor force status provides insights about variations in economic participation across populations. Among men aged 25 to 54 years old in Ottawa, the percentage of non-racialized men who were not in the labor force (9.0 per cent) was 1.9 percentage points lower than racialized men (10.9 per cent) (Figure 9). The difference between non-racialized (12.6 per cent) and racialized women (21.3 per cent) in the same age group was larger at 8.7 percentage points (Figure 10).<sup>40</sup>

Figure 9: Percentage of men 25 to 54 years old who are employed, unemployed, and not in the labor force, Ottawa-Gatineau (Ontario part) 2020<sup>41</sup>



## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

Table 10: Data for Figure 9 – Percentage of men 25 to 54 years old who are employed, unemployed, and not in the labor force, Ottawa-Gatineau (Ontario part) 2020

<b>Racial identity</b>	<b>Employed</b>	<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>Not in labor force</b>
Arab	73.5	10.4	16.0
Black	77.8	9.4	12.9
West Asian	81.2	5.9	13.0
Southeast Asian	81.5	8.7	9.7
Visible minority, n.i.e. <sup>4</sup>	81.6	10.1	8.2
Multiple visible minorities	81.7	8.7	9.6
Chinese	82.9	5.6	11.5
Korean	82.9	6.5	10.6
Latin American	84.5	6.5	9.0
Japanese	86.6	4.5	9.0
Filipino	89.3	4.8	5.9
South Asian	89.9	4.4	5.6
Total visible minority population	81.7	7.4	10.9
Not a visible minority	85.7	5.3	9.0

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<sup>4</sup> The response category 'visible minority, not included elsewhere (n.i.e.)' includes respondents who wrote in a response that is designated as a visible minority, but cannot be classified elsewhere.

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

Figure 10: Percentage of women 25 to 54 years old who are employed, unemployed, and not in the labor force, Ottawa-Gatineau (Ontario part) 2020<sup>42</sup>

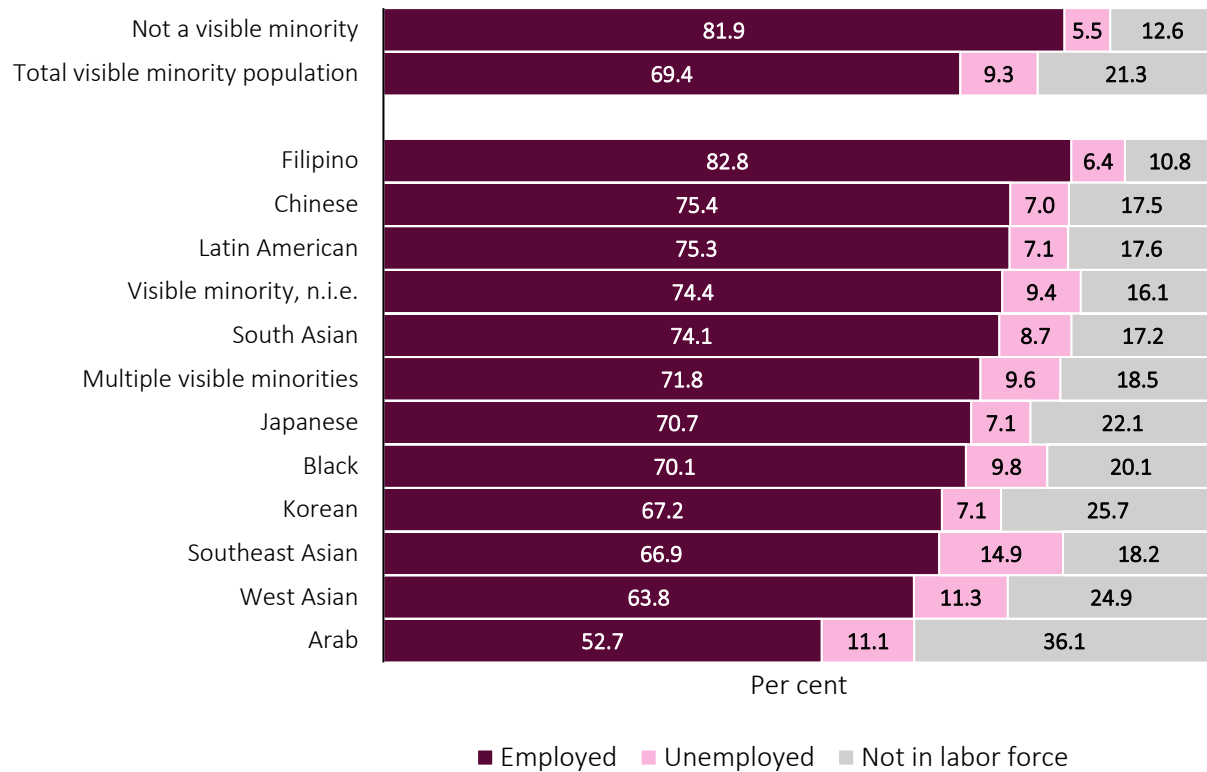


Table 11: Data for Figure 10 – Percentage of women 25 to 54 years old who are employed, unemployed, and not in the labor force, Ottawa-Gatineau (Ontario part) 2020

Racial identity	Employed	Unemployed	Not in labor force
Arab	52.7	11.1	36.1
West Asian	63.8	11.3	24.9
Southeast Asian	66.9	14.9	18.2
Korean	67.2	7.1	25.7
Black	70.1	9.8	20.1
Japanese	70.7	7.1	22.1
Multiple visible minorities	71.8	9.6	18.5
South Asian	74.1	8.7	17.2

Current state of poverty in Ottawa

Racial identity	Employed	Unemployed	Not in labor force
Visible minority, n.i.e. <sup>5</sup>	74.4	9.4	16.1
Latin American	75.3	7.1	17.6
Chinese	75.4	7.0	17.5
Filipino	82.8	6.4	10.8
Total visible minority population	69.4	9.3	21.3
Not a visible minority	81.9	5.5	12.6

**Gender, race, and the labour force**

**Systemic exclusion from the labor force is both a consequence and driver of poverty. Across racial identities, the percentage of women aged 25 to 54 years old who arrived in Ottawa after 2011 and were not participating in the labor force ranged from 10.8 per cent to 49.2 per cent.<sup>43</sup>**

Some of the variation in the percentage of women not participating in the labor force may be explained by the extent to which women arrive in Canada under different immigration admission categories. Compared to women who are economic immigrants, a higher percentage of those accepted as sponsored dependents under the family class experience language barriers and have lower levels of education.<sup>44</sup> Insufficient support for newcomer communities creates conditions for social exclusion that perpetuate disparities in health and well-being. Figures 11 and 12 show the percentage of men and women who arrived in Canada after 2011 that are employed, unemployed and not in the labor force.

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<sup>5</sup> The response category ‘visible minority, not included elsewhere (n.i.e.)’ includes respondents who wrote in a response that is designated as a visible minority, but cannot be classified elsewhere.

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

Figure 11: Percentage of men aged 25 to 54 years old who arrived in Canada between 2011 and 2021 that are employed, unemployed and not in the labor force, Ottawa-Gatineau (Ontario part) 2020<sup>45</sup>

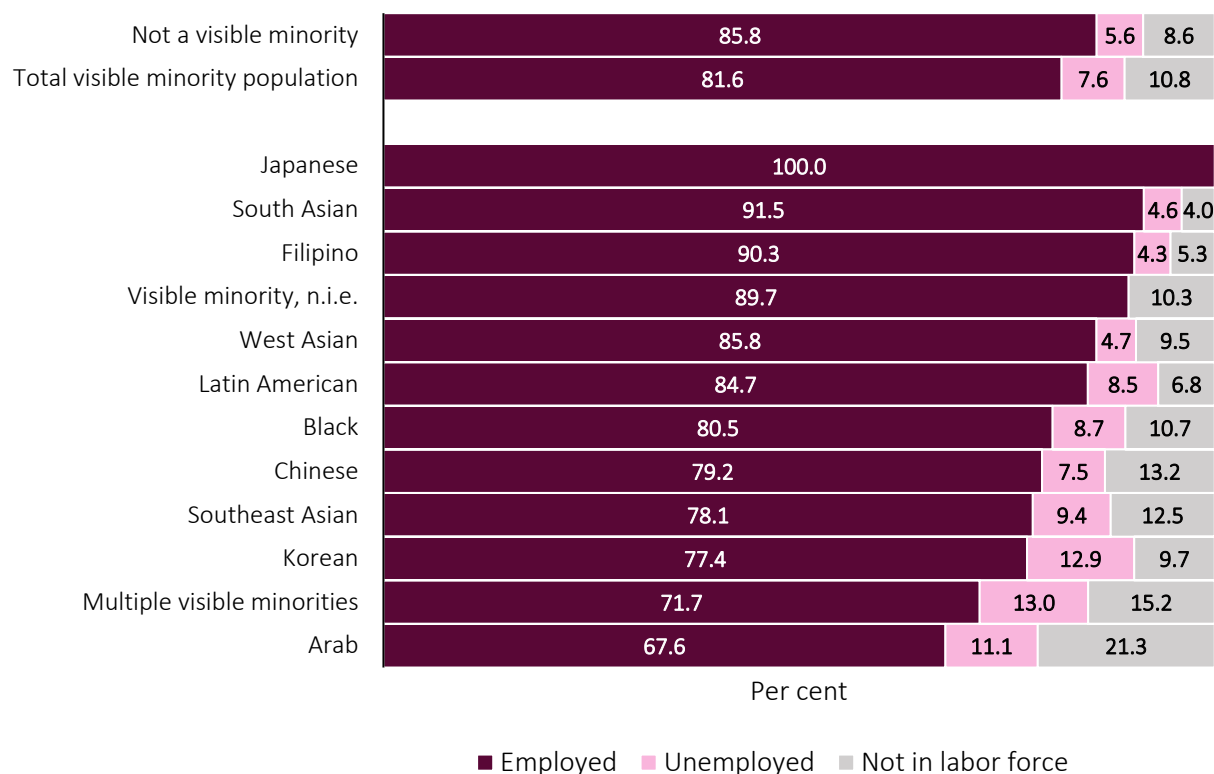


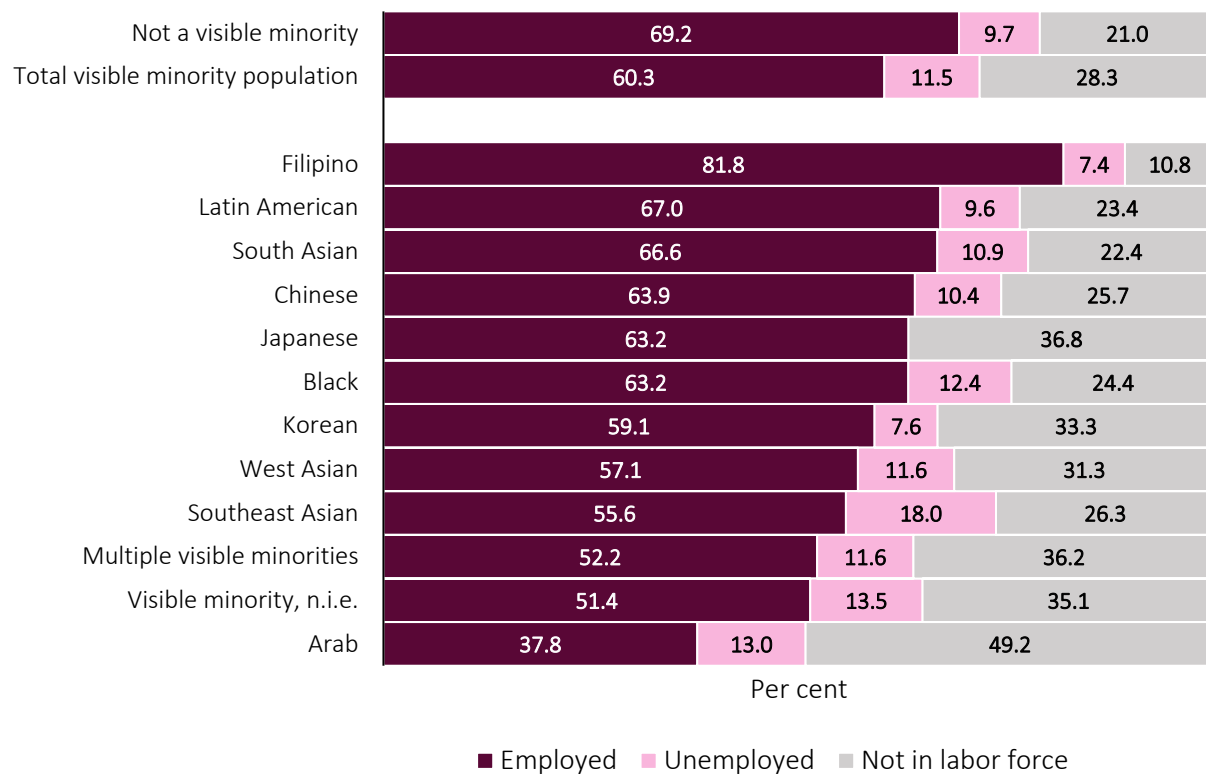
Table 12: Data for Figure 11 – Percentage of men aged 25 to 54 years old who arrived in Canada between 2011 and 2021 that are employed, unemployed and not in the labor force, Ottawa-Gatineau (Ontario part) 2020

Racial identity	Employed	Unemployed	Not in labor force
Arab	67.6	11.1	21.3
Multiple visible minorities	71.7	13.0	15.2
Korean	77.4	12.9	9.7
Southeast Asian	78.1	9.4	12.5
Chinese	79.2	7.5	13.2
Black	80.5	8.7	10.7
Latin American	84.7	8.5	6.8
West Asian	85.8	4.7	9.5

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

Racial identity	Employed	Unemployed	Not in labor force
Visible minority, n.i.e. <sup>6</sup>	89.7	0.0	10.3
Filipino	90.3	4.3	5.3
South Asian	91.5	4.6	4.0
Japanese	100.0	0.0	0.0

Figure 12: Percentage of women aged 25 to 54 years old who arrived in Canada between 2011 and 2021 that are employed, unemployed and not in the labor force, Ottawa-Gatineau (Ontario part) 2020<sup>46</sup>



<sup>6</sup> The response category 'visible minority, not included elsewhere (n.i.e.)' includes respondents who wrote in a response that is designated as a visible minority, but cannot be classified elsewhere.



## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

Table 13: Data for Figure 12 – Percentage of women aged 25 to 54 years old who arrived in Canada between 2011 and 2021 that are employed, unemployed and not in the labor force, Ottawa-Gatineau (Ontario part) 2020

Racial identity	Employed	Unemployed	Not in labor force
Arab	37.8	13.0	49.2
Visible minority, n.i.e. <sup>7</sup>	51.4	13.5	35.1
Multiple visible minorities	52.2	11.6	36.2
Southeast Asian	55.6	18.0	26.3
West Asian	57.1	11.6	31.3
Korean	59.1	7.6	33.3
Black	63.2	12.4	24.4
Japanese	63.2	0.0	36.8
Chinese	63.9	10.4	25.7
South Asian	66.6	10.9	22.4
Latin American	67.0	9.6	23.4
Filipino	81.8	7.4	10.8

### Youth and the labour force

**Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) are at higher risk of long-term poverty due to conditions that impede their ability to acquire skills needed for gainful employment. Variation in youth NEET across populations in Ottawa highlight unique needs of different communities.**

Factors that contribute to youth NEET include inter-generational poverty, disability, illness, and barriers to education. These may increase the potential for earning low wages, early parenthood, unemployment, housing instability, and financial insecurity.<sup>47</sup> The percentage of youth NEET in Ottawa was similar between racialized (11.4 per cent) and non-racialized (10.7 per cent) populations in 2020 (Figure 13). However, within the racialized population the range of youth NEET varied from 5.3 per cent to 14.2 per cent<sup>48</sup> when disaggregated by racial identity.<sup>48</sup> For some racialized groups, the percentage of youth NEET was higher among those who

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<sup>7</sup> The response category 'visible minority, not included elsewhere (n.i.e.)' includes respondents who wrote in a response that is designated as a visible minority, but cannot be classified elsewhere.

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

immigrated to Canada (Figure 14). The association with immigration to Canada, however, is not common to all racialized populations. For some, third generation youth had notably higher percentages of NEET relative to first- or second- generation youth (Figure 15).<sup>49</sup> This highlights the unique needs of different communities across Ottawa.

Figure 13: Percentage of youth not in employment, education or training in Ottawa by racial identity, 2020<sup>50</sup>

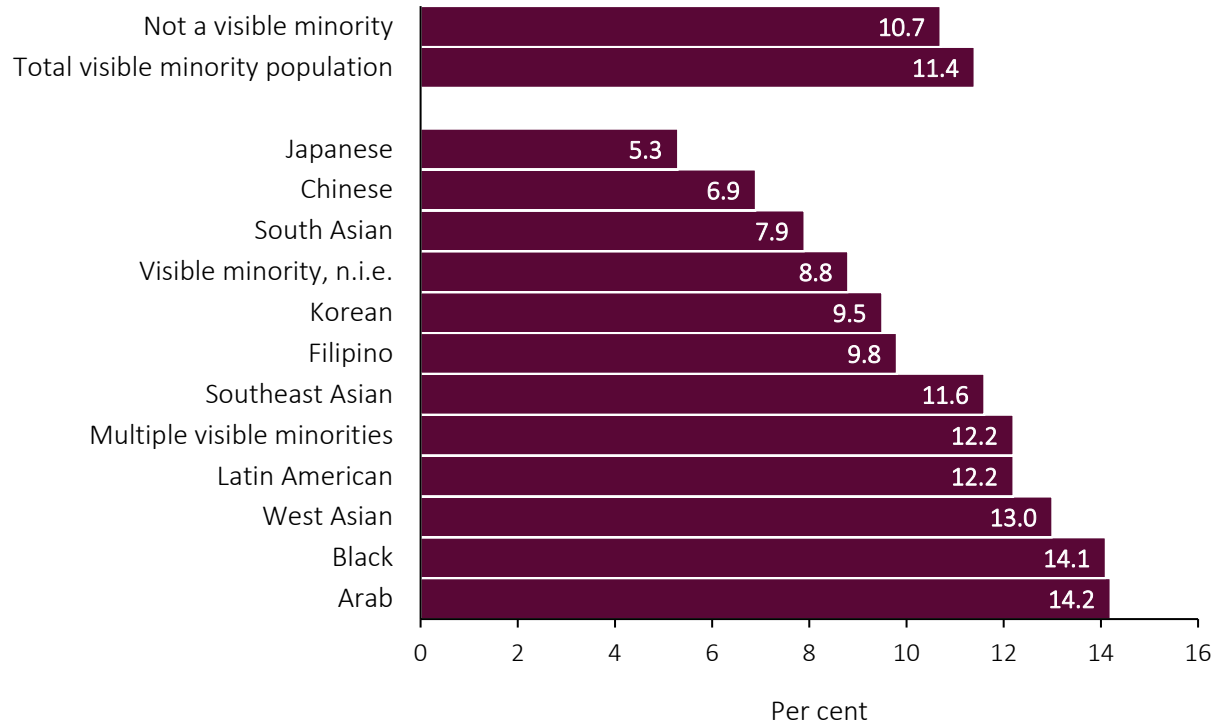


Table 14: Data for Figure 13 – Percentage of youth not in employment, education or training in Ottawa by racial identity, 2020

Racial identity	Per cent
Arab	14.2
Black	14.1
West Asian	13
Latin American	12.2
Multiple visible minorities	12.2
Southeast Asian	11.6
Filipino	9.8
Korean	9.5

Current state of poverty in Ottawa

Racial identity	Per cent
Visible minority, n.i.e. <sup>8</sup>	8.8
South Asian	7.9
Chinese	6.9
Japanese	5.3
Total visible minority population	11.4
Not a visible minority	10.7

Figure 14: Percentage of youth not in employment, education or training in Ottawa by racial identity and immigration status, 2020<sup>51</sup>

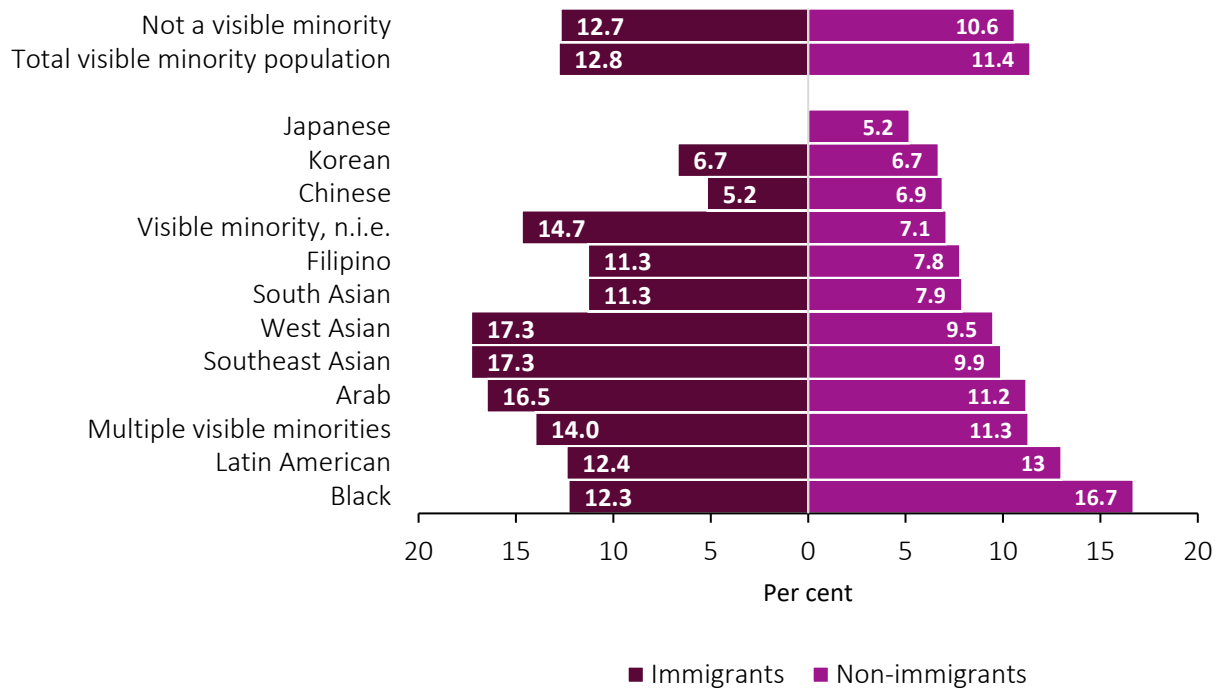


Table 15: Data for Figure 14 – Percentage of youth not in employment, education or training in Ottawa by racial identity and immigration status, 2020

Racial identity	Immigrants	Non-immigrants
Black	-12.3	16.7

<sup>8</sup> The response category ‘visible minority, not included elsewhere (n.i.e.)’ includes respondents who wrote in a response that is designated as a visible minority, but cannot be classified elsewhere.

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

<b>Racial identity</b>	<b>Immigrants</b>	<b>Non-immigrants</b>
Latin American	-12.4	13
Multiple visible minorities	-14	11.3
Arab	-16.5	11.2
Southeast Asian	-17.3	9.9
West Asian	-17.3	9.5
South Asian	-11.3	7.9
Filipino	-11.3	7.8
Visible minority, n.i.e. <sup>9</sup>	-14.7	7.1
Chinese	-5.2	6.9
Korean	-6.7	6.7
Japanese	0	5.2

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<sup>9</sup> The response category 'visible minority, not included elsewhere (n.i.e.)' includes respondents who wrote in a response that is designated as a visible minority, but cannot be classified elsewhere.

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

Figure 15: Percentage of youth not in employment, education or training in Ottawa by racial identity and generation in Canada, 2020<sup>52</sup>

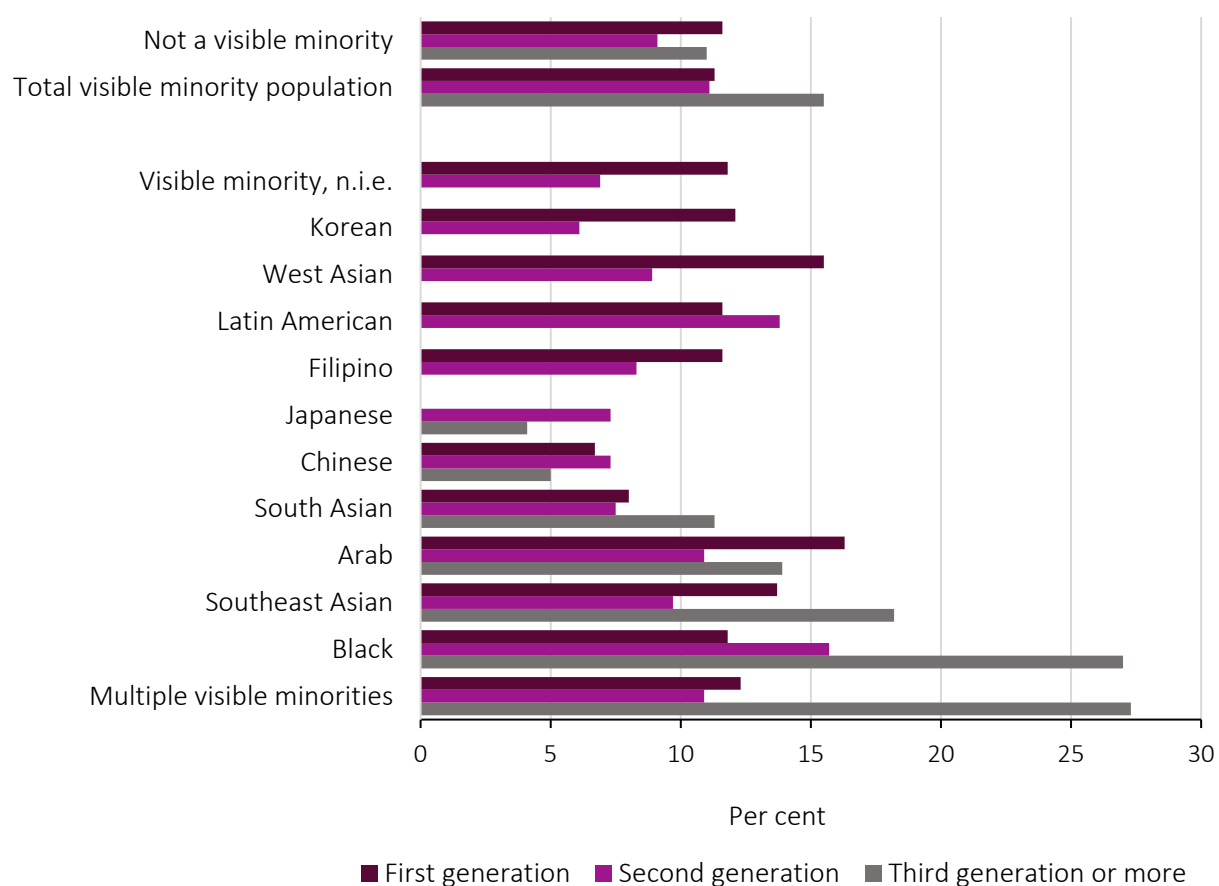


Table 16: Data for Figure 15 – Percentage of youth not in employment, education or training in Ottawa by racial identity and generation in Canada, 2020

Racial identity	Third generation or more	Second generation	First generation
Multiple visible minorities	27.3	10.9	12.3
Black	27	15.7	11.8
Southeast Asian	18.2	9.7	13.7
Arab	13.9	10.9	16.3
South Asian	11.3	7.5	8
Chinese	5	7.3	6.7
Japanese	4.1	7.3	0
Filipino	0	8.3	11.6
Latin American	0	13.8	11.6
West Asian	0	8.9	15.5

Racial identity	Third generation or more	Second generation	First generation
Korean	0	6.1	12.1
Visible minority, n.i.e. <sup>10</sup>	0	6.9	11.8

## People living to their full potential

Living to full potential refers to a person’s ability to pursue personal development and exert control over their lives. Structural barriers to meeting one’s full potential increase the likelihood of chronic poverty over the course of a person’s life and between generations. Poverty reduction work in this area focuses on removing disparities in early childhood development and educational achievement.

### Education

**Due to structural barriers that impede access to resources and opportunities, children from low-income households are more likely to exhibit gaps across domains of the Early Development Instrument when starting elementary school.<sup>53</sup> In 2018, one third to half of kindergarten children from 31 neighbourhoods in Ottawa scored low in one or more domains of the Early Development Instrument.<sup>54</sup>**

The Early Development Instrument gives insights into child development across five domains: physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communication skills and general knowledge. The social and economic conditions in which children are born influence access to opportunities for healthy development. Research from Canada identifies the following determinants of child development:<sup>55</sup>

- Single parenthood
- Teenage parenthood
- Involvement in child welfare system
- Newcomer to Canada (particularly refugees)
- Low income

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<sup>10</sup> The response category ‘visible minority, not included elsewhere (n.i.e.)’ includes respondents who wrote in a response that is designated as a visible minority, but cannot be classified elsewhere.

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

- Low level of parental education
- Poor housing quality
- Low availability of quality child care and early education services
- Barriers to accessing health and mental health services

In 2018, a third to half of children scored low in one or more domains of the Early Development Instrument in 31 neighbourhoods in Ottawa (Table 17).<sup>56</sup>

Table 17: Percentage of children low in one or more Early Development Instrument domain by neighbourhood in Ottawa, 2018<sup>57</sup>

Neighbourhood	Percentage
Carlington	51.5
Sandy Hill	50.8
Greenboro East	49.5
Hunt Club East - Western Community	46.5
Bells Corners West	46.2
Carleton Heights - Rideauview	44.2
Woodvale - Craig Henry - Manordale - Estates of Arlington Woods	43.5
Parkwood Hills - Stewart Farm	43.5
Ledbury - Heron Gate - Ridgemont	43.4
Riverside Park	42.9
Overbrook - McArthur	41.5
Emerald Woods - Sawmill Creek	40.7
Iris - Queensway Terrance South	39.1
Hunt Club - Ottawa Airport	39.1
Bayshore - Belltown	39.1
Vanier North	38.8
Island Park - Wellington Village	37.7
East Industrial	37.5
Vanier South	37.5
Qualicum - Redwood Park	37.3
Britannia Village	37.1
Byward Market	36.7
Rothwell Heights - Beacon Hill North	36.0
Braemar Park - Bel Air Heights - Copeland Park	35.4

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

Neighbourhood	Percentage
Carlingwood West - Glabar Park - McKellar Heights	34.6
Lowertown	34.1
Hawthorne Meadows - Sheffield Glen	34.0
Carson Grove - Carson Meadows	33.7
Navan - Sarsfield	33.3
Carp	33.3

## Impacts of COVID-19 on education

**Learning losses due to school closures during COVID-19 raise concerns about additional disadvantage students from low-income households face and long-term implications for employability and financial security.<sup>58</sup>**

Equity in education refers to equal learning opportunities where differences in outcomes such as academic performance and educational attainment are not associated with socioeconomic factors. Unequal access to learning opportunities at home is an important factor explaining gaps in academic achievement between students from high- and low- income households. During COVID-19, access to tools to support remote learning, including access to reliable internet, raised concerns about deepening pre-existing disparities in education outcomes.

Across Ottawa school boards in the 2022-2023 academic year, the percentage of students not meeting the provincial standard in reading and writing was higher among those in Grade 3 relative to those in Grade 6 (Figures 16 & 17). Disruptions to early primary school education when reading and writing skills are introduced may explain some of this discrepancy. The percentage of students not meeting the provincial standard in mathematics was as high as 39.1 per cent (Grade 3), 48.5 per cent (Grade 6), and 39.1 per cent (Grade 9) (Figure 18).<sup>59</sup>



## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

Figure 16: Percentage of students not meeting the provincial standard in reading by grade and Ottawa school board, 2022-2023<sup>60</sup>

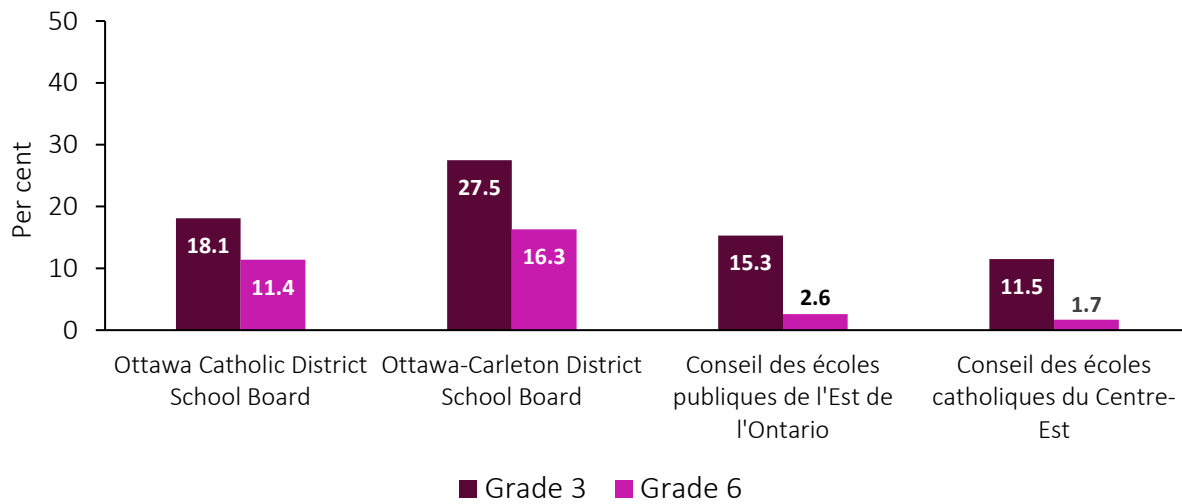


Table 18: Data for Figure 16 – Percentage of students not meeting the provincial standard in reading by grade and Ottawa school board, 2022-2023

School board	Grade 3	Grade 6
Ottawa Catholic School Board	18.1	11.4
Ottawa-Carleton District School Board	27.5	16.3
Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario	15.3	2.6
Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est	11.5	1.7

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

Figure 17: Percentage of students not meeting the provincial standard in writing by grade and Ottawa school board, 2022-2023<sup>61</sup>

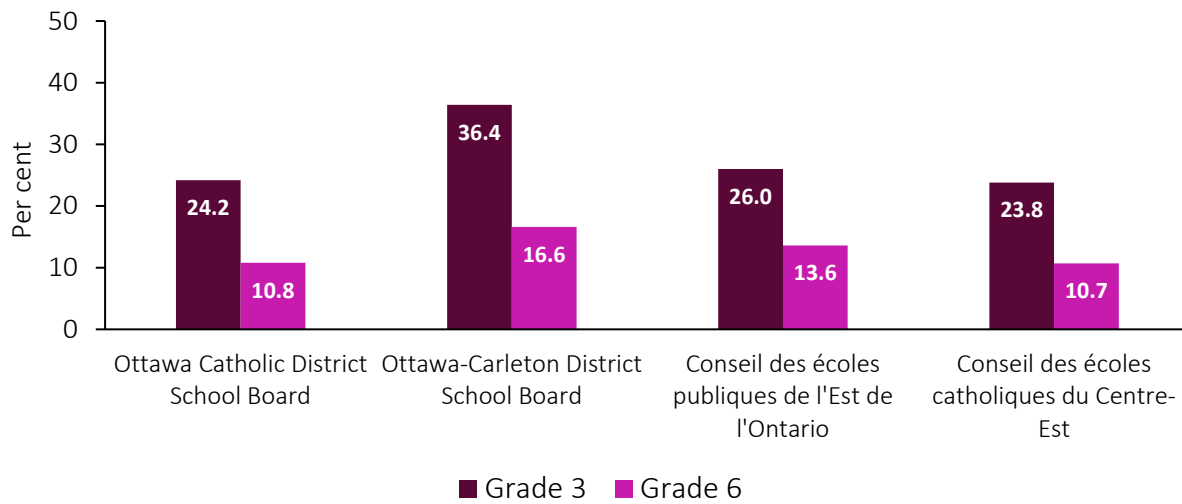


Table 19: Data for Figure 17 – Percentage of students not meeting the provincial standard in writing by grade and Ottawa school board, 2022-2023

School board	Grade 3	Grade 6
Ottawa Catholic School Board	24.2	10.8
Ottawa-Carleton District School Board	36.4	16.6
Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario	26	13.6
Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est	23.8	10.7

## Current state of poverty in Ottawa

Figure 18: Percentage of students not meeting the provincial standard in mathematics by grade and Ottawa school board, 2022-2023<sup>62</sup>

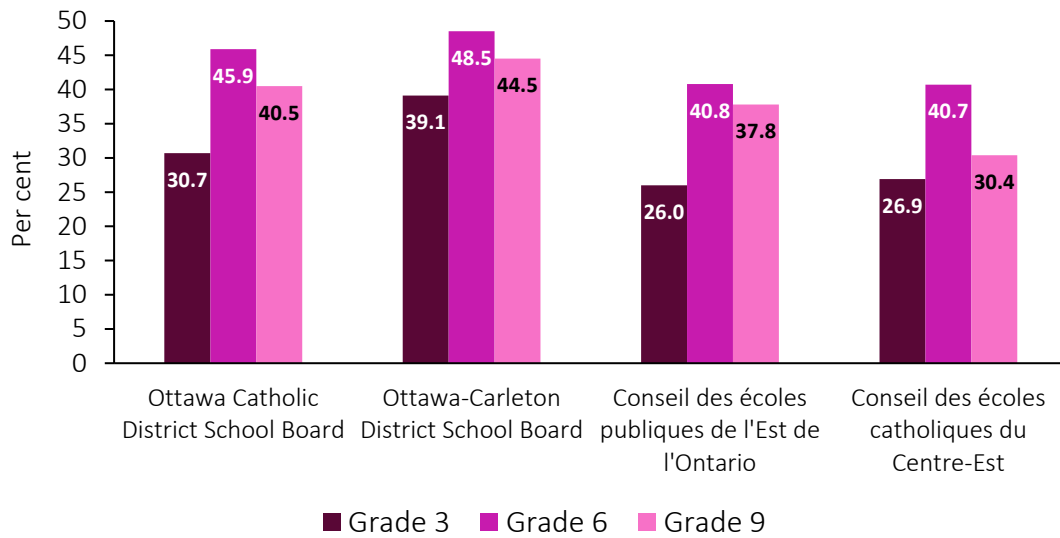


Table 20: Data for Figure 18 – Percentage of students not meeting the provincial standard in mathematics by grade and Ottawa school board, 2022-2023

School board	Grade 3	Grade 6	Grade 9
Ottawa Catholic School Board	30.7	45.9	40.5
Ottawa-Carleton District School Board	39.1	48.5	44.5
Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario	26	40.8	37.8
Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est	26.9	40.7	30.4

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> City for All Women Initiative & City of Ottawa 2017, 5

<sup>2</sup> Mikkonen, J. & Raphael, D. (2010). *Social determinants of health: The Canadian facts*. Toronto, Canada: York University School of Health and Policy Management.

<sup>3</sup> Government of Canada. 2013. [What is the Population Health Approach?](#)

<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada. 2022. Special tabulation, based on 2018 and 2021 cycles of the Canadian Housing Survey. Custom tabulation produced for the City of Ottawa.

<sup>5</sup> Affordability Action Council. 2024. [Rural recognition: Affordable and safe transportation options for remote communities](#). Institute for Research on Public Policy.

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0093-01 [Poverty and low-income statistics by selected demographic characteristics](#).

<sup>7</sup> Gustajtis B. and Heisz A. [Market Basket Measure poverty rates for 2022 and 2023](#).

<sup>8</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0093-01 [Poverty and low-income statistics by selected demographic characteristics](#).

<sup>9</sup> Gustajtis B. and Heisz A. [Market Basket Measure poverty rates for 2022 and 2023](#).

<sup>10</sup> UNICEF Canada. UNICEF Report Card 18: Canadian Comparison, Child Poverty in Canada: Let's Finish This. UNICEF Canada, Toronto, 2023.

<sup>11</sup> Haider, A. 2021. [The basic facts about children in poverty](#). Center for American Progress.

<sup>12</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0018-01 [After-tax low income status of tax filers and dependants based on Census Family Low Income Measure \(CFLIM-AT\), by family type and family type composition](#).

<sup>13</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0024-01 [Low income entry and exit rates of tax filers in Canada](#).

<sup>14</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0115-01 [Individual Market Basket Measure poverty status by visible minority groups and demographic characteristics](#): Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts.

<sup>15</sup> Statistics Canada. 2023. *Ottawa, CV [Census Subdivision], Ontario (table)*. [Indigenous Population Profile. 2021 Census of Population](#). Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-510-X2021001. Ottawa. Released June 21, 2023.

<sup>16</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0115-01 [Individual Market Basket Measure poverty status by visible minority groups and demographic characteristics](#): Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts.

<sup>17</sup> Statistics Canada. 2023. *Ottawa, CV [Census Subdivision], Ontario (table)*. [Indigenous Population Profile. 2021 Census of Population](#). Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-510-X2021001. Ottawa. Released June 21, 2023.

<sup>18</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0115-01 [Individual Market Basket Measure poverty status by visible minority groups and demographic characteristics](#): Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts.

<sup>19</sup> Statistics Canada. 2023. *Ottawa, CV [Census Subdivision], Ontario (table)*. [Indigenous Population Profile. 2021 Census of Population](#). Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-510-X2021001. Ottawa. Released June 21, 2023.

<sup>20</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0115-01 [Individual Market Basket Measure poverty status by visible minority groups and demographic characteristics](#): Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts.

<sup>21</sup> Context Research Group. 2023. *City of Ottawa Population Survey Report*.

<sup>22</sup> Uppal, S. 2023. [Rising prices and the impact on the most financially vulnerable: A profile of those in the bottom family income quintile](#). Statistics Canada.

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<sup>24</sup> Statistics Canada. 2023. [Canadian Income Survey, 2021](#).

<sup>25</sup> Health Canada. 2020. [Household food insecurity in Canada: Overview](#).

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<sup>28</sup> Uppal, S. 2023. [Food insecurity among Canadian families](#). Statistics Canada.

<sup>29</sup> Statistics Canada. 2024. [Consumer Price Index \(CPI\): Statistics Canada's primary measure of inflation](#).

<sup>30</sup> Dalhousie University. 2024. [14<sup>th</sup> edition Canada's food price report 2024](#).

<sup>31</sup> Statistics Canada. 2024. [Consumer Price Index \(CPI\): Statistics Canada's primary measure of inflation](#).

<sup>32</sup> Public Health Ontario. 2023. *Household Food Insecurity Snapshot: PHU (2019 to 2022)*.

<sup>33</sup> Context Research Group. 2023. *City of Ottawa Population Survey Report*. Report produced for the City of Ottawa.

- <sup>34</sup> Uppal, S. 2023. [Food insecurity among Canadian families](#). Statistics Canada.
- <sup>35</sup> Ottawa Public Health. 2023. [Monitoring Food Affordability in Ottawa](#).
- <sup>36</sup> Ottawa Public Health. 2023. [Monitoring Food Affordability in Ottawa](#).
- <sup>37</sup> Robson, J. and Schwartz, S. 2020. Who doesn't file a tax return? A portrait of non-filers. Canadian Public Policy. 46(3) : 323-339.
- <sup>38</sup> Cameron, A. et al. 2020. [Tax policy trends: The merits of automatic income tax assessments for low-income Canadians](#). University of Calgary.
- <sup>39</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0446-01 [Labour force status by visible minority, immigrant status and period of immigration, highest level of education, age and gender](#): Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts.
- <sup>40</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0446-01 [Labour force status by visible minority, immigrant status and period of immigration, highest level of education, age and gender](#): Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts.
- <sup>41</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0446-01 [Labour force status by visible minority, immigrant status and period of immigration, highest level of education, age and gender](#): Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts.
- <sup>42</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0446-01 [Labour force status by visible minority, immigrant status and period of immigration, highest level of education, age and gender](#): Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts.
- <sup>43</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0446-01 [Labour force status by visible minority, immigrant status and period of immigration, highest level of education, age and gender](#): Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts.
- <sup>44</sup> Bonikowska, A. and Hou, F. 2017. [Labour market outcomes of immigrant women who arrive as dependants of economic immigrant principal applicants](#).
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- <sup>46</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0446-01 [Labour force status by visible minority, immigrant status and period of immigration, highest level of education, age and gender](#): Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts..
- <sup>47</sup> Canadian Council for Youth Prosperity. 2020. [NEET youth: A population profile](#).
- <sup>48</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0648-01 [Youth not in education, employment or training by visible minority, selected sociodemographic characteristics and the census year](#).

<sup>49</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0648-01 [Youth not in education, employment or training by visible minority, selected sociodemographic characteristics and the census year.](#)

<sup>50</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0648-01 [Youth not in education, employment or training by visible minority, selected sociodemographic characteristics and the census year.](#)

<sup>51</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0648-01 [Youth not in education, employment or training by visible minority, selected sociodemographic characteristics and the census year.](#)

<sup>52</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0648-01 [Youth not in education, employment or training by visible minority, selected sociodemographic characteristics and the census year.](#)

<sup>53</sup> Enns, J. et al. 2018. [Early childhood development in Canada](#) : Current state of knowledge and future directions. Discussion paper for the Public Health Agency of Canada.

<sup>54</sup> Data received from the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study.

<sup>55</sup> Enns, JE. Brownell M. et al. 2018. [Early childhood development in Canada](#): Current state of knowledge and future directions. Discussion paper for the Public Health Agency of Canada.

<sup>56</sup> Data received from the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study.

<sup>57</sup> Data received from the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study.

<sup>58</sup> Aurini, J. and Davies, S. 2021. COVID-19 school closures and educational achievement gaps in Canada: Lessons learned from Ontario summer learning research. *Can Rev Sociol* 58(2): 165-185.

<sup>59</sup> Education Quality and Accountability Office. 2023. [School, board and provincial results, 2022-2023.](#)

<sup>60</sup> Education Quality and Accountability Office. 2023. [School, board and provincial results, 2022-2023.](#)

<sup>61</sup> Education Quality and Accountability Office. 2023. [School, board and provincial results, 2022-2023.](#)

<sup>62</sup> Education Quality and Accountability Office. 2023. [School, board and provincial results, 2022-2023.](#)