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# STILL IN RECOVERY

Assessing the pandemic's impact on women

Katherine Scott

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### Beyond Recovery: Priorities for supporting women and the economy

*Canada's Gender Gap: Where are we now?* is part of a larger project, Beyond Recovery, which is working to support and advance a gender-just recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The project's goals are to document and analyze women's experiences, with a particular focus on those of marginalized women in hard-hit sectors, and to provide evidence-based policy proposals to ensure those who are most impacted in this pandemic are front and centre in Canada's post-pandemic future.

This project has been funded in part by Women and Gender Equality Canada.



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### About the author

Katherine Scott is a Senior Researcher at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. She is the director of the CCPA's initiative on gender equality and public policy, Making Women Count, and is involved in other ongoing social policy research and advocacy.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC THAT swept the globe in 2020 not only threatened people's health but exposed and exacerbated entrenched inequalities. Women bore the brunt. Three years later, the acute phase of the pandemic is over, but women are still in recovery mode.

This brief takes stock of where we are now with respect to the gender gap in Canada—using the CCPA's Gender Gap Index to assess developments over the past three years. The index focuses on the gap between men and women. It looks at 17 indicators across the five domains that make up the CCPA index: economic participation and security, personal security, educational attainment, health, and leadership and political empowerment.

Nationally, the CCPA index reveals that the gender equality gap widened slightly between 2019 and 2022. In 2022, Canada had closed 78.6 per cent of the parity gap, a decline of 0.4 percentage points compared to 2019.

Increased educational attainment and women's representation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) occupations were more than offset by declines in women's mental health and the increased threat of violence against women and gender-diverse people.

Likewise, a strong job recovery helped boost women's economic participation, including among historically marginalized groups, but the gender poverty gap widened at the same time, signalling that many are being left behind.

These trends played out in different ways across the country. Nova Scotia had the highest overall ranking, at #1, while Manitoba had the lowest overall ranking, at #10. Here's the ranking from best to worst:

1. Nova Scotia
2. B.C.
3. New Brunswick
4. Ontario
5. Newfoundland and Labrador
6. P.E.I.
7. Alberta
8. Saskatchewan
9. Quebec
10. Manitoba

Regardless of the rankings, every province has more work to do. Prince Edward Island, Quebec and Nova Scotia all experienced declines in their overall gender parity scores. These changes were enough to knock Prince Edward Island from its 2019 first place posting and out of the top five in 2022, and Quebec from fifth to ninth place.

Declines in four of five domains, however, did not prevent Nova Scotia from ranking first in 2022, with the highest score (80 per cent). Manitoba, as in 2019, reported the lowest gender parity score (76.9 per cent) in 2022.

In 2022, the overall distance between the province with the smallest gender gap and the largest was 3.1 percentage points, a decline from 6.5 percentage points in 2019. The pandemic experience seems to have resulted in a levelling down of gender equality.

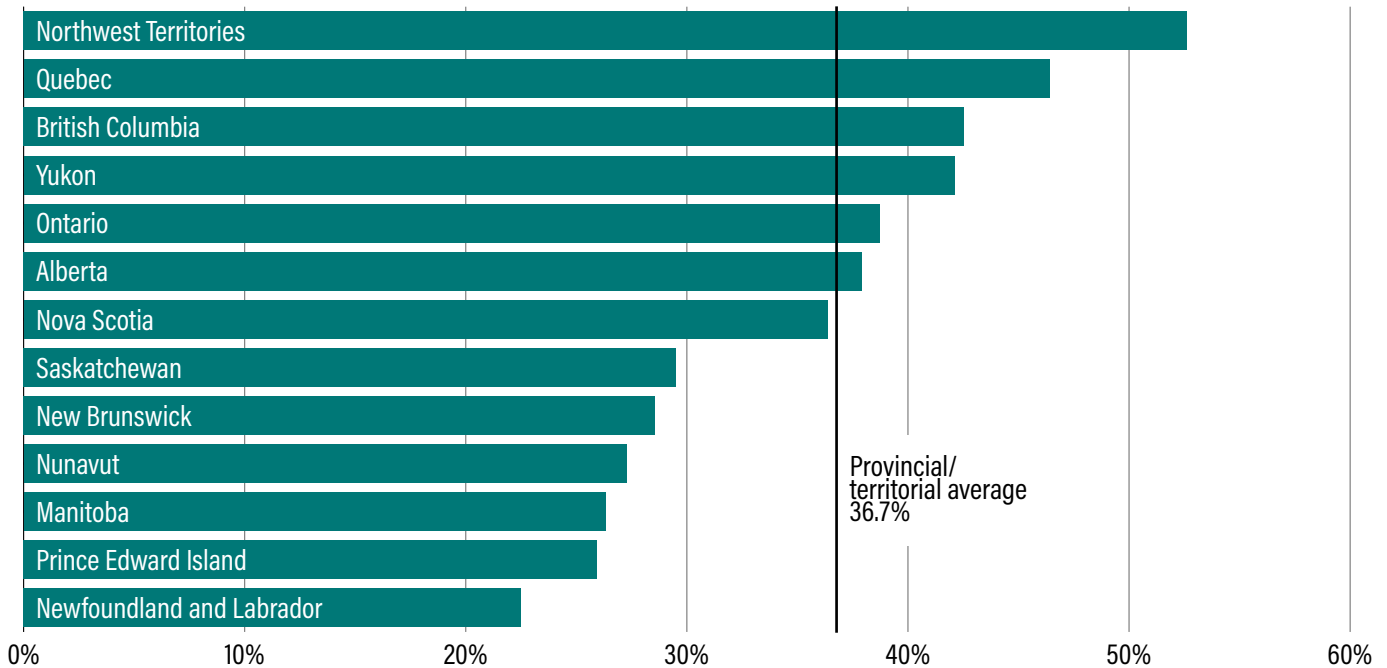
The largest gap in the CCPA's index was in the Leadership and Political Empowerment domain, where women, on average, hold roughly only one-third of all positions of authority in every province—and have done so for many years. This domain is a key factor pulling down overall gender equality scores across the board.

In 2022, index scores ranged from a high in British Columbia of 54.1 per cent to a low in Manitoba, which has closed only 37.8 per cent of its leadership gap. The gender parity score in leadership declined by 2.9 percentage points over this period. Women in Quebec lost the most ground, experiencing a large decline in their share of business owners with paid help and of women engaged in management occupations.

The Educational Attainment domain has the next largest gap, despite the very high numbers of young women engaged in postsecondary education. In 2022, the average provincial gender gap in education was

## Figure 9 Women’s representation in provincial and territorial legislatures

Most recent election



Source: Information gathered from provincial election agencies.

20.1 per cent; stated another way, provinces have traveled 79.9 per cent of the way to educational parity. The gap here is the result of the sizable and persistent under-representation of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields of study. In this area, Prince Edward Island has come the closest to closing the gender gap, with a score of 83 per cent. The education gap was widest in Quebec and Alberta, with scores of 74.1 per cent and 76.7 per cent, respectively.

There is a sizable gap in women’s Economic Participation and Security, as measured by the level of employment, employment income and poverty relative to men. In 2022, the provinces had closed, on average, 86 per cent of the economic gender gap. Five percentage points separated top-ranked New Brunswick with an economic gender gap score of 88.1 per cent and bottom-ranked Alberta with a score of 82.9 per cent.

Wages represented the largest gender gap in the economic domain. This was also the indicator with the largest difference in values between the provinces. In 2022, women in Alberta took home roughly 64 cents for every dollar a man earned. This represented a difference of more than \$21,500. The gender gap was smallest in Prince Edward Island, where women earned 78 cents on the dollar—for a difference of \$9,200.

The Health domain—which tracks the gap in life expectancy and self-reported excellent health, daily stress, and unmet health care needs—represented the smallest gender gap and the smallest spread in scores. Only 4.2 percentage points separated the top-ranked province and the bottom-ranked province.

The pandemic had an immediate impact on average life expectancy, which is the first of four health indicators in the CCPA Gender Gap Index. In 2020, life expectancy dropped among both women and men by -0.4 years and -0.7 years, respectively. The largest losses were recorded among men in Alberta and Saskatchewan (-1.4 years), followed by British Columbia (-1.2 years)—the result not only of COVID-19 but also the surge in opioid-related deaths in recent years. Among women, the largest decline in life expectancy occurred in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, each by an average of -0.8 years, and in Quebec and Alberta, each by -0.7 years.

Rising gender-based violence is also undermining women’s health and well-being, constituting a profound attack on gender equality rights. There were increases in police-reported intimate-partner violence, sexual assault and criminal harassment targeting women between 2019 and 2021, which drove down the personal security scores in every province. Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Quebec, Manitoba and Saskatchewan reported the largest declines over this period, Ontario and British Columbia, reported the smallest.

Initially, there was a drop in police-reported violent crime against women in 2020, the first in five years. But, looking more closely, this decline was the result of a reduction in assaults by non-intimate partners (-11.2 per cent). At the same time, all forms of violence committed by current or former intimate spouses or partners increased between 2019 and 2020, including sexual assault (+5.7 per cent), physical assault (+0.6 per cent) and other violent violations (+3.5 per cent).

Both intimate partner violence and non-intimate partner violence against women rose again between 2020 and 2021, by 2.3 per cent and 9.1 per cent, respectively, surpassing 2019 levels. There was also an 8.7 per cent increase in the rate of women reporting sexual assaults and a 15.3 per cent increase in those reporting criminal harassment between 2019 and 2021.

There were large increases in intimate partner violence and sexual assaults in Newfoundland and Labrador and in Quebec, which experienced a large spike in femicides in the first months of 2021. New Brunswick and Saskatchewan recorded a roughly 30 per cent rise in the incidents of criminal harassment.

The rise in gender inequality was wholly predictable, given the inequities built into Canada's labour market and welfare state and the failure of governments to pursue a "holistic" response to the pandemic. The federal government's gender response was certainly the largest — as measured in direct spending and the millions of people impacted. Between March 2020 and June 2021, it spent \$1,555 per capita on gender-sensitive transfers and services compared to an average of \$357 per capita among the provinces.

Net provincial spending varied considerably, from a very low \$50 per capita in Alberta to \$844 per capita in British Columbia, more than twice the provincial average and 17 times more than in Alberta, Canada's wealthiest province. Indeed, more than half of the provinces spent less than \$100 per capita on gender-sensitive measures, including provinces in Atlantic Canada, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Addressing pandemic-related gender disparities was not a budgetary priority in these jurisdictions.

The pandemic has graphically revealed the shortcomings of our current systems of income security and public services and the ways in which public policy both reflects and reproduces disadvantage and privilege. As it was, there were significant policy gaps that neither provincial nor federal programming adequately addressed. As our report shows, these included comprehensive and coordinated programs to combat the substantial rise in gender-based violence and to support to larger numbers of individuals coping with mental health challenges. Access to health care remains a pressing challenge as health care authorities and community service providers struggle to recruit and retain care workers. The crisis in our care economy shows no signs of abating soon.

Our goal with the CCPA Gender Gap Index and our Beyond Recovery project is to help spur a national conversation about the challenges that women and gender-diverse people face and the progressive alternatives that are on offer at a local, provincial or national level. Such a conversation is essential to creating communities where all can thrive. If there is one message to take forward it is that change on gender equality is possible but concerted action is needed to get us there.

# INTRODUCTION

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC THAT swept the globe in 2020 not only threatened people's health but exposed and exacerbated entrenched inequalities. Women bore the brunt. Millions were working in public-facing jobs that were most affected by necessary public health closures. Millions more laboured on the front lines, sustaining our communities while juggling an enormous increase in unpaid labour and care at home. Significant gaps in our market-oriented care infrastructure and the failure of governments to take effective action further amplified the pandemic's impacts—and resulting stresses—on women and marginalized communities, including increased violence, greater isolation, ill health and learning loss, heightened economic insecurity, and loss of access to vital community supports.<sup>1</sup>

Three years later, the acute phase of the pandemic is over but critical questions remain about the pandemic's long-term impact. The concern from the start was the potential of the crisis to set off a devastating feedback loop that would deepen existing inequalities. This brief takes stock of where we are now with respect to the gender gap in Canada—using the CCPA's Gender Gap Index to assess developments over the past three years.

It looks at 17 indicators across the five domains that make up the CCPA index: economic participation and security, personal security, educational attainment, health, and leadership and political empowerment. It compares the findings for 2021 and 2022 to those posted in 2019. National and provincial trends are highlighted, as well as information about the experiences of Indigenous women, women with disabilities, racialized women and immigrant women.

No single measure or set of indicators can hope to capture the complexity of women's lives,<sup>2</sup> reflect the uniqueness of each region



or community, or provide a definitive accounting of their strengths and weaknesses with respect to gender equality.<sup>3</sup> As such, this report provides only a cursory review of the critical differences that exist between different groups of women and gender-diverse people, which is vital to our understanding of gender equality and experience of oppression.

Committing to 'leave no one behind'—as Canada has done in taking up the United Nations' Sustainable Development Agenda—demands better disaggregated data, not only by sex and gender but also across multiple forms of marginalization, including racism and the impacts of colonialism. It also demands systemic and structural transformation of the economic and political systems that reproduce and sustain inequality.<sup>4</sup>

But projects such as this one can serve as signposts, helping to target areas where more attention is needed from policy-makers and our communities, particularly as we grapple to understand and respond to the fallout of the pandemic. The pandemic has graphically revealed the shortcomings of our current systems of income security and public services and the ways in which public policy both reflects and reproduces disadvantage and privilege. This report points to several policy areas that demand immediate action. Looking forward, Canada has the opportunity to heal past harms and to dismantle systemic barriers by creating the policy and program infrastructure necessary to achieve a gender-just recovery for everyone.

## CCPA Gender Gap Index

The CCPA's Gender Gap Index was created in 2014 to draw attention to deep-seated disparities across a range of areas related to women's basic rights and to track Canada's progress in closing gender gaps over time. Modelled on the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Gender Gap Index,<sup>5</sup> the CCPA's index asks if men and women in Canada have relatively equal access to resources and opportunities fundamental to their well-being.

The index focuses on the gap *between* men and women, rather than overall levels of well-being. Thus, regions or communities with the smallest gaps—where outcomes for women are closer to those for men—are ranked more highly than those with larger gaps.

It encompasses 17 indicators across the four WEF domains—economic participation and security, leadership and political empowerment, health, educational attainment—and a fifth domain: personal security. The specific indicators have been aligned with those used in the federal government's 2018 Gender Results Framework.

The CCPA Gender Gap Index served as the basis for *The Best and Worst Place to be a Woman in Canada* series, published between 2014 and 2019.<sup>6</sup> The series is now discontinued.

Please see Appendix A for a list of indicators used in this report. For more information about the methodology used to create the index, please contact the author at [ccpa@policyalternatives.ca](mailto:ccpa@policyalternatives.ca).

The information collected for this brief is presented in summary tables at the end of the text and will be available on the CCPA's Beyond Recovery project page.

# STALLED PROGRESS IN CLOSING CANADA'S GENDER GAP

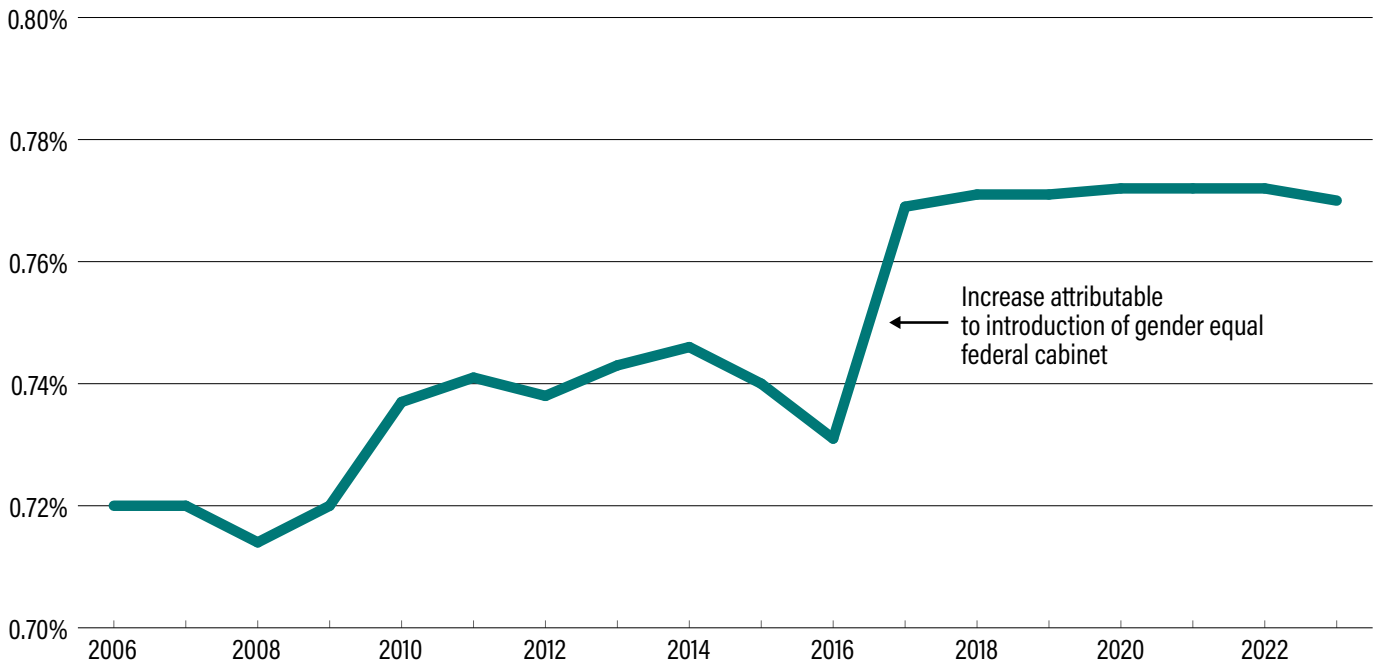
IN THE LAST YEAR, much attention has focused on the scale of the economic recovery, which started in late 2021 and into 2022, that has fuelled higher employment levels—notably among historically marginalized groups. Wages have increased as well for select groups of workers—narrowing the gender wage gap for some.<sup>7</sup> These gains, however, have been offset by other setbacks, including a marked rise in gender-based violence<sup>8</sup> and hate crimes<sup>9</sup> and the growing numbers now struggling with a steep rise in the cost of housing and food<sup>10</sup>—contradictory trends and pressures captured in our review of national and provincial gender equality indicators.

The World Economic Forum's (WEF) *Global Gender Gap Index* highlights the national story. In 2006, the first year that the WEF published its index, Canada ranked 14<sup>th</sup> out of the 115 countries surveyed. While Canada eked out small annual increases in its score between 2006 and 2014, by 2015, our ranking had fallen from 19<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> place. In 2016, our ranking dropped to 35<sup>th</sup> place. Canada turned this around in 2017, moving up the index to 16<sup>th</sup> place—the direct result of a boost in women's representation in the federal cabinet after the October 2015 election.

Since that time, Canada's performance has stalled, and its ranking has fallen to 30<sup>th</sup> in 2023, down five spots in the last year alone, as

## Figure 1 Global Gender Gap Index

Canada, 2006-23



Source World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Index 2023

other countries have stepped up and surpassed Canada. There is still a 23 per cent gender gap that remains to be closed nationally, a slight increase of 0.2 percentage points over 2022, the result of a decline in women's political empowerment score. At the current rate of progress, it will take another seven decades (68 years) to reach full parity.

A closer examination reveals uneven progress across the WEF's different indicator domains. Near perfect scores in the areas of health and educational attainment in Canada have not translated into sustained progress on the economic front or in women's representation in leadership positions.

Using the CCPA's Gender Gap Index, these divergent trends are also evident in our examination of women's experiences during the pandemic and its aftermath.<sup>11</sup> Nationally, the CCPA index reveals that the gender equality gap widened slightly between 2019 and 2022. In 2022, Canada had closed 78.6 per cent of the parity gap, a decline of 0.4 percentage points compared to 2019. Increased educational attainment and women's representation in STEM were more than offset by declines in women's mental health and the increased threat of violence against women and gender-diverse people. Likewise, a strong job recovery helped boost women's economic participation, including among historically

**Table 1 Gender Gap Index: Provincial rankings 2022**

|                           | Economic security | Education | Leadership | Health | Personal security | Overall rank |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|--------|-------------------|--------------|
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 5                 | 5         | 4          | 7      | 6                 | 5            |
| Prince Edward Island      | 4                 | 1         | 9          | 10     | 2                 | 6            |
| Nova Scotia               | 2                 | 2         | 7          | 3      | 4                 | 1            |
| New Brunswick             | 1                 | 3         | 2          | 6      | 8                 | 3            |
| Quebec                    | 3                 | 10        | 5          | 9      | 7                 | 9            |
| Ontario                   | 6                 | 4         | 6          | 8      | 1                 | 4            |
| Manitoba                  | 8                 | 7         | 10         | 1      | 9                 | 10           |
| Saskatchewan              | 7                 | 6         | 8          | 4      | 10                | 8            |
| Alberta                   | 10                | 9         | 3          | 2      | 5                 | 7            |
| British Columbia          | 9                 | 8         | 1          | 5      | 3                 | 2            |

Source: CCPA's Gender Gap Index

marginalized groups, but the gender poverty gap widened at the same time, signalling that many are being left behind.

These trends played out in different ways across the country. Prince Edward Island, Quebec and Nova Scotia all experienced declines in their overall gender parity scores. These changes were enough to knock Prince Edward Island from its 2019 first place posting and out of the top five in 2022, and Quebec from fifth to ninth place. Declines in four of five domains, however, did not prevent Nova Scotia from ranking first in 2022, with the highest score (80 per cent). Manitoba, as in 2019, reported the lowest gender parity score (76.9 per cent) in 2022.

In 2022, the overall distance between the province with the smallest gender gap and the largest was 3.1 percentage points, a decline from 6.5 percentage points in 2019, linked to declines in the scores of provinces at the top of the league table. The pandemic experience seems to have resulted in a levelling down of gender equality.

The largest gap in the CCPA's index was in the Leadership and Political Empowerment domain, where women, on average, hold roughly only one-third of all positions of authority in every province—and have done so for many years. This domain is a key factor pulling down overall gender equality scores across the board—here in Canada and around the world. In 2022, index scores ranged from a high in British Columbia of 54.1 per cent to a low in Manitoba, which has closed only 37.8 per cent of its leadership gap.

During the past three years, the uptick in women's representation in provincial legislatures, notably in Alberta's election this spring, was not enough to compensate for deteriorating circumstances of women

business owners. The gender parity score in leadership declined by 2.9 percentage points over this period. Women in Quebec lost the most ground, experiencing a large decline in their share of business owners with paid help and of women engaged in management occupations.

The Educational Attainment domain has the next largest gap, despite the very high numbers of young women engaged in postsecondary education. In 2022, the average provincial gender gap in education was 20.1 per cent; stated another way, provinces have traveled 79.9 per cent of the way to educational parity. The gap here is the result of the sizable and persistent under-representation of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields of study.

In this area, Prince Edward Island has come the closest to closing the gender gap, with a score of 83 per cent. The education gap was widest in Quebec and Alberta, with scores of 74.1 per cent and 76.7 per cent, respectively. Educational attainment is the only area that marked a significant improvement between 2019 and 2022, as the average gender gap narrowed by 2.5 percentage points, reflecting the growing number of female postsecondary graduates in Canada. All provinces, with the exception of first-ranked P.E.I., experienced an improvement in the pursuit of gender parity in education.

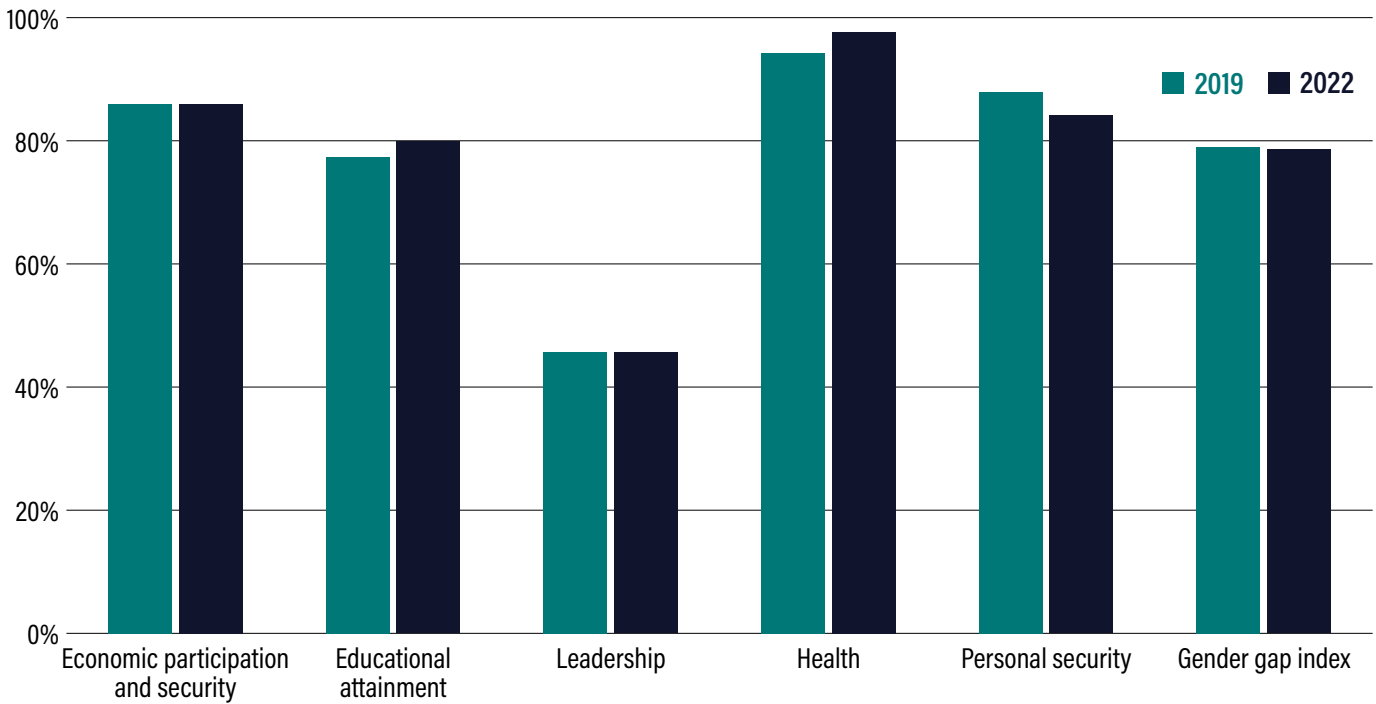
There is a sizable gap in women's Economic Participation and Security, as measured by the level of employment, employment income and poverty relative to men. In 2022, the provinces had closed, on average, 86 per cent of the economic gender gap. Five percentage points separated top-ranked New Brunswick with an economic gender gap score of 88.1 per cent and bottom-ranked Alberta with a score of 82.9 per cent.

Wages represented the largest gender gap in the economic domain. This was also the indicator with the largest difference in values between the provinces. In 2022, women in Alberta took home roughly 64 cents for every dollar a man earned. This represented a difference of more than \$21,500. The gender gap was smallest in Prince Edward Island, where women earned 78 cents on the dollar—for a difference of \$9,200.

There was no change in the size of the average economic gap posted in 2019 and 2022, but this statistic obscures the scale of the economic upheaval that the pandemic precipitated. Had it not been for government emergency transfers, mass unemployment among largely low-waged service workers would have driven up poverty rates to historic highs. As it was, a strong employment recovery starting in 2021 helped boost average women's (and men's) wages. At the same time, poverty rates started to rise as pandemic programs were wound down and the gap between men

Figure 2 Gender Gap Index, 2019 and 2022

Average weighted provincial scores



Source: CCPA Gender Gap Index. For a list of indicators and data sources, see Appendix A

and women started to widen, coinciding with a steep rise in the cost of living beginning in 2021. Taken together, many women and their families are now experiencing financial stress, especially those from historically marginalized communities.

The Health domain—which tracks the gap in life expectancy and self-reported excellent health, daily stress, and unmet health care needs—represented the smallest gender gap and the smallest spread in scores. Only 4.2 percentage points separated the top-ranked province and the bottom-ranked province. That said, the coronavirus took an immense toll on women and men, which was reflected in the sizable drop in life expectancy in 2020 and an increase in those reporting unmet health care needs. As well, the proportion of women reporting mental health challenges and high levels of daily stress increased between 2019 and 2021. These trends contributed to a decline in the overall average gender parity score in health.

Rising gender-based violence is also undermining women’s health and well-being, constituting a profound attack on gender equality rights. There were increases in police-reported intimate-partner violence, sexual assault and criminal harassment targeting women between 2019 and

2021, which drove down the personal security scores in every province. Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Quebec, Manitoba and Saskatchewan reported the largest declines over this period, Ontario and British Columbia, reported the smallest.

Crime rates have continued to rise in 2022, according to new information from Statistics Canada—up by four per cent between 2021 and 2022, and the violent crime severity index rose by five per cent in 2022, including a three per cent rise in sexual assaults.<sup>12</sup>

The volume and severity of crime has been on the rise in Canada since 2014. The pandemic added fuel to the fire, exacerbating the risk of violence that women and gender-diverse people face, especially Indigenous women, women with disabilities and those living in rural and remote areas—far from services and supports. Immediate action is needed to turn this crisis around.

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The following looks at the five domains that comprise the CCPA's gender gap index, focusing on developments between 2019 and 2022. The last section considers Canada's pandemic response and its impact on gender equality.



## ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION AND SECURITY: STRONG EMPLOYMENT RECOVERY UNDERMINED BY INCREASE IN POVERTY RATES

Prior to the pandemic, the employment rate among working-age Canadians had been edging up after years of stagnation. The quality of the jobs on offer were improving as well—with higher levels of full-time employment and an uptick in unionization among public sector workers, contributing to positive wage growth.<sup>13</sup> Then the pandemic hit.

### Labour market stages strong employment recovery in 2022

In previous recessions, women's work in the service sector offered some measure of protection against job loss in male-dominated goods industries—but not so during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the spring of 2020, millions of women lost their job or faced reduced hours as preventive public health measures were introduced to contain the circulation of the coronavirus. Women's rate of employment dropped by more than 10 percentage points in two short months, wiping out 35 years of progress.

Low-wage workers accounted for the largest share of these losses. Fully half (52 per cent) of all low-wage workers earning \$14 an hour or less were laid off or lost the majority of their working hours between February and April 2020. This included 58 per cent of low-wage women and 45 per cent of low-wage men.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 2 Economic participation and security: Provincial rankings 2022**

|                           | Employment rate<br>(2022) | Full time employment<br>(2022) | Poverty rate<br>(2021) | Median employment<br>income (2021) | Overall rank |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 1                         | 5                              | 10                     | 7                                  | 5            |
| Prince Edward Island      | 4                         | 4                              | 9                      | 1                                  | 4            |
| Nova Scotia               | 2                         | 3                              | 7                      | 6                                  | 2            |
| New Brunswick             | 3                         | 1                              | 8                      | 3                                  | 1            |
| Quebec                    | 5                         | 2                              | 5                      | 4                                  | 3            |
| Ontario                   | 9                         | 6                              | 4                      | 2                                  | 6            |
| Manitoba                  | 8                         | 8                              | 3                      | 5                                  | 8            |
| Saskatchewan              | 6                         | 7                              | 1                      | 8                                  | 7            |
| Alberta                   | 10                        | 10                             | 2                      | 10                                 | 10           |
| British Columbia          | 7                         | 9                              | 6                      | 9                                  | 9            |

Source: CCPA's Gender Gap Index

**Table 3 Employment rates**

By gender and province, 16-64 years old, 2008, 2019, 2022

|                           | Male workers |             |             | Female workers |             |             |
|---------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|
|                           | 2008         | 2019        | 2022        | 2008           | 2019        | 2022        |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 63.3         | 66.6        | 67.9        | 58.3           | 63.3        | 66.8        |
| Prince Edward Island      | 72.5         | 74.5        | 75.8        | 70.4           | 73.7        | 72.3        |
| Nova Scotia               | 71.7         | 72.5        | 74.1        | 68             | 71.5        | 72.3        |
| New Brunswick             | 72.2         | 72.5        | 73.6        | 68.7           | 69.9        | 71.5        |
| Quebec                    | 74.2         | 78.2        | 79.6        | 68.6           | 74.5        | 75.3        |
| Ontario                   | 76.6         | 76.7        | 77.8        | 69.5           | 70.0        | 71.3        |
| Manitoba                  | 82           | 78.7        | 79.8        | 73             | 71.2        | 73.4        |
| Saskatchewan              | 82.7         | 79.6        | 79.7        | 74.6           | 72.6        | 74.4        |
| Alberta                   | 85.5         | 79.6        | 79.8        | 73.9           | 72.0        | 73          |
| British Columbia          | 78.2         | 79.2        | 78.9        | 69.6           | 72.7        | 73.3        |
| <b>Canada</b>             | <b>77.1</b>  | <b>77.5</b> | <b>78.4</b> | <b>69.8</b>    | <b>71.7</b> | <b>72.8</b> |

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0327-01 Labour force characteristics by sex and detailed age group, annual

Women’s employment rebounded in a halting fashion between April 2020 and December 2021, dropping then rising with each successive wave of COVID-19. The gyrations of the labour market were particularly challenging for young women, who experienced the largest employment losses, and for older women, many of whom left the labour market altogether. At each step of the way, women’s employment recovery lagged that of men.

In 2022, the employment recovery firmly took off. Strong year-end job growth boosted women’s rate of employment to 58.3 per cent, just shy of 2019’s rate of 58.5 per cent (and the record high of 58.9 per cent in 2008)—led by strong gains among core-aged workers (25-54 years). Most of women’s gains (and men’s) were concentrated in full-time (70.5 per cent), private sector (74.5 per cent), and permanent positions (76.4 per cent).<sup>15</sup> The employment rate among those aged 15 to 64 years, the indicator we track in the CCPA gender gap index, reached 72.8 per cent in 2022, surpassing 2019 levels (71.7 per cent). Employment rates ranged from a high of 75.3 per cent in Quebec to a low of 66.8 per cent in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Alberta and British Columbia experienced the biggest declines in women’s rate of employment between 2019 and 2020, by 6.2 and 5.6 percentage points respectively. These provinces, along with Ontario, also experienced the largest rebounds between 2020 and 2022, recouping and modestly surpassing losses. In 2022, women’s employment rates in the

## Employment gains in 2022 have been broad-based

Women with disabilities, racialized workers, Indigenous Peoples and other marginalized workers experienced the onslaught of the pandemic head on. They were over-represented among the low-wage, precarious workers in public-facing industries most impacted by health restrictions, and their economic recovery unfolded at a much slower pace than more privileged workers. More recently, however, several groups have made important employment gains.

The employment gap between all immigrant and Canadian-born women (aged 15 years and older) has narrowed in recent years as levels of immigration have increased—from 10.3 percentage points in 2008 to 4.3 percentage points in 2019 and to 1.9 percentage points in 2022. Of the total increase in women’s employment between 2019 and 2022, immigrant women accounted for 92.6 per cent.<sup>16</sup> That said, there remains a sizeable employment gap between immigrant women and Canadian-born women (aged 15 to 64 years), especially among core-aged women, that speaks to the scale of the barriers that immigrant women continue to face in the post-pandemic economy.<sup>17</sup>

Racialized women have shared in post-pandemic employment gains but again a significant employment gap remains.<sup>18</sup> In 2022, seven in 10 (69.3 per cent) racialized women aged 15 to 64 years were engaged in paid employment compared to 74.6 per cent of non-racialized, non-Indigenous women. With the notable exception of Filipino women, whose rate of employment exceeds that of non-racialized women, the employment gap is greater than five percentage points for most other groups.

Like immigrant women, Indigenous women aged 15 to 64 years experienced a steep drop in their employment rate between 2019 and 2020 (by 4.6 percentage points), re-bounding in 2021, and then jumping by 4.9 percentage points in 2022 to 67.5 per cent. Over the three years, the number of Indigenous women in the paid labour market increased by 52,500, accounting for almost one-fifth (20.8 per cent) of total female employment gains. In 2022, rates of employment among Métis women were just shy of the rate of employment among non-Indigenous women. First Nation and Inuit women face greater employment barriers.

There is a longstanding and very large employment gap between people with disabilities and those without.<sup>19</sup> Immediately before the pandemic, the employment gap among disabled and non-disabled workers aged 15 to 64 years was 18.9 percentage points. In 2021, the employment rate among people with disabilities bounced back from recessionary lows, rising to 60.1 per cent, and again in 2022 to 65.5 per cent. Strong employment growth and a tight labour market helped narrow the gap by five percentage points, but there is still a great distance to travel to guarantee equitable access to employment. In 2022, the rate of employment among disabled women aged 15 to 64 years was 64.9 per cent—slightly lower than among men with disabilities (65.5 per cent), and much lower than women without disabilities (76.2 per cent) and men without disabilities (83.9 per cent).

See Appendix D for the most recent employment figures.

rest of the provinces also surpassed 2019 levels, except for Prince Edward Island, where the job recovery has been slower to take hold.

With the employment boost in 2022, Canada's employment parity score improved slightly between 2019 and 2022, from 92.2 per cent to 92.9 per cent. The score increased in seven provinces, led by Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and declined in three: Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Quebec. In this second group, men's employment recovery outpaced women's recovery, widening the gap. These are important issues to track, especially in Atlantic Canada, where rates of employment among women (and men) are lower, on average, than in the rest of the country.

Women in western Canada, by contrast, have historically reported higher rates of employment (including in part-time work) and much larger employment gaps. Before the pandemic, declines in male employment in the resource sector effectively narrowed the gender employment gap between 2014 and 2019. It remains to be seen how the economic fallout of the pandemic and evolution of the resource sector will impact future employment for men and women.

### **Earnings rebound in 2021—but not for all**

Higher employment rates speak to the strength of Canada's economic recovery last year; 2022 was a unique moment. An unprecedented confluence of forces came together to expand opportunities for workers—including for women who face sizable barriers to decent employment. The 2022 employment recovery held out the promise of enhanced economic security for women after a difficult three years. It also held out the hope of greater income equality.

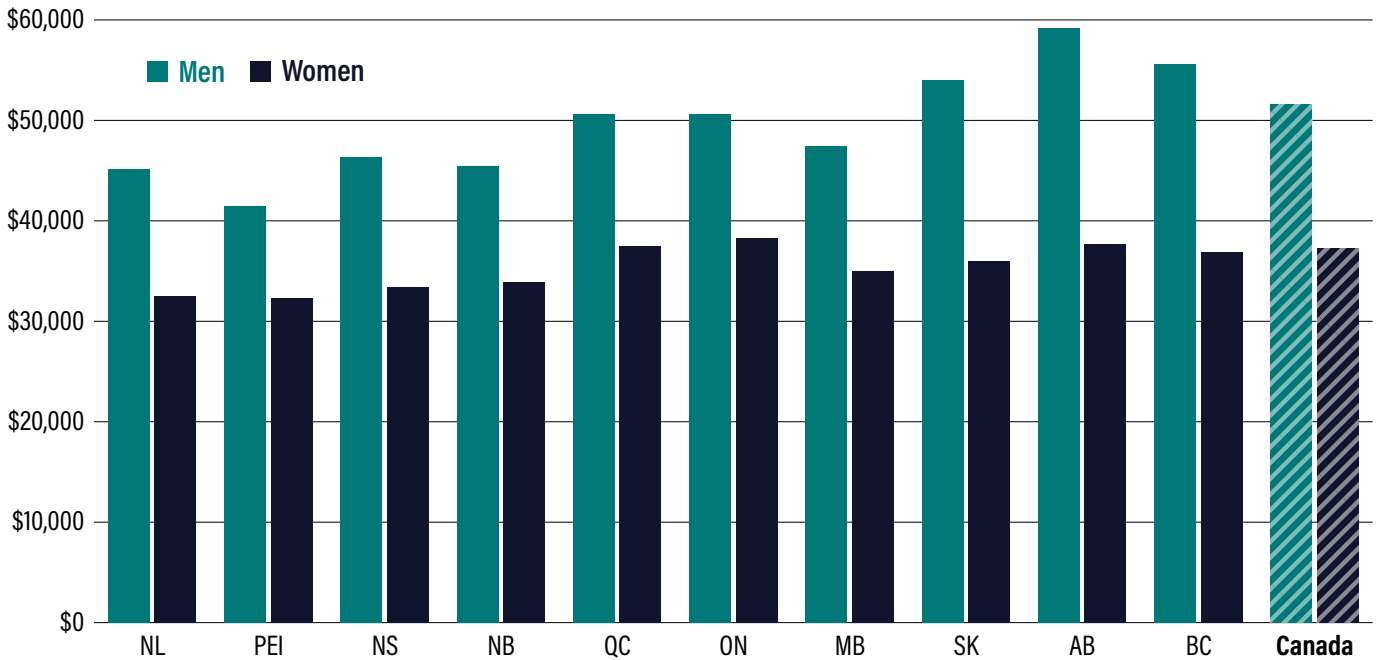
Canada's gender wage gap among women aged 16 to 64 years was 71.6 per cent in 2019,<sup>20</sup> a high point in a decade characterized by sluggish performance and backsliding. The sharp rise in pandemic-related unemployment precipitated a substantial drop in employment income among women and among men, widening the gender wage gap in the process, notably in Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and Alberta.

Keep in mind that these figures are skewed because employment losses were largely concentrated among low wage workers in many female-majority sectors. Median employment income was much higher for both men and women in 2020 than it might have been otherwise had it included the incomes of low wage workers. The gender wage gap is also likely to be much larger than reported.

In 2021, employment started to pick up as the economy fully reopened. Vacancies rose sharply in many female sectors and occupations

### Figure 3 Median employment income

By gender and province, 16-64 years old, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Income Survey, Custom tabulations

hit hard by the pandemic, reaching historic peaks in the spring of 2022. There was also strong employment growth in several high-paying sectors of the economy, such as professional, scientific, and technical services, public administration, and educational services. Faced with repeated lockdowns and lay-offs in many “high-touch” industries, workers in these sectors had the choice of pivoting to something different, something better.<sup>21</sup>

Conditions appeared ripe for boosting women’s wages and closing the gender pay gap.

Employment income did bounce back in 2021. Strong wage growth in Quebec and British Columbia, followed by Ontario, helped claw back pandemic-related income losses. Nationally, the gender wage gap of women aged 15 to 64 years shrank between 2020 and 2021. In 2021, women earned 72.3 per cent of what men did, as measured by their employment income, a wage gap of 27.7 per cent, a slightly smaller gap than in 2019.

The national picture, however, hides a good deal of variation within and between the provinces and between different groups of women tied to regional labour market conditions. In most provinces, women’s gains lagged those reported by men. Except for Newfoundland and Labrador,

## Table 4 Market income

By population group and gender, 2021 constant dollars

|  | Male workers |          | Female workers |          |
|--|--------------|----------|----------------|----------|
|  | 2019         | 2021     | 2019           | 2021     |
| <b>Indigenous status (16+ years)</b>     |              |          |                |          |
| Indigenous population                    | \$41,100     | \$39,600 | \$26,200       | \$27,100 |
| Non-Indigenous population                | \$44,000     | \$44,700 | \$30,600       | \$30,600 |
| <b>Racialized status (16+ years)</b>     |              |          |                |          |
| Racialized population                    |              | \$37,600 |                | \$27,600 |
| Non-racialized population                |              | \$47,100 |                | \$31,400 |
| <b>Immigration status (16+ years)</b>    |              |          |                |          |
| Landed immigrants                        | \$41,900     | \$42,300 | \$28,100       | \$28,000 |
| Recent immigrants (10 years or less)     | \$40,600     | \$40,600 | \$26,500       | \$24,500 |
| Very recent immigrants (5 years or less) | \$35,700     | \$38,800 | \$27,200       | \$23,600 |
| Born in Canada                           | \$45,600     | \$45,900 | \$31,700       | \$31,500 |
| <b>Disability status* (16+ years)</b>    |              |          |                |          |
| Persons with disabilities                | \$31,400     | \$35,600 | \$28,700       | \$29,000 |
| Persons without disabilities             | \$49,700     | \$49,400 | \$36,200       | \$34,400 |

**Note** The figures presented by Indigenous status, immigrant status and racialized status refer to market income (including employment income, investment and retirement income, and other income).

\* The figures by disability status refer to employment income for employees and the self-employed.

**Source** Statistics Canada, Canadian Income Survey, Table 11-10-0088-01; Table 11-10-0091-01.

Ontario, and Manitoba, the gender wage gap was larger in 2021 than in 2019 in all of the other provinces.

The experience of Alberta women stands out. Earnings losses between 2019 and 2021 effectively widened the wage gap with men by six percentage points, pushing Alberta to the bottom. Overall, the widest gaps for women aged 16 to 64 years were in Alberta (63.7 per cent), British Columbia (66.4 per cent) and Saskatchewan (66.7 per cent), the smallest in Prince Edward Island (77.8 per cent).

The surge in employment helped to boost the market income<sup>22</sup> of Indigenous women in 2021, recouping their very steep income losses between 2019 and 2020 (at -16.4 per cent). Between 2020 and 2021, Indigenous women experienced a jump of \$5,200, pushing median employment income to \$27,100. There remains, however, a very large income gap with Indigenous men (68.4 per cent), non-Indigenous, non-racialized women (86 per cent) and non-Indigenous, non-racialized men (57.2 per cent).<sup>23</sup>

Likewise, the roughly half of women with disabilities with employment income experienced the same sharp losses between 2019 and 2020 and the same sharp rebound between 2020 and 2021 that Indigenous

women did. In 2021, disabled women reported \$29,000 in earnings, which amounts to only 84.3 per cent of the earnings of women without disabilities and just 58.7 per cent of men without disabilities.<sup>24</sup> Very low earnings continue to place marginalized women at great risk of poverty and deprivation.

One of the most disturbing findings was the very weak recovery in market income recorded by immigrant women, especially among those who had recently moved to Canada. In 2021, despite the surge in employment starting in the second half of the year, earnings were still trending below pre-pandemic levels for immigrant women (-0.4 per cent), and considerably less for immigrants who had moved to Canada between 2016 and 2021 (-13.2 per cent).

In 2021, immigrant women, on average, earned \$28,000, 88.9 per cent of Canadian-born women's market income and 61 per cent of Canadian-born men's market income. The wage gap was even higher for recent immigrants (less than five years), at three-quarters of Canadian-born women's market income (74.9 per cent) and just half (51.4 per cent) of Canadian-born men's market income.<sup>25</sup>

### **Historic drop in poverty in 2020 followed by predictable rise in 2021**

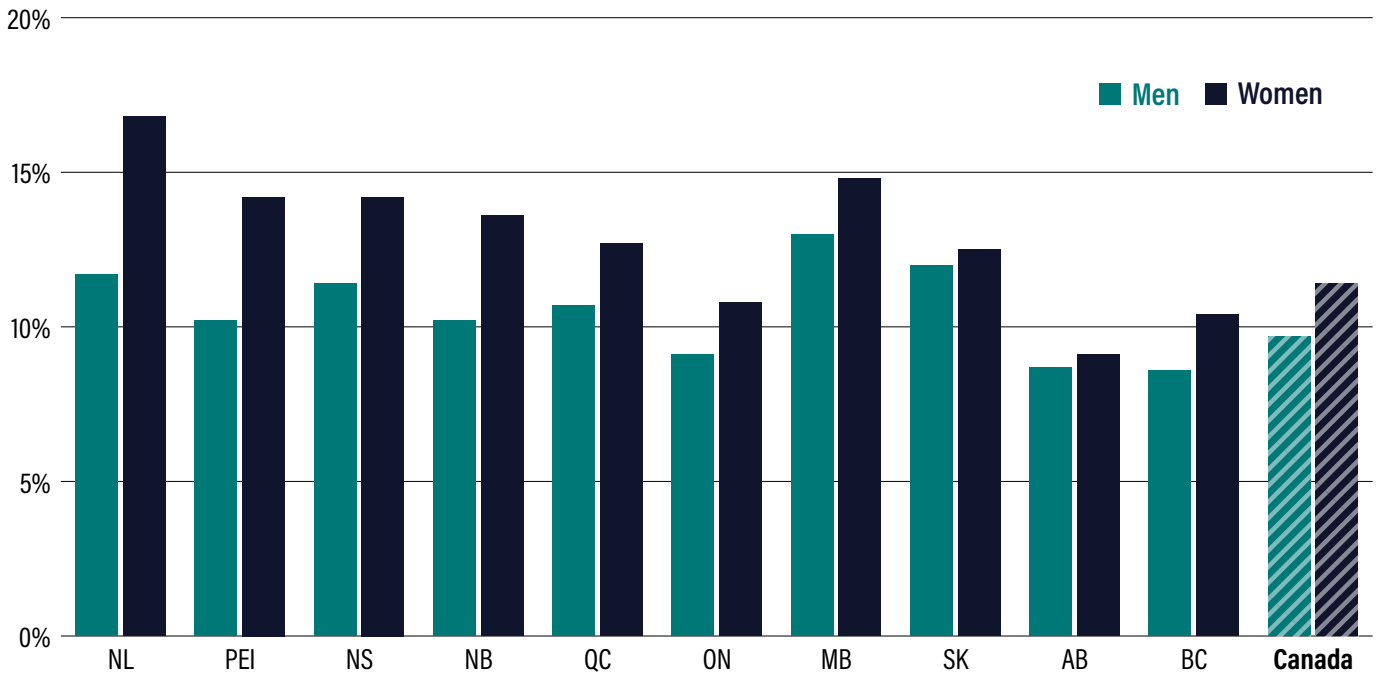
Emergency pandemic benefits played a central role in protecting workers and their families who were impacted by recurring employment losses through the first waves of the pandemic, derailing what would have been a precipitous rise in poverty. As it was, Canada experienced a 23.1 per cent drop in poverty between 2019 and 2020: a 24.1 per cent reduction among men and 22.5 per cent reduction among women (as measured by the After-tax Low-Income Measure). The rate of poverty declined in all provinces except for Alberta, where there was no change.

The next year, with the wind down of these pandemic supports, poverty rates predictably rebounded. Nationally, poverty rates rose from 8.5 per cent to 9.7 per cent for men and from 10 per cent to 11.4 per cent for women between 2020 and 2021. The employment recovery was not enough to compensate for the sizable cut in income support to low- and modest-income households.

The total poverty rate increased in eight of 10 provinces.<sup>26</sup> Women accounted for most of the increase (55.6 per cent), an even larger share in British Columbia (90 per cent), Newfoundland and Labrador (66.7 per cent) and Ontario (61 per cent). In 2021, the highest rate of women's poverty was recorded in Atlantic Canada. (This was true in 2019 as well). Manitoba also ranked at the bottom of the league table in 2021, falling three spots to ninth between 2019 to 2021.

## Figure 4 Poverty rates

By gender and province, Low Income Measure-After Tax, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Table 11-10-0135-01—Low income statistics by age, sex and economic family type. Low Income Measure-After Tax.

In 2021, women’s poverty rates were still lower than in 2019 in most provinces—except for Newfoundland and Labrador and Alberta, where the rate was the same or higher. At the same time, the gender poverty gap in nine of 10 provinces widened as the increase in women’s poverty outpaced men’s.<sup>27</sup> Nationally, the gender poverty parity score declined by 1.7 percentage points over this period, falling from 86.6 per cent in 2019 to 85.1 per cent in 2021. The widening poverty gap between men and women was the primary driver dragging down overall gender parity scores in the economic domain.

The largest gender poverty gaps are clustered in Eastern Canada. In 2021, Newfoundland and Labrador (69.6 per cent), Prince Edward Island (71.8 per cent), New Brunswick (75 per cent) and Nova Scotia (80.3 per cent)—ranked 10<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> in order. In these provinces and Quebec, there was more than a two-percentage point spread between the poverty rates of women and men. The narrowest gap was in Saskatchewan, with a gender parity score of 96 per cent.

Indigenous Peoples and people with disabilities experienced the same reduction in poverty between 2019 and 2020 and the same cruel rebound between 2020 and 2021. Among Indigenous Peoples aged 16



years and older, the rate of poverty fell sharply from 21 per cent in 2019 to 15.3 per cent in 2020, bouncing back to 18.1 per cent in 2021.<sup>28</sup> Among people with disabilities, their rate of poverty fell from 18.1 per cent to 14.7 per cent back to 16.5 per cent over the same period. There was little change in the sizable Indigenous poverty gap (58.6 per cent) and disability poverty gap (52.1 per cent) in 2021.

Poverty is also more prevalent for most racialized groups; of the 11 racialized groups identified in the last Census, eight had higher poverty rates than the white group.<sup>29</sup> Among women aged 15 years and older, the poverty gap between racialized and non-racialized women was 84.6 per cent in 2020.

Poverty rates were highest among Korean, Arab, West Asian and Chinese women and lowest among Filipino women. Differences in poverty were especially large among first-generation residents, persisting for some groups across generations. For example, in 2020, the poverty rates among Black and Latin American people in the third generation or more were more than double the rate of white people.<sup>30</sup>

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Canada's economy rebounded in 2021 and continued to grow in 2022, fuelled by a strong labour market. But as the CCPA index shows, strong employment growth wasn't enough to boost the economic fortunes of all women.

Up until recently, the largest employment gains were recorded in high-paying professional services, where men accounted for 59 per cent of new job growth in areas such as accounting, computer systems design and scientific research. By contrast, women, by and large, remain concentrated in largely female-dominated sectors of the economy and in female-dominated occupations that are characterized by lower rates of pay—precisely because they are female-dominated.<sup>31</sup> This is especially true among marginalized female workers.

A growing gap in poverty between men and women speaks to the economic vulnerability of a large number of women who are caught in low-wage employment or are reliant on programs like social assistance, which guarantee economic penury.<sup>32</sup> In 2022, one-fifth of all female workers (19.1 per cent) worked for less than \$500 per week compared to 10.6 per cent of men. There was a decline in the proportion of low-wage workers between 2019 and 2022, with the shift of some workers to higher-paid occupations and sectors, but women remain 1.7 times more likely than men to labour in low-wage employment just as before the pandemic.

This is a significant challenge, especially for Indigenous women, women with disabilities and immigrant women, who face the largest

barriers to economic security and are most impacted currently by the spiralling costs of shelter, food and energy.

Monthly labour force data shows that women's wages continued to grow throughout 2022, but not by enough to keep up with men's wages or with rising inflation. The gap between wage growth and monthly CPI figures was particularly pronounced in several women-majority care occupations and low-wage sectors, further entrenching established gender pay disparities.<sup>33</sup>

Much remains to be done to ensure that the recovery does not continue to be as unequal as the downturn itself. To truly close the gap, we need policy that targets discrimination against Indigenous and racialized women, women with disabilities, and gender-diverse people. We need investments in the sectors where women work, including in Canada's care economy. We need a strong social safety and a progressive tax system to ensure that all can live in dignity. And, we need to tackle the unequal economics of women's paid and unpaid work that underpins women's continuing disadvantage.

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT: POSTSECONDARY ENROLMENT AT RECORD HIGHS

Women in Canada have made tremendous gains in education, outpacing their male counterparts in both high school and postsecondary education completion. As has been the case since the early 1990s, women comprise of most students enrolled in Canada’s public colleges and universities—and the majority of graduates.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, their representation in postsecondary institutions has continued to grow in recent years. “When faced with unprecedented youth unemployment and postsecondary education moving online, young women aged 17 to 24 responded by enrolling in postsecondary institutions at a higher rate than a year earlier.”<sup>35</sup> As there was no corresponding increase among young men, the education gender gap in women’s favour will continue to grow.

This has largely been a story about the growth in enrolment in universities. In 2022, 39.6 per cent of working age women (aged 25 to 64 years) were university graduates, an increase of 3.5 percentage points (or 457,000 women) since 2019 alone. The increase in the share of working-age men with university education was almost as high, rising by 2.8 percentage points (or 362,000) between 2019 and 2022. One-third (33.1 per cent) of men now have university degrees. As a result, the gender gap widened slightly over this period.

The growth rate among women exceeded the growth rate among male peers in seven provinces. In British Columbia, for example, the number of working-age graduates increased by 18.9 per cent (or close to 100,000) compared to an also strong rate among men of 15 per cent (or 64,000). In

**Table 5 Educational attainment: Provincial rankings 2022**

|                           | College and CEGEP (2022) | University degree (2022) | STEM field of study (2021) | Overall rank |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 10                       | 2                        | 3                          | 5            |
| Prince Edward Island      | 3                        | 4                        | 1                          | 1            |
| Nova Scotia               | 6                        | 1                        | 5                          | 2            |
| New Brunswick             | 1                        | 3                        | 9                          | 3            |
| Quebec                    | 9                        | 7                        | 10                         | 10           |
| Ontario                   | 2                        | 10                       | 4                          | 4            |
| Manitoba                  | 5                        | 6                        | 6                          | 7            |
| Saskatchewan              | 4                        | 5                        | 8                          | 6            |
| Alberta                   | 8                        | 9                        | 7                          | 9            |
| British Columbia          | 7                        | 8                        | 2                          | 8            |

Source: CCPA's Gender Gap Index

Quebec, the number of university-educated women increased by 103,000 (14.1 per cent) even as the size of the working-age population declined (0.4 per cent). The only province where there was a sizable difference between men and women that worked in men's favour was in Alberta. Men's increase in university graduates was more than four times higher than the increase among women (9.2 per cent vs. 2.2 per cent) between 2019 and 2022.

The changes in college enrolment were much smaller. In 2022, over one-third of working-age women and men (36.1 per cent and 36.2 per cent, respectively) were college graduates, including trade certificate holders. The number of female college graduates increased by a modest 1.1 per cent over this period while men posted a slight decline. On this measure, New Brunswick and Alberta led with the largest increases in the number of college-educated women, by eight per cent and seven per cent, respectively.

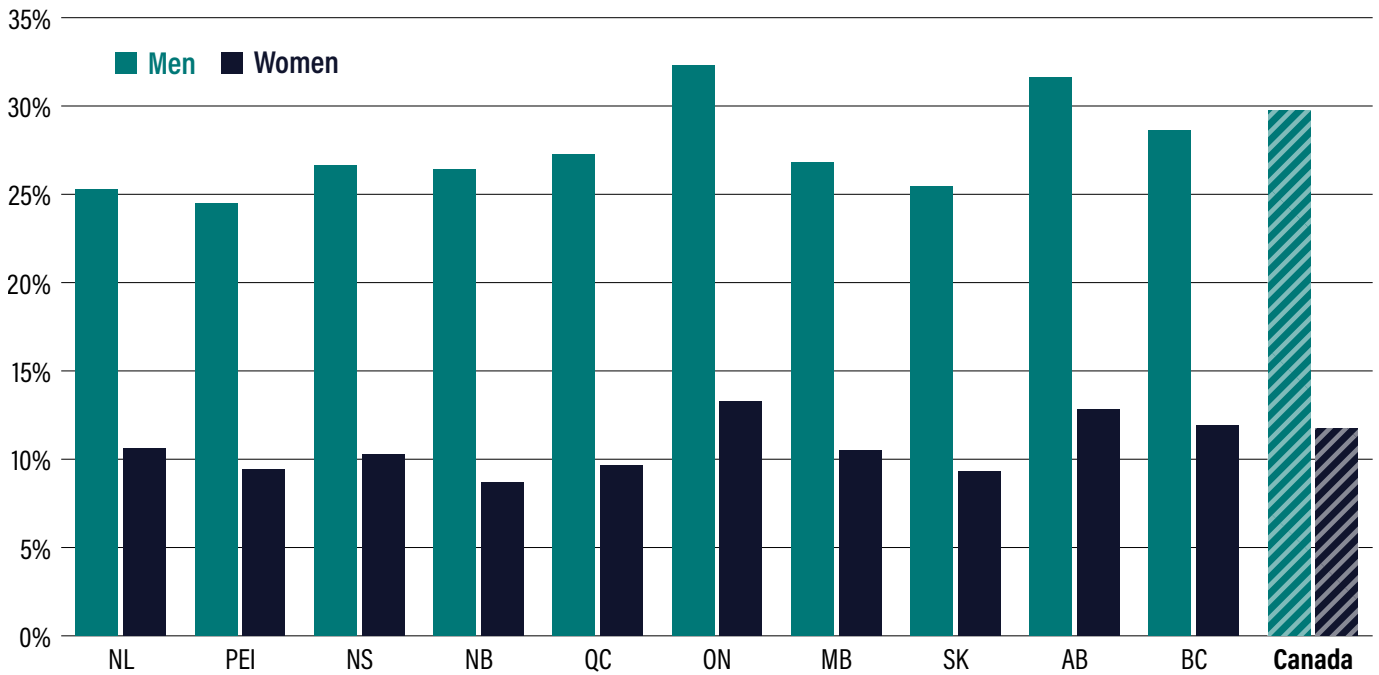
The rising share of working-age people who have completed postsecondary degrees and diplomas is being driven both by rising educational attainment among young adults, as noted, and by the welcome of highly educated new immigrants. According to the 2021 census, nearly six in 10 immigrants who came to Canada between 2016 and 2021 were university graduates; this group was responsible for nearly half of the rise in the share of the university-educated population over this period.<sup>36</sup>

This is not a surprise, given the emphasis placed on education in the immigration system and the very large increase in international students in recent years—many of whom elect to settle permanently in Canada. The result is that immigrants, as a group, have higher rates of postsecondary education compared to non-immigrants. Among working age women, 71.9 per cent possessed a postsecondary credential in 2021 compared to 68.6 per cent of non-immigrant women. The gap was even larger between immigrant and non-immigrant men. The level of educational attainment is even higher among non-permanent residents.<sup>37,38</sup>

The educational gap persists among Indigenous Peoples. Just over half of working-age Indigenous women (53.8 per cent) held a postsecondary credential in 2021 compared to 70.8 per cent of non-Indigenous women. The gap was particularly large among Inuit women (at 35.8 per cent)—a reflection of the profound barriers that continue to thwart educational pursuits and achievement. Indigenous Peoples did make important gains between 2016 and 2021, narrowing the high school completion gap and boosting the number of postsecondary grads—almost three-quarters of whom were women—but the increases among non-Indigenous groups were higher.<sup>39</sup>

## Figure 5 Proportion of STEM degree holders

By gender and province, 25-64 years old, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Table 98-10-0391-01—Major field of study (STEM and BHASE, detailed) by geography: Canada, provinces and territories

Women commit to higher education in large numbers, but gender disparities persist. Only modest headway has been made to break down gender segregation in fields of study and the labour market. Women are still largely concentrated in occupations involving the “5 Cs”: caring, clerical, catering, cashiering and cleaning, roughly 54.1 per cent according to the latest census figures. This is little changed from 1987, when 59.2 per cent of women aged 25 to 54 years were employed in these same occupations. By contrast, just 18.7 per cent of men were employed in traditionally-female occupations in 2021 compared to a similarly low 15.7 per cent in 1987—just a three-percentage point increase over 34 years.<sup>40</sup>

We see the same pattern in fields of academic study. In 2021, women (aged 25 to 64 years) accounted for only 11.8 per cent postsecondary degree holders in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) compared to one in four men (29.8 per cent). This represents an increase of 1.2 percentage points over 2016 (at 10.6 per cent), slightly narrowing the gender gap between men and women. Young immigrant women now make up a sizeable share those with STEM degrees, quite a bit larger than their overall share of female university degree holders.<sup>41</sup>

These gains have coincided with a rise in the share of STEM sector jobs, notably since a good portion of the world of education and work moved online at the start of the pandemic. Indeed, a growing number of all jobs now demand higher levels of digital and technical literacy. Women's growing presence in STEM fields is important, but it's just a drop in the bucket given the size of the gender gap (44.8 per cent)—one of the largest in the CCPA Gender Gap Index. Prince Edward Island and British Columbia have covered the most distance to parity, with scores of 49.4 per cent and 47.5 per cent; Quebec has travelled the shortest distance, with a score of 38.4 per cent.

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The highly segregated character of postsecondary education undermines the potential of educational attainment. More women than men are graduating from our postsecondary institutions, but the continuing gap in STEM education speaks to persistent gender bias, which is dragging down Canada's (aggregate provincial) score on the Gender Gap Index. In 2022, the gender gap score in educational attainment was 79.9 per cent—an improvement over 77.4 per cent in 2019 but a distance from parity.

Among the provinces, Prince Edward Island has been more successful at closing the gender gap in education, with a score of 83 per cent. It's a result of a large plurality of female university graduates and the relatively small (yet still very large) gender gap among STEM graduates. Nova Scotia ranked second, with a score of 82.6 per cent, reflecting women's strong showing in postsecondary education. The education gap was widest in Quebec and Alberta, with scores of 74.1 per cent and 76.7 per cent.

Much more remains to be done to equip young women and others from marginalized groups with the tools and skills to succeed in our changing world. This task is especially pressing, given the impact of the pandemic itself on the education system and the long-term consequences of crushing student debt loads.<sup>42</sup>

Young people confronted significant challenges over this time—including successive school closures, cancelled classes and work placements, and a sharp pivot to virtual learning—with little formal support. The cancellation of needed supports for students with disabilities and others was particularly detrimental to their learning, overall health and well-being.<sup>43</sup> The scale of learning loss is only now becoming clear.<sup>44</sup> A comprehensive national response is needed immediately to address the challenges students are now facing, targeting those disproportionately impacted.

## HEALTH AND WELL-BEING: MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC LINGER

Women’s health was significantly impacted during the pandemic, which was reflected in their heightened risk of community and workplace exposure and infection, the disproportionate burden of care that women shouldered, as well as reduced, less timely access to critical health and social services. These challenges were most acute for Indigenous and racialized women, those with disabilities, and women subsisting on poverty level income—groups who tend to already be burdened by poorer health.

In Canada, women were more likely to contract COVID-19, but men had higher age-adjusted rates of severe illness and death. That said, as of July 2021, women accounted for 46 per cent of hospitalizations and 50 per cent of deaths due to COVID-19, which was directly related to the devastating spread of COVID-19 among largely female residents in long-term care facilities through the first waves of the pandemic.<sup>45</sup>

The pandemic had an immediate impact on average life expectancy, which is the first of four health indicators in the CCPA Gender Gap Index. In 2020, life expectancy dropped among both women and men by -0.4 years and -0.7 years, respectively. The largest losses were recorded among men in Alberta and Saskatchewan (-1.4 years), followed by British Columbia (-1.2 years)—the result not only of COVID-19 but also the surge in opioid-related deaths in recent years.<sup>46</sup> Among women, the largest

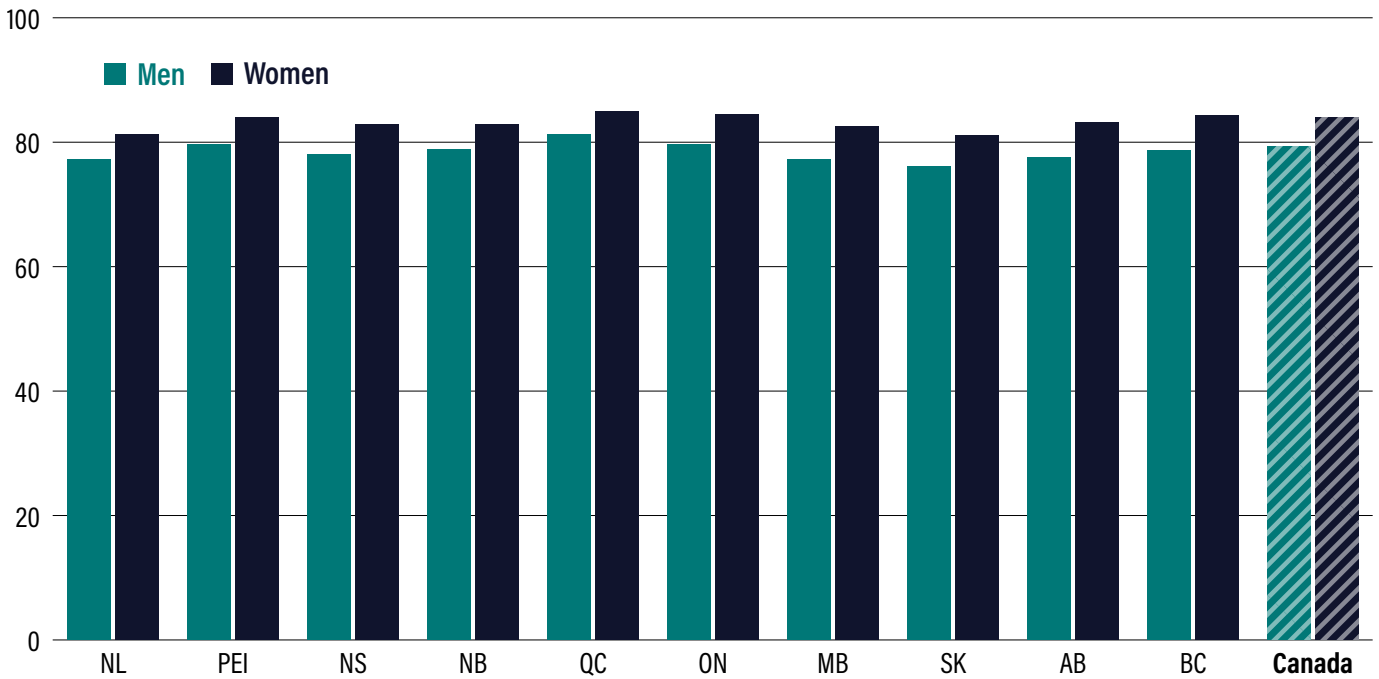
Table 6 **Health: Provincial rankings 2022**

|                           | Healthy life expectancy (2021) | Self-rated health—very good or excellent (2021) | Self-rated life stress—very high (2021) | Unmet health care needs (2021) | Overall rank |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 8                              | 4   | 9                                       | 4                              | 7            |
| Prince Edward Island      | 7                              | 10  | 7                                       | 5                              | 10           |
| Nova Scotia               | 5                              | 1   | 8                                       | 6                              | 3            |
| New Brunswick             | 9                              | 2   | 6                                       | 9                              | 6            |
| Quebec                    | 10                             | 5   | 10                                      | 3                              | 9            |
| Ontario                   | 6                              | 6   | 5                                       | 8                              | 8            |
| Manitoba                  | 4                              | 3   | 1                                       | 2                              | 1            |
| Saskatchewan              | 3                              | 7   | 2                                       | 10                             | 4            |
| Alberta                   | 1                              | 8   | 4                                       | 1                              | 2            |
| British Columbia          | 2                              | 9   | 3                                       | 7                              | 5            |

Source: CCPA's Gender Gap Index

## Figure 6 Life expectancy at birth

By gender and province, in years, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Table 13-10-0837-01 and Table: 13-10-0140-01. Single year estimates with exception of PEI (three year estimate)

decline in life expectancy occurred in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, each by an average of -0.8 years, and in Quebec and Alberta, each by -0.7 years. All four provinces reported high rates of infection in long-term care facilities.<sup>47</sup>

2021 was another difficult year, especially for residents in Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Over the two years, average life expectancy declined by two or more years among men in those three provinces, including among women in Saskatchewan. Nationally, average life expectancies were still below 2019 levels, at 84 years among women and 79.3 years among men.

Within the broader population, COVID-19 related mortality rates were especially high in low-income communities and in neighbourhoods with large concentrations of racialized residents and new immigrants.<sup>48</sup> Overall, the mortality rate was significantly higher for racialized people (31 deaths per 100,000 population) compared to non-racialized and non-Indigenous people (22 deaths per 100,000 population), and much higher again among racialized people living in poverty (44 deaths per 100,000), especially Black people (103 deaths per 100,000 population).<sup>49</sup>



The long-term damage of the pandemic on women's health and well-being is not yet clear. Average life expectancies have still not fully recovered, as noted, and there remain significant concerns about the rise in chronic illness (including long COVID-19<sup>50</sup>) and mental health challenges, especially among young women.<sup>51</sup>

Our data show that there was an increase in people reporting very good or excellent health in 2020 among both men and women, but these rates fell the next year to below 2019 levels. In 2021, 59.3 per cent of women aged 12 and older reported that they were in very good or excellent health, down from 60.5 per cent in 2019. Women in Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island experienced the largest drop, followed by women in Ontario and Alberta. On average, women are less likely to report good health compared to men, by a small margin. This gender gap did not substantially change between 2019 and 2021.

By contrast, there was a much more significant decline in the proportion of women reporting excellent or very good mental health in 2020 and in 2021. Over these two years, the rate fell by almost 10 percentage points, from 64.5 per cent to 55.1 per cent. The proportion of men reporting good mental health also fell, but to a lesser extent (by -6.7 percentage points), widening the gender gap over this period.

A number of surveys captured the decline in women's mental health, starting in 2020—notably the increase in symptoms that are consistent with general anxiety disorder. Women were more likely than men to express "extreme" concern about pandemic impacts on health, financial security and community solidarity. And gender-diverse respondents have been more likely than both women and men to report poorer mental health outcomes during the pandemic.<sup>52</sup>

Overall, women accounted for almost two-thirds (62.5 per cent) of the increase in those reporting poorer mental health between 2019 and 2021, notably among teens and young adults. The proportion of teenaged girls, aged 12 to 17, reporting good mental health fell by 14.5 percentage points, more than twice the rate of teenaged boys, while good mental health among women aged 18 to 29 years fell by 10.4 percentage points.<sup>53</sup>

At the same time, the proportion of women reporting high levels of stress—the indicator included in the CCPA Gender Gap Index—remained unchanged between 2019 and 2021 while men registered a decline. In 2021, 22.4 per cent of women and 18.2 per cent of men reported that their lives were "quite a bit" or "extremely" stressful, more than a four-percentage gap.

Women recorded the highest levels of daily stress in Quebec, where one-quarter of women (25.6 per cent) indicated that most days were quite a bit or extremely stressful. The rate of self-reported high stress was also high in Alberta (22.7 per cent) and Ontario (22.2 per cent). The smallest proportion of women reporting high stress lived in Newfoundland and Labrador (at 16.6 per cent). Compared to 2019, the gender gap has widened, notably in Atlantic Canada, Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta.

The combination of worsening mental health issues and documented stresses on the health care system contributed to a predictable rise in the incidence of unmet health care needs. During the pandemic, almost half (49 per cent) reported some difficulty accessing needed care — 52 per cent of women and 46 per cent of men. People with disabilities and those with chronic health conditions were particularly vulnerable. Roughly three in 10 people with disabilities (28 per cent) reported that they were not able to access all of the services that they needed between 2020 and 2021.<sup>54</sup>

Women and gender-diverse people faced unique challenges accessing reproductive care, including long wait times, issues related to quarantine rules or office closures, difficulties getting referrals, travel-related barriers, and out-of-pocket costs. The shift to virtual care and expanded access to medical abortion were two notable positive highlights. The hope moving forward is to create a sustainable hybrid model that blends telemedicine and in-person options.<sup>55</sup>

In total, the proportion of the population over age 16 reporting unmet health care needs rose by 1.8 percentage points between 2019 and 2021, reaching 7.9 per cent — over 2.2 million people. Of this group, 62.5 per cent were women. Even before the pandemic, women had higher rates of unmet needs compared to men, especially in Atlantic Canada. The upheaval in services further served to increase the gender gap in provinces such as Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

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Compared to the other areas, the average gender gap in health is comparatively small, at 97.4 per cent. The difference between top-ranked Manitoba and bottom-ranked Prince Edward Island is small, at 3.9 percentage points.

Thankfully, average life expectancy among men and women started to rebound in 2021, but the deterioration of women's mental health and their access to health care services has served to widen the aggregate gap since 2019. All provinces reported a larger gender gap in unmet health care needs in 2022, led by Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and New

Brunswick. Atlantic Canada and Quebec reported the largest increases in the gender gap in high daily stress.

These indicators provide only a partial snapshot of the impact of the pandemic on women's health. We know that profound health disparities persist. From research and treatment options to health policy and programs, gender differences have not been adequately considered and continually produce and reproduce real harm.<sup>56</sup> These gaps are especially important for women and gender-diverse people from marginalized communities who experience overlapping sources of discrimination. Systemic racism, ableism and sexism keep marginalized people from receiving equitable and safe care, as the experience of the pandemic has illustrated once again.<sup>57</sup>

Moving forward, significant and coordinated investments in mental health must be a top priority. The existing patchwork of services is not a system at all. Massive gaps in the public system result in lengthy wait lists, heightened distress and deterioration among those seeking help. Often the only place to turn is to private clinics, where cost is prohibitive, ensuring access to only the privileged few.

Mental health advocates and service providers are sounding the alarm. For the federal government's part, long-term federal leadership and funding are urgently needed to expand integrated community-based and acute care services, tailored to diverse community needs, across the country.<sup>58</sup>

## PERSONAL SECURITY: HIGHER LEVELS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE A DEADLY PANDEMIC LEGACY

The rise in gender-based violence (GBV) that has accompanied the pandemic came as no surprise. Public health orders to shelter in place fuelled greater tension and strain in many families. At the same time, they increased the isolation of women with violent partners, separating them from the people who could best help them. We've seen this in other places and in other emergencies, and we saw it in Canada during COVID-19.

Initially, there was a drop in police-reported violent crime against women in 2020, the first in five years. But, looking more closely, this decline was the result of a reduction in assaults by non-intimate partners (-11.2 per cent). At the same time, all forms of violence committed by current or former intimate spouses or partners increased between 2019 and 2020, including sexual assault (+5.7 per cent), physical assault (+0.6 per cent) and other violent violations (+3.5 per cent).

Total police-reported violent crime against women quickly rebounded in 2021, up 6.4 per cent over 2020, reaching 1,194.69 incidents per 100,000 population, surpassing 2019 rates and continuing the damaging rise in violence that's been documented each year since 2014.

The pandemic represented only a momentary pause in non-intimate partner assaults. Both intimate partner violence and non-intimate partner violence against women rose between 2020 and 2021, by 2.3 per cent and

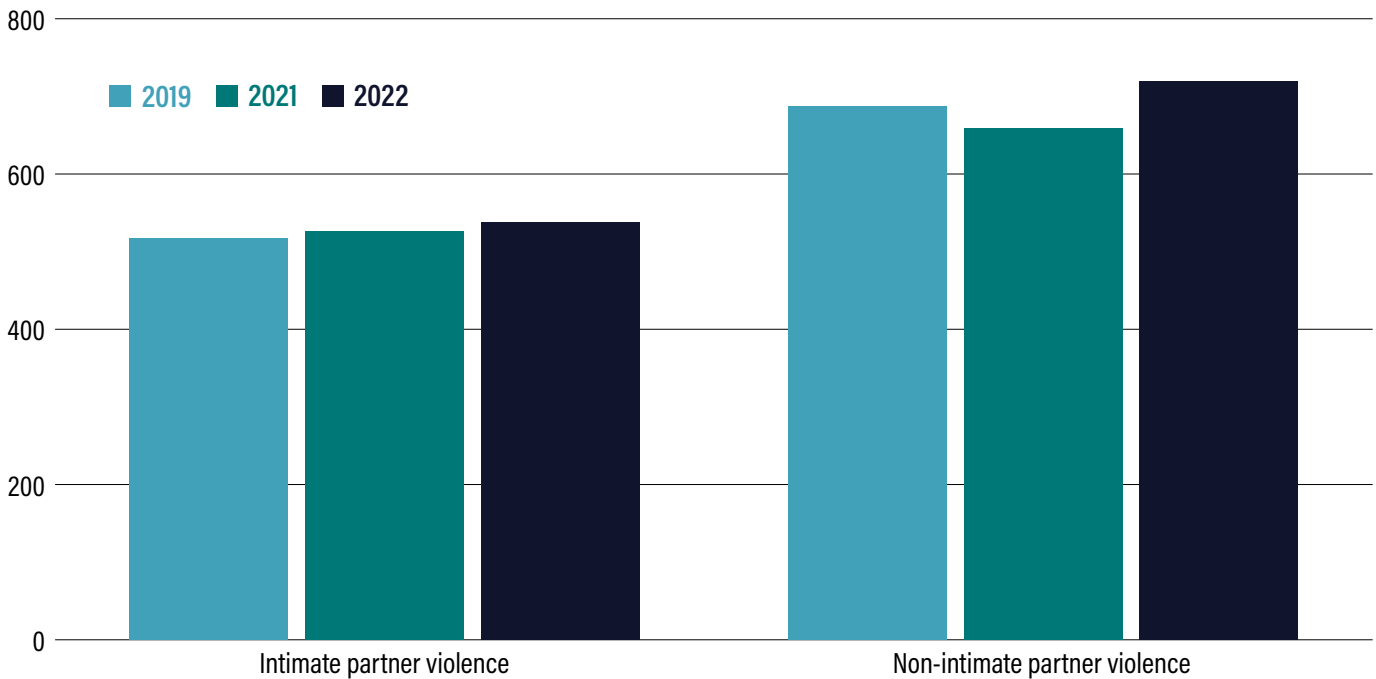
Table 7 **Personal security: Provincial rankings 2022**

|                           | Intimate partner violence (2021) | Sexual assaults (2021) | Criminal harassment (2021) | Overall rank |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 7                                | 7                      | 6                          | 6            |
| Prince Edward Island      | 2                                | 4                      | 4                          | 2            |
| Nova Scotia               | 5                                | 6                      | 5                          | 4            |
| New Brunswick             | 8                                | 2                      | 10                         | 8            |
| Quebec                    | 4                                | 3                      | 9                          | 7            |
| Ontario                   | 1                                | 1                      | 8                          | 1            |
| Manitoba                  | 9                                | 9                      | 1                          | 9            |
| Saskatchewan              | 10                               | 10                     | 3                          | 10           |
| Alberta                   | 6                                | 8                      | 7                          | 5            |
| British Columbia          | 3                                | 5                      | 2                          | 3            |

Source: CCPA's Gender Gap Index

## Figure 7 Violent crime

Rate of violent crime per 100,000 committed against women and girls (aged 12+ years) by intimate and non-intimate partners, 2019-21



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 35-10-0202-01 Intimate partner and non-intimate partner victims of police-reported violent crime by age and gender of victim

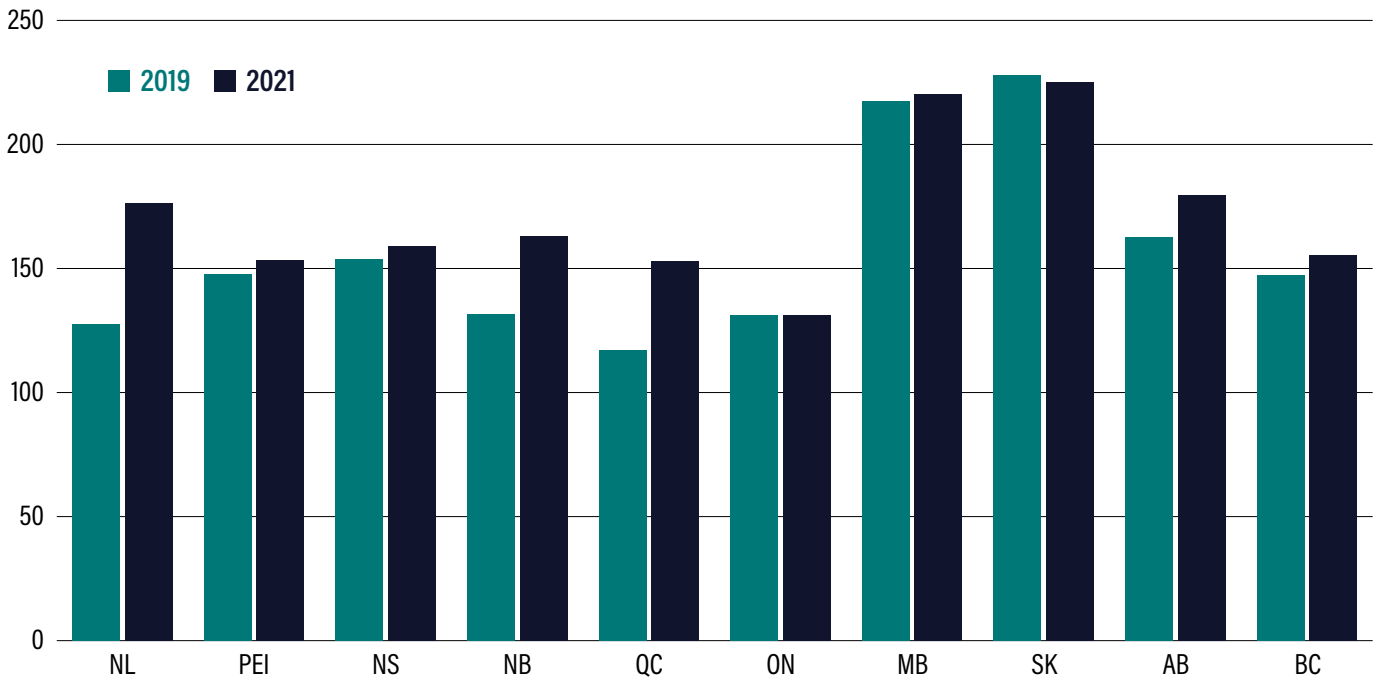
9.1 per cent, respectively, surpassing 2019 levels. This includes the number of homicides. In 2021, according to the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, 173 women and girls lost their lives across the country, an increase from 137 in 2019. The overwhelming majority of deaths were at the hands of men.<sup>59</sup>

Likewise, sexual assaults against women and girls, as well as criminal harassment—additional measures tracked in the CCPA’s Gender Gap Index—were higher than before the pandemic. Nationally, there was an 8.7 per cent increase in the rate of women reporting sexual assaults and a 15.3 per cent increase in those reporting criminal harassment between 2019 and 2021.

Except for Prince Edward Island and British Columbia, all provinces reported an increase in violent crime against women between 2019 and 2021. Over these three years, Newfoundland and Labrador experienced the largest increase in violent crime (+19.6 per cent), followed by New Brunswick and Quebec, at 13.1 per cent and 10.9 per cent, respectively. The increases in these provinces, and in Alberta, were largely driven by double-digit increases in non-intimate partner violence in 2021.

## Figure 8 Sexual assault

Incidents of sexual assault per 100,000 girls and women (all ages) by province, 2019-21



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 35-10-0051-01 Victims of police-reported violent crime

There were also large increases in intimate partner violence and sexual assaults in Newfoundland and Labrador and in Quebec, which experienced a large spike in femicides in the first months of 2021.<sup>60</sup> New Brunswick and Saskatchewan recorded a roughly 30 per cent rise in the incidents of criminal harassment.

These estimates, of course, represent just the tip of the iceberg. According to the 2019 General Social Survey, only 19 per cent of spousal violence cases are reported to the police by the victim or someone else.<sup>61</sup> The figure is even lower for sexual assault incidents: six per cent.<sup>62</sup> Differences in police enforcement practices and resourcing also contribute to under-reporting as the controversy around protocols for classifying reported incidents as founded or unfounded revealed.<sup>63</sup>

The risk of violence is especially high among Indigenous women,<sup>64</sup> women with disabilities<sup>65</sup> and sexual-minority women (women who are not heterosexual).<sup>66</sup> Among women with disabilities, numbering in the millions, 57.4 per cent report having been physically or sexually assaulted at least once. The numbers were even higher among Indigenous women (62.7 per cent) and sexual-minority women (66.3 per cent).

These same women and gender-diverse people are also much more likely to experience violence and harassment at work, since they are overrepresented in industries and occupations at greatest risk of violence from co-workers, clients or the public—such as health care, food and bar services, retail and education.<sup>67</sup> For frontline workers, the pandemic added fuel to the fire, exacerbating the severity, frequency, and duration of the harassment and violence experienced at work.

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The level of women's personal security has deteriorated since the beginning of the pandemic (84.1 per cent). Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick and Quebec experienced the largest increases in their index scores, while Ontario and Prince Edward Island recorded the smallest. The latter ranked first and second as the safest province to live in 2021. Their rates of sexual assault, intimate partner violence and criminal harassment fell below the Canadian average for each measure.

Saskatchewan and Manitoba rank at the bottom as a result of their very high rates of police-reported sexual assault and intimate partner violence and have done so for several years. New Brunswick and Quebec had the highest rates of criminal harassment targeting women in 2021. Overall, there was a nine-percentage point difference between Ontario's score and Saskatchewan's. The gap between the top and bottom has widened since before the pandemic.

It is important to keep in mind that there is variation within every province with respect to experience of gendered violence. We know that women living in rural areas, for instance, experience higher rates of intimate partner violence than men or women living in urban areas. The Renfrew County's Coroner's Inquest into the deaths of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam and the Nova Scotia Mass Casualty Commission are two recent examinations of the very high risk of violence women in rural and remote communities face.<sup>68</sup> Paying attention to place is essential in order to generate meaningful and effective strategies for ending violence.

The inescapable conclusion—corroborated by accounts of survivors and frontline workers in the anti-violence movement—is that women and gender-diverse people are at greater risk of violence today than before the pandemic.

In November 2022, with little fanfare, Canada's first ever National Action Plan against Gender-based Violence was released.<sup>69,70</sup> The National Action Plan, however, provides only a vague shopping list of potential actions, the details of which are currently being hashed out in separate bilateral agreements with each province and territory.<sup>71</sup> Critical questions

remain about how the federal government will ensure the provision of high-quality supports and services across all jurisdictions.<sup>72</sup>

Likewise, Indigenous women's groups have decried the government's lack of progress in responding to the Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.<sup>73</sup> A total of \$2.2 billion was set aside in the 2021 budget to "accelerate" work on a National Action Plan,<sup>74</sup> but funding commitments are proceeding very slowly.<sup>75</sup>

Building a truly national program demands clear standards, effective administration, independent oversight, sustained community leadership and the political will to see it through. A life free of violence is a basic human right. In the face of rising violence, the time for half measures is well and truly done.



## LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT: LARGE GAPS IN LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT PERSIST

Women are stepping forward to put their name on the ballot at all levels of government. In 2021, 762 women ran for office federally, enough to fill the House of Commons twice over.<sup>76</sup> But our system throws up lots of barriers—not just gender stereotypes about women’s capabilities and proper roles<sup>77</sup> but other structural factors, such as party gatekeeping, our first past the post electoral system, and lack of access to the resources necessary to support a successful bid.<sup>78</sup>

The increase and intensity of online hate and harassment targeting women, 2SLGBTQ+ people, as well as Indigenous, Black and other racialized candidates is yet another obstacle to women’s political equality—one that’s gotten appreciably worse in the last three years.<sup>79</sup> It’s not surprising that the march toward gender parity has been so achingly slow.

Canada’s poor performance on women’s leadership is the biggest drag on our score on the WEF’s Global Gender Gap Index. The appointment of a gender-balanced cabinet in 2015 notwithstanding, the ratio of women to men in managerial roles has remained nearly unchanged since the mid-2000s. While the representation of women in the House of Commons has edged up, Canada’s position in international rankings has fallen as other countries have pushed forward.

Only 30.5 per cent of the seats in the federal parliament are occupied by women<sup>80</sup>—placing Canada 61<sup>st</sup> in the international rankings,<sup>81</sup> down

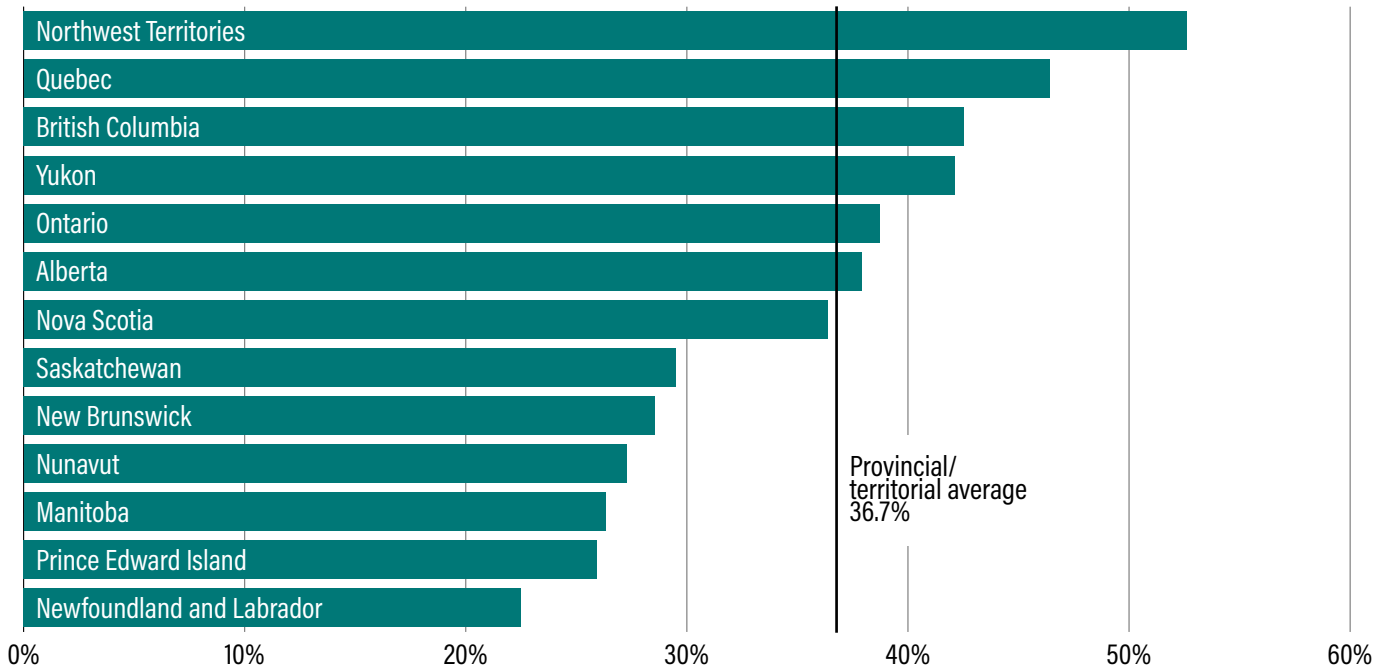
**Table 8 Leadership and political empowerment: Provincial rankings 2022**

|                           | Management occupations (2022) | Elected officials (provincial) | Self employment with paid help (2022) | Overall rank |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 2                             | 10                             | 3                                     | 4            |
| Prince Edward Island      | 10                            | 9                              | 8                                     | 9            |
| Nova Scotia               | 3                             | 5                              | 7                                     | 7            |
| New Brunswick             | 1                             | 7                              | 5                                     | 2            |
| Quebec                    | 7                             | 1                              | 9                                     | 5            |
| Ontario                   | 4                             | 3                              | 6                                     | 6            |
| Manitoba                  | 9                             | 8                              | 10                                    | 10           |
| Saskatchewan              | 8                             | 6                              | 1                                     | 8            |
| Alberta                   | 6                             | 4                              | 4                                     | 3            |
| British Columbia          | 5                             | 2                              | 2                                     | 1            |

Source: CCPA’s Gender Gap Index

## Figure 9 Women’s representation in provincial and territorial legislatures

Most recent election



Source: Information gathered from provincial election agencies.

from 27<sup>th</sup> at the turn of the century<sup>82</sup>—while just 2.4 per cent of sitting parliamentarians identify as members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community and 3.3 per cent report Indigenous ancestry. People with disabilities are all but invisible in parliament. In the 2015 federal election, for example, only 14 people reported a disability out of close to 1,500 candidates.<sup>83</sup>

Female representation in provincial and territorial legislatures is slightly higher, on average—at 36.7 per cent in 2023—but it ranges considerably from a high of 52.6 per cent in Northwest Territories (2019) to a low of 22.5 per cent in Newfoundland and Labrador (2021). Heather Stefanson (Manitoba), Caroline Cochrane (NWT) and Danielle Smith (Alberta) are the only female premiers in office.

Between the 2019 and 2021 elections, the number of women serving in the House of Commons increased by three, while 16 more women joined the ranks of those serving in provincial and territorial legislatures up to and including the recent Alberta election. At this rate, we’ll be lucky to reach parity by mid-century.

Outside of politics, women haven’t fared much better, holding an average of 36 per cent of all management-level positions in the public and private sectors. In 2022, women working in management represented

6.8 per cent of all female workers aged 15 to 64 years. By comparison, 11.2 per cent of their male peers worked in management.

Women's rate of employment in management slightly increased between 2019 and 2022, by 0.3 percentage points, but so did men's, by 0.6 percentage points. Indeed, women only captured 35.1 per cent of new job creation over this period. As a result, women's share of management positions and Canada's gender gap were effectively unchanged.

Over this same period, six of the provinces recorded an increase in the share of women working in management, led by New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador, while four experienced a decline, thus widening the gender gap: Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Quebec and Ontario. Overall, the average gender parity score among the provinces was 57.1 per cent in 2022, with gaps ranging from a low of 47.8 per cent in Prince Edward Island to a high of 74.1 per cent in New Brunswick.

While women have managed to hold onto—and, for some, even grow—their share of management jobs, the same cannot be said of women business owners. The impact of public health closures fell particularly hard on the self-employed. In June 2023, levels of self-employment among women were still 5.8 per cent below those in February 2020, representing a loss of roughly 60,000 of this group of business owners and freelancers.<sup>84</sup>

The CCPA's gender gap index tracks the 27.7 per cent of self-employed workers (aged 15 to 64 years) who engage paid help—a marker of greater financial security and higher wages compared to those who work on their own. As with management occupations, men dominate self-employment, accounting for 61.9 per cent of all self-employed workers in 2022 and an even larger share of the self-employed with paid help: 72.8 per cent.

Both women's rate of self-employment with paid help and their share of this type of business activity have declined since 2019. Overall, there were 34,000 (or 16.4 per cent) fewer female business owners in 2022 than before the pandemic. There were fewer male business owners as well—but their relative losses are half of those reported by women. As a result, the gender gap score has fallen from 41.1 per cent in 2019 to 37.3 per cent in 2022.

Quebec women reported the largest losses (-38.5 per cent) over this period, followed by Manitoba (-31.7 per cent). Both provinces now have the widest gender gap in self-employment with paid labour, at 32.8 per cent and 32.1 per cent, respectively. Saskatchewan has the smallest at a still very large 44.3 per cent, experiencing a boost in women's employment between 2021 and 2022.

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As the labour market continues to change in the aftermath of the pandemic, it will be important to track the gendered division of management labour and the fate of female business owners. Increasing numbers of women are working in management, but men continue to dominate the C-suite and attract greater support for their business endeavours, the result of pervasive gender bias in the workplace and broader economy.<sup>85</sup>

A review of leadership indicators reveals that glacial progress is being made in closing the gap—gaps that are even wider for women of colour, Indigenous women, gender-diverse people, and women with disabilities. Only 42.7 per cent of the gender gap in leadership has been closed to date. This is the largest gender disparity in our index.

Average weighted aggregate scores range from a high in British Columbia (51.4 per cent) to a low in Manitoba (37.8 per cent)—a difference of 13 percentage points. There were very large differences in the share of provincial legislators who were women between Quebec (with a gender gap of 86.6 per cent) and Newfoundland and Labrador (with a gender gap of 29 per cent).

Efforts are underway to improve women's representation in leadership positions. The widespread adoption of remote work and hybrid work models in 2020 holds out the opportunity for greater flexibility and work-life balance, which has been consistently identified by women as a critical barrier to women's advancement and extends the opportunity for varied employment to workers who face barriers to working on site.<sup>86</sup>

In the political arena, the federal House of Commons made permanent pandemic-era hybrid workplace rules and virtual voting procedures in June 2023. One of the key reasons was to facilitate better work-life balance for parliamentarians and help attract potential candidates—including women and under-represented communities—to politics.

These recent reforms are important in the push for greater gender equality in employment, helping to challenge entrenched workplace biases and to facilitate a more inclusive approach to employment. They should be considered as part of a comprehensive package of employer and government programs, including care policies and expanded leaves, employment equity and workplace practices that root out discriminatory workplace practices, as well as measures to create safe and respectful workplaces, free of violence and discrimination. More comprehensive and better intersectional data is also needed to support and to track efforts to close the very large gender gap in women's leadership.

# GOVERNMENTS NEED TO ACT TO CLOSE THE GENDER GAP

AT THE BEGINNING OF the pandemic, all countries took steps to respond to the health crisis and mitigate the ensuing economic and societal shocks.<sup>87</sup> Yet, as UN Women has documented, very few put in place a “holistic gender response”<sup>88</sup> to the unfolding crisis and the erosion of women’s rights and well-being. Fewer still considered the unique position or experiences of marginalized women or gender-diverse people in their recovery programs.

In Canada, the federal government, for its part, clearly acknowledged the gendered character of the COVID-19 crisis in its policy statements. It was one of a small group of countries, as reported by the OECD, that explicitly undertook gender impact assessments in the design and delivery of its pandemic and recovery response.<sup>89</sup>

It also marshalled a sizable pandemic response in comparison to its peers, providing nearly 19 per cent of GDP in total support to keep Canadians and businesses afloat,<sup>90</sup> directing an above-average share of funding to households.<sup>91,92</sup> Through the first waves of the pandemic, the federal government introduced approximately 150 different measures, covering health, income security, loan guarantees for private business, and more. The lion’s share of all direct spending came from the federal government: 86 per cent.<sup>93</sup>

Looking at measures that directly impacted households and businesses, 30.4 per cent met the criteria set out in the UNDP-UN Women Global Gender Response Tracker for being “gender-sensitive”, a figure in line with the global average (32 per cent of the 226 countries surveyed),<sup>94</sup> but a comparatively small fraction (11.6 per cent) of Canada’s total spending package.<sup>95</sup>

Of these funds, 38 per cent was spent on programs that helped women and other marginalized communities cope with the economic fallout of the pandemic, including top-ups to Canada Child Benefit and GST/HST credit recipients, funds for food banks and community service organizations, and training dollars for workers in hard-hit sectors, such as food and accommodation.

Another 62 per cent of federal gender-sensitive spending targeted care needs, encompassing pandemic-related family leave provisions, cash benefits to help compensate parents for lost earnings due to care responsibilities (via CERB, Employment Insurance, and the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit), and funds to expand and strengthen care services such as emergency child care and essential worker wage top-ups.<sup>96</sup>

A total of \$300 million over three years was directed to organizations supporting women, girls and gender-diverse people experiencing gender-based violence.<sup>97</sup>

As our figures show, federal emergency transfers had a substantial impact on household incomes, more than offsetting what would have been a large rise in poverty, especially among economically vulnerable households.<sup>98</sup> Eligibility was extended—at least temporarily—to those providing essential care and schooling to those in need. Historic new investments in child care announced in 2021 hold out the promise of finally creating a Canada-wide system of early learning and child care that is affordable, inclusive and accessible—and essential for the advance of gender equality in Canada.<sup>99</sup>

The scale of the federal intervention was also a key factor in Canada’s robust employment recovery in 2021 and 2022, opening opportunities for women and other marginalized communities, as this study highlights. Mindful of the lessons of the 2008-09 recession and the damaging, long-lasting impacts of austerity, governments around the world adopted a more proactive response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Government spending helped sustain economic demand across provinces, creating the conditions for a speedy economic recovery.

At the same time, the response to the crisis in care, and its disproportionate impact on women, was hit and miss. The federal

measures were not enough to deliver on the promise of gender justice — certainly not in a country where a fulsome response to the pandemic hinged on subnational levels of government, many of which were wholly silent on the pandemic’s gendered impacts.

Most provinces sat back and let the federal government do the heavy lifting on their pandemic responses, giving only a cursory nod to programming to address the pandemic’s disproportionate impacts on women and other marginalized communities. Had it not been for federal transfers tied to specific goals, such as the provision of child care or services for vulnerable populations, the number of provincial programs qualifying as gender-sensitive would have been considerably smaller, indeed potentially non-existent.

The rise in gender inequality was wholly predictable, given the inequities built into Canada’s labour market and welfare state and the failure of governments to pursue a “holistic” response to the pandemic. The federal government’s gender response was certainly the largest — as measured in direct spending and the millions of people impacted. Between March 2020 and June 2021, it spent \$1,555 per capita on gender-sensitive transfers and services compared to an average of \$357 per capita among the provinces.

Net provincial spending varied considerably, from a very low \$50 per capita in Alberta to \$844 per capita in British Columbia, more than twice the provincial average and 17 times more than in Alberta, Canada’s wealthiest province. Indeed, more than half of the provinces spent less than \$100 per capita on gender-sensitive measures, including provinces in Atlantic Canada, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Addressing pandemic-related gender disparities was not a budgetary priority in these jurisdictions.

As it was, there were significant policy gaps that neither provincial nor federal programming adequately addressed. As our report shows, these included comprehensive and coordinated programs to combat the substantial rise in gender-based violence and to support to larger numbers of individuals coping with mental health challenges. Access to health care remains a pressing challenge as health care authorities and community service providers struggle to recruit and retain care workers. The crisis in our care economy shows no signs of abating soon.<sup>100</sup>

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There is a good deal yet to learn about the pandemic’s gendered impact and potential long-term consequences for gender equality in Canada. There is also a good deal more to learn about the strategies that

worked, in whole or in part, to address diverse women's needs during this crisis.

Strengthening foundational income supports as well as introducing targeted programs were essential in delivering needed financial aid to millions of women struggling with employment and income losses and the burden of care. These interventions offer important lessons for permanently strengthening income security and expanding coverage. The CCPA's Alternative Federal Budget 2024, for example, contains two new proposals to help fill glaring gaps in our safety net: a new Canada Livable Income benefit for adults aged 18 to 62 who do not have children and a proposed design for the new Canada Disability Benefit.<sup>101</sup> These two programs, along with expanded eligibility and a new income floor for Employment Insurance (both regular and special benefits), would go a long way to providing an assured income guarantee for all working-age adults, including low-wage women.

Time-limited pandemic investments in the care economy, however, were not enough to stabilize the system, which had been drained and strained by years of austerity. Provincial governments have key roles to play in creating more inclusive, gender-equal communities. Expanding the number of public/non-profit child spaces; scaling up community-based mental health services; raising the minimum wage and strengthening labour standards; expanding the stock of second-stage housing for women fleeing violence; providing free contraception; improving the wages and working conditions of care workers across the board. Moving beyond a fragmented approach of underfunding, privatization and exploitation in the care economy must be an investment priority going forward at both levels of government.

All future action demands a laser focus on feminist intersectionality to capture the diversity of women's lived experience and to break down the program silos that reinforce discrimination and injustice. To this end, we need to tackle the data gaps that silence and render invisible women and girls facing intersecting forms of discrimination, those most likely to be left behind.<sup>102</sup>

Most pandemic programs have now run their course. With the notable exception of new investments in child care and pending, but unspecified, federal reform of Employment Insurance and disability benefits, provincial and federal programming continues to respond poorly to the systemic barriers that women face in a new context of heightened economic uncertainty and high costs of living.

Our goal with the CCPA Gender Gap Index and our Beyond Recovery project is to help spur a national conversation about the challenges



that women and gender-diverse people face and the progressive alternatives that are on offer at a local, provincial or national level. Such a conversation is essential to creating communities where all can thrive. If there is one message to take forward it is that change on gender equality is possible but concerted action is needed to get us there.

# APPENDIX A

## INDICATOR DEFINITIONS AND SOURCES

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### ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION AND SECURITY

**Employment rate (15-64 years) (female to male ratio), 2022:** Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

**Percentage in full-time work (15-64 years) (female to male ratio), 2022:** Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

**Percentage of total population in low income, calculated using the Low-Income Measure-After Tax (male-to-female ratio), 2021:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Income Survey, Custom Order.

**Median employment income (15-64 years) (female-to-male ratio), 2021:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Income Survey, Custom Order.

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### LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

**Population (15-64 years) employed in management occupations (female-to-male ratio), 2022:** Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Custom Tabulation. Management category 0-all levels.

**Elected officials (female-to-male ratio), most recent election at time of publication:** Individual municipal city records for all census subdivisions within Census Metropolitan Areas; elected provincial officials (female-to-male ratio).

**Population (15-64 years) engaged in self-employment with paid help (female-to-male ratio), 2022:** Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey. Custom Tabulation. Includes incorporated and unincorporated businesses.

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## HEALTH

**Life expectancy at birth, adjusted for health life expectancy, one-year average (female-to-male ratio), 2020:** Statistics Canada, Table: 13-10-0837-01 and Table: 13-10-0140-01.

**Population (12+ years) reporting “very good” or “excellent health” (female-to-male ratio), 2021:** Statistics Canada, Health Characteristics, annual estimates.

**Population (12+ years) reporting “quite a bit” or “extremely” high daily stress (female-to-male ratio), 2021:** Statistics Canada, Health Characteristics, annual estimates.

**Population reporting unmet health care needs (16+ years) (female-to-male ratio), 2021:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Income Survey.

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## PERSONAL SECURITY

**Police-reported intimate partner violence (victims aged 12+ years), 2021:** Statistics Canada, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

**Police-reported sexual assault—levels 1, 2 and 3, (victims all ages), 2021:** Statistics Canada, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

**Police-reported criminal harassment (victims aged 18-110 years), 2021:** Statistics Canada, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, custom tabulation.

## Notes

- All indicators are expressed as total number of incidents and rates per 100,000 population. These indicators compare the number of violence incidents reported by women by community for 2021. They do not present a ratio of the incidents that women experience as compared to men.
- Oshawa is not included in this reporting series. For the purposes of the index, an average value among the cities included in this project has been calculated and assigned to Oshawa.

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## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

### **College, CEGEP or other non-university, vocational or apprenticeship certificate or diploma (25-64 years) (female-to-male ratio), 2022:**

Labour Force Survey, custom tabulation.

**University certificate, diploma or degree at bachelor level or above (25-64 years) (female-to-male ratio), 2022:** Statistics Canada. Labour Force Survey, custom tabulation.

**Post-secondary graduates with qualifications in STEM fields of study (25-64 years) (female-to-male ratio), 2021:** Statistics Canada, Census of Population.

# APPENDIX B

## PROVINCIAL PROFILES

**Table 9 Gender Gap Index: Provincial scores and ranking 2022**

Ranked out of 10 provinces, a score of 1.00 represents parity

|                                      | Score        | Rank     |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| <b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>     |              |          |
| Economic participation and security  | 0.866        | 5        |
| Educational attainment               | 0.805        | 5        |
| Leadership and political empowerment | 0.472        | 4        |
| Health                               | 0.970        | 7        |
| Personal security                    | 0.840        | 6        |
| <b>Overall</b>                       | <b>0.791</b> | <b>5</b> |
| <b>Prince Edward Island</b>          |              |          |
| Economic participation and security  | 0.869        | 4        |
| Educational attainment               | 0.830        | 1        |
| Leadership and political empowerment | 0.381        | 9        |
| Health                               | 0.963        | 10       |
| Personal security                    | 0.873        | 2        |
| <b>Overall</b>                       | <b>0.783</b> | <b>6</b> |
| <b>Nova Scotia</b>                   |              |          |
| Economic participation and security  | 0.875        | 2        |
| Educational attainment               | 0.826        | 2        |
| Leadership and political empowerment | 0.458        | 7        |
| Health                               | 0.981        | 3        |
| Personal security                    | 0.860        | 4        |
| <b>Overall</b>                       | <b>0.800</b> | <b>1</b> |
| <b>New Brunswick</b>                 |              |          |
| Economic participation and security  | 0.881        | 1        |
| Educational attainment               | 0.818        | 3        |
| Leadership and political empowerment | 0.490        | 2        |
| Health                               | 0.971        | 6        |
| Personal security                    | 0.820        | 8        |
| <b>Overall</b>                       | <b>0.796</b> | <b>3</b> |
| <b>Quebec</b>                        |              |          |
| Economic participation and security  | 0.873        | 3        |
| Educational attainment               | 0.741        | 10       |
| Leadership and political empowerment | 0.467        | 5        |
| Health                               | 0.965        | 9        |
| Personal security                    | 0.829        | 7        |
| <b>Overall</b>                       | <b>0.775</b> | <b>9</b> |

|                                      | Score        | Rank      |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| <b>Ontario</b>                       |              |           |
| Economic participation and security  | 0.861        | 6         |
| Educational attainment               | 0.808        | 4         |
| Leadership and political empowerment | 0.461        | 6         |
| Health                               | 0.969        | 8         |
| Personal security                    | 0.877        | 1         |
| <b>Overall</b>                       | <b>0.796</b> | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Manitoba</b>                      |              |           |
| Economic participation and security  | 0.852        | 8         |
| Educational attainment               | 0.799        | 7         |
| Leadership and political empowerment | 0.378        | 10        |
| Health                               | 1.006        | 1         |
| Personal security                    | 0.812        | 9         |
| <b>Overall</b>                       | <b>0.769</b> | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Saskatchewan</b>                  |              |           |
| Economic participation and security  | 0.856        | 7         |
| Educational attainment               | 0.799        | 6         |
| Leadership and political empowerment | 0.457        | 8         |
| Health                               | 0.977        | 4         |
| Personal security                    | 0.789        | 10        |
| <b>Overall</b>                       | <b>0.775</b> | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Alberta</b>                       |              |           |
| Economic participation and security  | 0.829        | 10        |
| Educational attainment               | 0.767        | 9         |
| Leadership and political empowerment | 0.483        | 3         |
| Health                               | 0.989        | 2         |
| Personal security                    | 0.840        | 5         |
| <b>Overall</b>                       | <b>0.782</b> | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>British Columbia</b>              |              |           |
| Economic participation and security  | 0.832        | 9         |
| Educational attainment               | 0.793        | 8         |
| Leadership and political empowerment | 0.514        | 1         |
| Health                               | 0.976        | 5         |
| Personal security                    | 0.869        | 3         |
| <b>Overall</b>                       | <b>0.797</b> | <b>2</b>  |

**Table 10 Gender Gap Index: Provincial scorecard**

Ranked out of 10 provinces, a score of 1.00 represents parity

|   | Rank | Men      | Women    | W/M Ratio |
|---|------|----------|----------|-----------|
| <b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| <b>Economic participation and security</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| Employment rate (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)   | 1    | 67.9     | 66.8     | 0.984     |
| Percentage in full-time work (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                      | 5    | 91.2     | 80.3     | 0.880     |
| Percentage in low income*, 2021 (%)   | 10   | 11.7     | 16.8     | 0.696     |
| Median employment income (18-64 yrs), 2021 (\$)   | 7    | \$45,100 | \$32,500 | 0.721     |
| <b>Educational attainment**</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Share of college, CEGEP or apprenticeship graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)               | 10   | 51.5     | 48.5     | 0.941     |
| Share of university graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                     | 2    | 40.5     | 59.5     | 1.468     |
| Share of post-secondary graduates with STEM qualifications (25-64 yrs), 2021 (%)        | 3    | 67.8     | 32.2     | 0.474     |
| <b>Leadership and political empowerment</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Share of employed in management occupations (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                       | 2    | 60.1     | 39.2     | 0.652     |
| Share of elected municipal and provincial officials, most recent election (%)           | 10   | 77.5     | 22.5     | 0.290     |
| Share of self-employed with paid help (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                             | 3    | 70.7     | 29.3     | 0.415     |
| <b>Health</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Life expectancy at birth, adjusted for health life expectancy, 2021                     | 8    | 77.3     | 81.3     | 0.992     |
| Share reporting "very good" or "excellent" health (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)                   | 4    | 49.5     | 50.5     | 1.018     |
| Share reporting "quite a lot" or "extremely" high life stress (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)       | 9    | 41.7     | 58.3     | 0.715     |
| Share reporting unmet health care needs (16+ years), 2021 (%)                           | 4    | 45.2     | 54.8     | 0.826     |
| <b>Personal security</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| Police reported intimate partner violence (12+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population) | 7    |          | 661.9    |           |
| Police reported sexual assault (levels 1, 2 and 3), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)  | 7    |          | 176.3    |           |
| Police reported criminal harassment (18+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)       | 6    |          | 45.3     |           |
| <b>Prince Edward Island</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| <b>Economic participation and security</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| Employment rate (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)   | 4    | 75.8     | 72.3     | 0.954     |
| Percentage in full-time work (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                      | 4    | 91.1     | 80.2     | 0.880     |
| Percentage in low income*, 2021 (%)   | 9    | 10.2     | 14.2     | 0.718     |
| Median employment income (18-64 yrs), 2021 (\$)   | 1    | \$41,500 | \$32,300 | 0.778     |
| <b>Educational attainment**</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Share of college, CEGEP or apprenticeship graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)               | 3    | 49.5     | 50.5     | 1.019     |
| Share of university graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                     | 4    | 42.8     | 57.2     | 1.336     |
| Share of post-secondary graduates with STEM qualifications (25-64 yrs), 2021 (%)        | 1    | 66.9     | 33.1     | 0.494     |
| <b>Leadership and political empowerment</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Share of employed in management occupations (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                       | 10   | 68.7     | 32.8     | 0.478     |
| Share of elected municipal and provincial officials, most recent election (%)           | 9    | 74.1     | 25.9     | 0.350     |
| Share of self-employed with paid help (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                             | 8    | 75.0     | 25.0     | 0.333     |
| <b>Health</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Life expectancy at birth, adjusted for health life expectancy, 2021                     | 7    | 79.7     | 83.9     | 0.992     |
| Share reporting "very good" or "excellent" health (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)                   | 10   | 50.6     | 49.4     | 0.978     |
| Share reporting "quite a lot" or "extremely" high life stress (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)       | 7    | 42.9     | 57.1     | 0.752     |
| Share reporting unmet health care needs (16+ years), 2021 (%)                           | 5    | 44.4     | 55.6     | 0.800     |
| <b>Personal security</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| Police reported intimate partner violence (12+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population) | 2    |          | 397.4    |           |
| Police reported sexual assault (levels 1, 2 and 3), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)  | 4    |          | 153.2    |           |
| Police reported criminal harassment (18+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)       | 4    |          | 39.5     |           |



|   | Rank | Men      | Women    | W/M Ratio |
|---|------|----------|----------|-----------|
| <b>Nova Scotia</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| <b>Economic participation and security</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| Employment rate (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)   | 2    | 74.1     | 72.3     | 0.976     |
| Percentage in full-time work (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                      | 3    | 89.7     | 79.2     | 0.883     |
| Percentage in low income*, 2021 (%)   | 7    | 11.4     | 14.2     | 0.803     |
| Median employment income (18-64 yrs), 2021 (\$)   | 6    | \$46,300 | \$33,400 | 0.721     |
| <b>Educational attainment**</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Share of college, CEGEP or apprenticeship graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)               | 6    | 50.1     | 49.9     | 0.995     |
| Share of university graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                     | 1    | 40.3     | 59.7     | 1.484     |
| Share of post-secondary graduates with STEM qualifications (25-64 yrs), 2021 (%)        | 5    | 68.3     | 31.7     | 0.464     |
| <b>Leadership and political empowerment</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Share of employed in management occupations (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                       | 3    | 62.4     | 37.9     | 0.607     |
| Share of elected municipal and provincial officials, most recent election (%)           | 5    | 63.6     | 36.4     | 0.571     |
| Share of self-employed with paid help (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                             | 7    | 74.3     | 25.7     | 0.346     |
| <b>Health</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Life expectancy at birth, adjusted for health life expectancy, 2021                     | 5    | 78.1     | 82.8     | 0.999     |
| Share reporting "very good" or "excellent" health (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)                   | 1    | 48.4     | 51.6     | 1.067     |
| Share reporting "quite a lot" or "extremely" high life stress (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)       | 8    | 41.9     | 58.1     | 0.721     |
| Share reporting unmet health care needs (16+ years), 2021 (%)                           | 6    | 43.8     | 56.3     | 0.778     |
| <b>Personal security</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| Police reported intimate partner violence (12+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population) | 5    |          | 540.1    |           |
| Police reported sexual assault (levels 1, 2 and 3), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)  | 6    |          | 159.1    |           |
| Police reported criminal harassment (18+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)       | 5    |          | 39.9     |           |
| <b>New Brunswick</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| <b>Economic participation and security</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| Employment rate (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)   | 3    | 73.6     | 71.5     | 0.971     |
| Percentage in full-time work (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                      | 1    | 91.3     | 82.6     | 0.904     |
| Percentage in low income*, 2021 (%)   | 8    | 10.2     | 13.6     | 0.750     |
| Median employment income (18-64 yrs), 2021 (\$)   | 3    | \$45,400 | \$33,900 | 0.747     |
| <b>Educational attainment**</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Share of college, CEGEP or apprenticeship graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)               | 1    | 48.4     | 51.6     | 1.064     |
| Share of university graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                     | 3    | 41.0     | 59.0     | 1.436     |
| Share of post-secondary graduates with STEM qualifications (25-64 yrs), 2021 (%)        | 9    | 71.8     | 28.2     | 0.393     |
| <b>Leadership and political empowerment</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Share of employed in management occupations (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                       | 1    | 57.4     | 42.6     | 0.741     |
| Share of elected municipal and provincial officials, most recent election (%)           | 7    | 71.4     | 28.6     | 0.400     |
| Share of self-employed with paid help (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                             | 5    | 73.0     | 27.0     | 0.370     |
| <b>Health</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Life expectancy at birth, adjusted for health life expectancy, 2021                     | 9    | 78.8     | 82.9     | 0.991     |
| Share reporting "very good" or "excellent" health (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)                   | 2    | 48.4     | 51.6     | 1.065     |
| Share reporting "quite a lot" or "extremely" high life stress (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)       | 6    | 43.9     | 56.1     | 0.783     |
| Share reporting unmet health care needs (16+ years), 2021 (%)                           | 9    | 39.7     | 60.3     | 0.658     |
| <b>Personal security</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| Police reported intimate partner violence (12+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population) | 8    |          | 739.1    |           |
| Police reported sexual assault (levels 1, 2 and 3), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)  | 2    |          | 163.0    |           |
| Police reported criminal harassment (18+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)       | 10   |          | 155.9    |           |

|   | Rank | Men      | Women    | W/M Ratio |
|---|------|----------|----------|-----------|
| <b>Quebec</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| <b>Economic participation and security</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| Employment rate (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)   | 5    | 79.6     | 75.3     | 0.946     |
| Percentage in full-time work (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                      | 2    | 88.5     | 78.3     | 0.885     |
| Percentage in low income*, 2021 (%)   | 5    | 10.7     | 12.7     | 0.843     |
| Median employment income (18-64 yrs), 2021 (\$)   | 4    | \$50,600 | \$37,500 | 0.741     |
| <b>Educational attainment**</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Share of college, CEGEP or apprenticeship graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)               | 9    | 51.0     | 49.0     | 0.959     |
| Share of university graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                     | 7    | 44.9     | 55.1     | 1.226     |
| Share of post-secondary graduates with STEM qualifications (25-64 yrs), 2021 (%)        | 10   | 72.2     | 27.8     | 0.384     |
| <b>Leadership and political empowerment</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Share of employed in management occupations (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                       | 7    | 64.7     | 35.3     | 0.546     |
| Share of elected municipal and provincial officials, most recent election (%)           | 1    | 53.6     | 46.4     | 0.866     |
| Share of self-employed with paid help (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                             | 9    | 75.3     | 24.7     | 0.328     |
| <b>Health</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Life expectancy at birth, adjusted for health life expectancy, 2021                     | 10   | 81.3     | 85.0     | 0.985     |
| Share reporting "very good" or "excellent" health (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)                   | 5    | 49.6     | 50.4     | 1.018     |
| Share reporting "quite a lot" or "extremely" high life stress (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)       | 10   | 40.3     | 59.7     | 0.676     |
| Share reporting unmet health care needs (16+ years), 2021 (%)                           | 3    | 46.3     | 53.7     | 0.863     |
| <b>Personal security</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| Police reported intimate partner violence (12+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population) | 4    |          | 540.1    |           |
| Police reported sexual assault (levels 1, 2 and 3), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)  | 3    |          | 152.9    |           |
| Police reported criminal harassment (18+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)       | 9    |          | 133.7    |           |
| <b>Ontario</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| <b>Economic participation and security</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| Employment rate (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)   | 9    | 77.8     | 71.3     | 0.916     |
| Percentage in full-time work (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                      | 6    | 89.1     | 77.6     | 0.871     |
| Percentage in low income*, 2021 (%)   | 4    | 9.1      | 10.8     | 0.843     |
| Median employment income (18-64 yrs), 2021 (\$)   | 2    | \$50,600 | \$38,300 | 0.757     |
| <b>Educational attainment**</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Share of college, CEGEP or apprenticeship graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)               | 2    | 48.8     | 51.2     | 1.048     |
| Share of university graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                     | 10   | 46.3     | 53.7     | 1.158     |
| Share of post-secondary graduates with STEM qualifications (25-64 yrs), 2021 (%)        | 4    | 68.0     | 32.0     | 0.471     |
| <b>Leadership and political empowerment</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Share of employed in management occupations (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                       | 4    | 63.7     | 36.3     | 0.571     |
| Share of elected municipal and provincial officials, most recent election (%)           | 3    | 61.3     | 38.7     | 0.632     |
| Share of self-employed with paid help (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                             | 6    | 73.6     | 26.4     | 0.359     |
| <b>Health</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Life expectancy at birth, adjusted for health life expectancy, 2021                     | 6    | 79.6     | 84.4     | 0.998     |
| Share reporting "very good" or "excellent" health (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)                   | 6    | 49.9     | 50.1     | 1.003     |
| Share reporting "quite a lot" or "extremely" high life stress (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)       | 5    | 45.2     | 54.8     | 0.824     |
| Share reporting unmet health care needs (16+ years), 2021 (%)                           | 8    | 40.4     | 59.6     | 0.678     |
| <b>Personal security</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| Police reported intimate partner violence (12+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population) | 1    |          | 392.3    |           |
| Police reported sexual assault (levels 1, 2 and 3), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)  | 1    |          | 131.0    |           |
| Police reported criminal harassment (18+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)       | 8    |          | 65.0     |           |

|   | Rank | Men      | Women    | W/M Ratio |
|---|------|----------|----------|-----------|
| <b>Manitoba</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| <b>Economic participation and security</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| Employment rate (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)   | 8    | 79.8     | 73.4     | 0.920     |
| Percentage in full-time work (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                      | 8    | 89.1     | 74.8     | 0.839     |
| Percentage in low income*, 2021 (%)   | 3    | 13       | 14.8     | 0.878     |
| Median employment income (18-64 yrs), 2021 (\$)   | 5    | \$47,400 | \$35,000 | 0.738     |
| <b>Educational attainment**</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Share of college, CEGEP or apprenticeship graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)               | 5    | 50.0     | 50.0     | 1.001     |
| Share of university graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                     | 6    | 43.7     | 56.3     | 1.288     |
| Share of post-secondary graduates with STEM qualifications (25-64 yrs), 2021 (%)        | 6    | 68.7     | 31.3     | 0.456     |
| <b>Leadership and political empowerment</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Share of employed in management occupations (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                       | 9    | 67.3     | 32.7     | 0.487     |
| Share of elected municipal and provincial officials, most recent election (%)           | 8    | 73.7     | 26.3     | 0.357     |
| Share of self-employed with paid help (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                             | 10   | 75.7     | 24.3     | 0.321     |
| <b>Health</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Life expectancy at birth, adjusted for health life expectancy, 2021                     | 4    | 77.3     | 82.5     | 1.0040    |
| Share reporting "very good" or "excellent" health (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)                   | 3    | 48.6     | 51.4     | 1.057     |
| Share reporting "quite a lot" or "extremely" high life stress (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)       | 1    | 49.7     | 50.3     | 0.988     |
| Share reporting unmet health care needs (16+ years), 2021 (%)                           | 2    | 47.1     | 52.9     | 0.892     |
| <b>Personal security</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| Police reported intimate partner violence (12+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population) | 9    |          | 986.0    |           |
| Police reported sexual assault (levels 1, 2 and 3), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)  | 9    |          | 220.4    |           |
| Police reported criminal harassment (18+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)       | 1    |          | 15.8     |           |
| <b>Saskatchewan</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| <b>Economic participation and security</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| Employment rate (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)   | 6    | 79.7     | 74.4     | 0.934     |
| Percentage in full-time work (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                      | 7    | 89.6     | 76.4     | 0.853     |
| Percentage in low income*, 2021 (%)   | 1    | 12.0     | 12.5     | 0.960     |
| Median employment income (18-64 yrs), 2021 (\$)   | 8    | \$54,000 | \$36,000 | 0.667     |
| <b>Educational attainment**</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Share of college, CEGEP or apprenticeship graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)               | 4    | 49.7     | 50.3     | 1.011     |
| Share of university graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                     | 5    | 43.0     | 57.0     | 1.326     |
| Share of post-secondary graduates with STEM qualifications (25-64 yrs), 2021 (%)        | 8    | 69.7     | 30.3     | 0.436     |
| <b>Leadership and political empowerment</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Share of employed in management occupations (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                       | 8    | 66.9     | 33.3     | 0.497     |
| Share of elected municipal and provincial officials, most recent election (%)           | 6    | 70.5     | 29.5     | 0.419     |
| Share of self-employed with paid help (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                             | 1    | 69.3     | 30.7     | 0.443     |
| <b>Health</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Life expectancy at birth, adjusted for health life expectancy, 2021                     | 3    | 76.1     | 81.1     | 1.004     |
| Share reporting "very good" or "excellent" health (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)                   | 7    | 50.1     | 49.9     | 0.996     |
| Share reporting "quite a lot" or "extremely" high life stress (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)       | 2    | 48.1     | 51.9     | 0.926     |
| Share reporting unmet health care needs (16+ years), 2021 (%)                           | 10   | 39.3     | 60.7     | 0.647     |
| <b>Personal security</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| Police reported intimate partner violence (12+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population) | 10   |          | 1176.8   |           |
| Police reported sexual assault (levels 1, 2 and 3), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)  | 10   |          | 225.0    |           |
| Police reported criminal harassment (18+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)       | 3    |          | 29.8     |           |

|   | Rank | Men      | Women    | W/M Ratio |
|---|------|----------|----------|-----------|
| <b>Alberta</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| <b>Economic participation and security</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| Employment rate (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)   | 10   | 79.8     | 73       | 0.915     |
| Percentage in full-time work (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                      | 10   | 90.5     | 73.6     | 0.814     |
| Percentage in low income*, 2021 (%)   | 2    | 8.7      | 9.1      | 0.956     |
| Median employment income (18-64 yrs), 2021 (\$)   | 10   | \$59,200 | \$37,700 | 0.637     |
| <b>Educational attainment**</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Share of college, CEGEP or apprenticeship graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)               | 8    | 50.5     | 49.5     | 0.981     |
| Share of university graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                     | 9    | 45.9     | 54.1     | 1.176     |
| Share of post-secondary graduates with STEM qualifications (25-64 yrs), 2021 (%)        | 7    | 69.6     | 30.4     | 0.437     |
| <b>Leadership and political empowerment</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Share of employed in management occupations (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                       | 6    | 64.2     | 35.8     | 0.558     |
| Share of elected municipal and provincial officials, most recent election (%)           | 4    | 62.1     | 37.9     | 0.611     |
| Share of self-employed with paid help (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                             | 4    | 70.9     | 29.1     | 0.410     |
| <b>Health</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Life expectancy at birth, adjusted for health life expectancy, 2021                     | 1    | 77.6     | 83.2     | 1.009     |
| Share reporting "very good" or "excellent" health (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)                   | 8    | 50.2     | 49.8     | 0.992     |
| Share reporting "quite a lot" or "extremely" high life stress (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)       | 4    | 45.8     | 54.2     | 0.845     |
| Share reporting unmet health care needs (16+ years), 2021 (%)                           | 1    | 47.2     | 52.8     | 0.894     |
| <b>Personal security</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| Police reported intimate partner violence (12+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population) | 6    |          | 610.2    |           |
| Police reported sexual assault (levels 1, 2 and 3), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)  | 8    |          | 179.7    |           |
| Police reported criminal harassment (18+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)       | 7    |          | 48.6     |           |
| <b>British Columbia</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| <b>Economic participation and security</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| Employment rate (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)   | 7    | 78.9     | 73.3     | 0.929     |
| Percentage in full-time work (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                      | 9    | 87.9     | 73.0     | 0.831     |
| Percentage in low income, 2021* (%)   | 6    | 8.6      | 10.4     | 0.827     |
| Median employment income (18-64 yrs), 2021 (\$)   | 9    | \$55,600 | \$36,900 | 0.664     |
| <b>Educational attainment**</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Share of college, CEGEP or apprenticeship graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)               | 7    | 50.3     | 49.7     | 0.988     |
| Share of university graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                     | 8    | 45.0     | 55.0     | 1.222     |
| Share of post-secondary graduates with STEM qualifications (25-64 yrs), 2021 (%)        | 2    | 67.8     | 32.2     | 0.475     |
| <b>Leadership and political empowerment</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Share of employed in management occupations (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                       | 5    | 63.8     | 36.2     | 0.568     |
| Share of elected municipal and provincial officials, most recent election (%)           | 2    | 57.5     | 42.5     | 0.740     |
| Share of self-employed with paid help (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                             | 2    | 70.0     | 30.0     | 0.429     |
| <b>Health</b>   |      |          |          |           |
| Life expectancy at birth, adjusted for health life expectancy, 2021                     | 2    | 78.7     | 84.3     | 1.009     |
| Share reporting "very good" or "excellent" health (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)                   | 9    | 50.3     | 49.7     | 0.989     |
| Share reporting "quite a lot" or "extremely" high life stress (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)       | 3    | 45.9     | 54.1     | 0.847     |
| Share reporting unmet health care needs (16+ years), 2021 (%)                           | 7    | 40.8     | 59.2     | 0.691     |
| <b>Personal security</b>  |      |          |          |           |
| Police reported intimate partner violence (12+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population) | 3    |          | 487.3    |           |
| Police reported sexual assault (levels 1, 2 and 3), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)  | 5    |          | 155.6    |           |
| Police reported criminal harassment (18+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)       | 2    |          | 28.7     |           |

|   | Men      | Women    | W/M Ratio |
|---|----------|----------|-----------|
| <b>Canada</b>   |          |          |           |
| <b>Economic participation and security</b>  | Men      | Women    | W/M Ratio |
| Employment rate (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)   | 78.4     | 72.8     | 0.929     |
| Percentage in full-time work (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                      | 89.1     | 76.6     | 0.861     |
| Percentage in low income*, 2021 (%)   | 9.7      | 11.4     | 0.851     |
| Median employment income (18-64 yrs), 2021 (\$)   | \$51,600 | \$37,300 | 0.723     |
| <b>Educational attainment**</b>   |          |          |           |
| Share of college, CEGEP or apprenticeship graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)               | 49.9     | 50.1     | 1.003     |
| Share of university graduates (25-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                                     | 45.4     | 54.6     | 1.204     |
| Share of post-secondary graduates with STEM qualifications (25-64 yrs), 2021 (%)        | 69.2     | 30.8     | 0.446     |
| <b>Leadership and political empowerment</b>   |          |          |           |
| Share of employed in management occupations (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                       | 64.0     | 36.0     | 0.562     |
| Share of elected officials, most recent election (%)                                    | 69.5     | 30.5     | 0.438     |
| Share of self-employed with paid help (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)                             | 72.8     | 27.2     | 0.373     |
| <b>Health</b>   |          |          |           |
| Life expectancy at birth, adjusted for health life expectancy, 2021                     | 79.3     | 84.0     | 0.998     |
| Share reporting "very good" or "excellent" health (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)                   | 49.8     | 50.2     | 1.008     |
| Share reporting "quite a lot" or "extremely" high life stress (12+ yrs), 2021 (%)       | 44.2     | 55.8     | 0.793     |
| Share reporting unmet health care needs (16+ years), 2021 (%)                           | 43.1     | 56.9     | 0.758     |
| <b>Personal security</b>  |          |          |           |
| Police reported intimate partner violence (12+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population) |          | 537.6    |           |
| Police reported sexual assault (levels 1, 2 and 3), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)  |          | 155.3    |           |
| Police reported criminal harassment (18+ yrs), 2021 (rate per 100,000 population)       |          | 71.7     |           |

\* Low Income Measure (After-Tax)

\*\* Highest educational degree held

Source Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. See Appendix A, List of indicators

# APPENDIX C

## POPULATION PROFILES

**Table 11 Indigenous women, selected gender equality indicators**

|   | Indigenous population |          | Non-Indigenous population |          |
|---|-----------------------|----------|---------------------------|----------|
|   | Men                   | Women    | Men                       | Women    |
| <b>Economic participation and security</b>  |                       |          |                           |          |
| Employment rate (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)   | 70.4                  | 67.5     | 78.6                      | 72.9     |
| Percentage in low income*, 2020 (%)   | 18.1                  | 19.5     | 10.1                      | 11.2     |
| Median market income (16+ yrs), 2021 (\$)   | \$39,600              | \$27,100 | \$44,700                  | \$30,600 |
| <b>Educational attainment**</b>   |                       |          |                           |          |
| Percentage of college, CEGEP or apprenticeship graduates (25-64 yrs), 2021 (%)        | 35.4                  | 37.1     | 34.7                      | 33.7     |
| Percentage of university graduates Bachelor's degree and above (25-64 yrs), 2021 (%)  | 9.0                   | 16.4     | 30.4                      | 37.1     |
| Percentage of post-secondary graduates with STEM qualifications (25-64 yrs), 2021 (%) | 18.6                  | 6.1      | 30.1                      | 12.0     |
| <b>Leadership and political empowerment</b>   |                       |          |                           |          |
| Percentage of employed in all management occupations (15+ yrs), 2022 (%)              | 7.2                   | 5.8      | 11.6                      | 7.0      |
| Share of First Nations Council members, 2019 (%)***                                   | 48.7                  | 27.4     |                           |          |
| Percentage of self-employed (15+ yrs), 2021 (%)                                       | 11.2                  | 8.7      | 17.3                      | 11.7     |
| <b>Health (updates forthcoming)</b>   |                       |          |                           |          |
| Percentage reporting "very good" or "excellent" health (15+ yrs), 2017 (%)            | 49.4                  | 46.1     |                           |          |
| Percentage reporting "very good" or "excellent" mental health (15+ yrs), 2017 (%)     | 57.9                  | 49.3     |                           |          |
| <b>Personal security (updates forthcoming)</b>  |                       |          |                           |          |
| Self-reported sexual assault victimization since age 15 (15+ yrs), 2018               | 12.3                  | 43.2     | 8.1                       | 29.9     |
| Self-reported physical assault victimization since age 15 (15+ yrs), 2018             | 53.6                  | 42.7     | 32.7                      | 25.6     |
| Intimate partner violence in the past 12 months (15+ yrs), by Indigenous status, 2018 |                       | 16.8     |                           | 11.9     |

\* Low Income Measure (After-Tax). Total low income figures for population aged 16+ years in 2021: 18.1% for Indigenous Peoples; 10.6% for non-Indigenous people (CIS)

\*\* Highest educational degree held

\*\*\* First Nations Council members. 23.9% of respondents sex not reported.

Sources Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0365-01; Table 11-10-0091-01; Table 98-10-0413-01; Table 98-10-0416-01; Table 14-10-0104-01; Table 41-10-0048-01; Table 41-10-0020-01; Table 41-10-0021-01; Table 35-10-0168-01; Indigenous Population Profile—2021

**Table 12 Racialized women, selected gender equality indicators**

|   | Racialized population |          | Non-Racialized population |          |
|---|-----------------------|----------|---------------------------|----------|
|   | Men                   | Women    | Men                       | Women    |
| <b>Economic participation and security</b>  |                       |          |                           |          |
| Employment rate (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)   | 76.9                  | 69.3     | 79.3                      | 74.6     |
| Percentage in low income*, 2020 (%)   | 12.8                  | 13.4     | 9.6                       | 11       |
| Median market income (16+ yrs), 2021 (\$)   | \$37,600              | \$27,600 | \$47,100                  | \$31,400 |
| <b>Educational attainment**</b>   |                       |          |                           |          |
| Percentage of college, CEGEP or apprenticeship graduates (25-64 yrs), 2021 (%)            | 24.0                  | 25.3     | 38.6                      | 37.1     |
| Percentage of university graduates Bachelor's degree and above (25-64 yrs), 2021 (%)      | 46.5                  | 48.4     | 23.4                      | 31.3     |
| Percentage of post-secondary graduates with STEM qualifications (25-64 yrs), 2021 (%)     | 28.7                  | 15.6     | 23.8                      | 6.1      |
| <b>Leadership and political empowerment</b>   |                       |          |                           |          |
| Percentage of employed in senior management occupations (15-64 yrs), 2021 (%)             | 0.9                   | 0.4      | 1.9                       | 0.9      |
| <b>Health</b>   |                       |          |                           |          |
| Percentage reporting "very good" or "excellent" health (12+ yrs), 2019-20 (%)             |                       | 65.8     |                           | 61.7     |
| Percentage reporting "quite a lot" or "extremely" high life stress (12+ yrs), 2019-20 (%) |                       | 17.3     |                           | 21.4     |
| <b>Personal security (updates forthcoming)</b>  |                       |          |                           |          |
| Self-reported sexual assault victimization since age 15 (15+ yrs), 2018                   | 5.9                   | 18.8     | 9.0                       | 33.3     |
| Intimate partner violence in the past 12 months, by racial status (15+ yrs), 2018         |                       | 9.2      |                           | 12.9     |

\* Low Income Measure (After-Tax)

\*\* Highest educational degree held

Sources Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey Supplement, custom tabulation; Table 98-10-0332-01; Table 11-10-0091-01; Table 98-10-0429-01; Table 98-10-0435-01; Table 98-10-0330-01; Table 13-10-0842-01; Table 35-10-0166-01.

**Table 13 Women with disabilities, selected gender equality indicators**

|   | People with disabilities |          | People without disabilities |          |
|---|--------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|----------|
|   | Men                      | Women    | Men                         | Women    |
| <b>Economic participation and security</b>  |                          |          |                             |          |
| Employment rate (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)   | 65.5                     | 64.9     | 83.7                        | 76.2     |
| Percentage in low income (16+ yrs)*, 2021 (%)   | 15.1                     | 17.6     | 7.9                         | 9.4      |
| Median employment income (16+ yrs), 2021 (\$)   | \$35,600                 | \$29,000 | \$49,400                    | \$34,400 |
| <b>Educational attainment** (updates forthcoming)</b>                                 |                          |          |                             |          |
| Percentage of college, CEGEP or apprenticeship graduates (25-64 yrs), 2017 (%)        | 33.7                     | 34.4     | 34.5                        | 31.7     |
| Percentage of university graduates Bachelor's degree and above (25-64 yrs), 2017 (%)  | 16.9                     | 24.3     | 31.3                        | 37.2     |
| <b>Leadership and political empowerment (updates forthcoming)</b>                     |                          |          |                             |          |
| Percentage employed in all management occupations (25-64 yrs), 2017 (%)               | 10.6                     | 8.7      | 14.7                        | 10.2     |
| <b>Personal security (updates forthcoming)</b>  |                          |          |                             |          |
| Self-reported sexual assault victimization since age 15 (15+ yrs), 2018               | 12.8                     | 39.2     | 6.2                         | 24.4     |
| Intimate partner violence in the past 12 months, by disability status (15+ yrs), 2018 |                          | 16.3     |                             | 9.6      |

\* Low Income Measure (After-Tax)

\*\* Highest educational degree held

Sources Statistics Canada, Labour market characteristics of persons with and without disabilities in 2022; Table 11-10-0088-01; Table 13-10-0378-01; Table 13-10-0752-01; Table 35-10-0166-01.

**Table 14 Immigrant women, selected gender equality indicators**

|   | Immigrant population |          | New immigrant population (2011-21) |          | Canadian-born population |          |
|---|----------------------|----------|------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------|----------|
|   | Men                  | Women    | Men                                | Women    | Men                      | Women    |
| <b>Economic participation and security</b>  |                      |          |                                    |          |                          |          |
| Employment rate (15-64 yrs), 2022 (%)   | 81.8                 | 70.5     | 80.9                               | 67.8     | 76.8                     | 72.9     |
| Percentage in low income*, 2020 (%)   | 11.3                 | 12.7     | 12.1                               | 13.2     | 9.5                      | 10.6     |
| Median market income (16+ yrs), 2021 (\$)   | \$42,300             | \$28,000 | \$40,600                           | \$24,500 | \$45,900                 | \$31,500 |
| <b>Educational attainment**</b>   |                      |          |                                    |          |                          |          |
| Percentage of college, CEGEP or apprenticeship graduates (25-54 yrs), 2022 (%)            | 26.0                 | 27.2     | 22.1                               | 21.3     | 40.7                     | 39.5     |
| Percentage of university graduates (25-54 yrs), 2022 (%)                                  | 52.4                 | 54.3     | 61.6                               | 63.9     | 27.2                     | 38.8     |
| Percentage of post-secondary graduates with STEM qualifications (25-64 yrs), 2021 (%)     | 28.7                 | 13.0     |                                    |          | 14.6                     | 5.7      |
| <b>Leadership and political empowerment</b>   |                      |          |                                    |          |                          |          |
| Percentage employed in senior management occupations (15-64 yrs), 2021 (%)                | 1.3                  | 0.6      | 0.8                                | 0.3      | 1.8                      | 0.9      |
| <b>Health</b>   |                      |          |                                    |          |                          |          |
| Percentage reporting "very good" or "excellent" health (12+ yrs), 2019-20 (%)             |                      | 61.4     |                                    | 72.1     |                          | 62.6     |
| Percentage reporting "quite a lot" or "extremely" high life stress (12+ yrs), 2019-20 (%) |                      | 17.2     |                                    | 17.4     |                          | 21.5     |
| <b>Personal security</b>  |                      |          |                                    |          |                          |          |
| Self-reported sexual assault victimization since age 15 (15+ yrs), 2018                   | 6.0                  | 19.7     |                                    |          | 9.1                      | 33.6     |
| Intimate partner violence in the past 12 months, by immigrant status (15+ yrs), 2018      |                      | 8        |                                    |          |                          | 12       |

\* Low Income Measure (After-Tax). Total low income figures for population aged 16+ years in 2021: 10.7% immigrants; immigrant 10 years or less 10.9%; Canadian-born 10.3% (CIS).

\*\* Highest educational degree held

Source Labour Force Survey, 2022, Public Use Microdata File; Table 98-10-0314-01; Table 11-10-0091-01; Table 14-10-0087-01; Table 98-10-0435-01; Table 98-10-0585-01; Table 13-10-0842-01; Table 35-10-0166-01.



# APPENDIX D

## EMPLOYMENT TRENDS AMONG WORKERS AGED 16-64 YEARS FOR DIFFERENT POPULATION GROUPS, 2019 AND 2022

Table 15 **Employment rates by immigration status, racialized status and gender**

|  | Male workers |      | Female workers |      |
|--|--------------|------|----------------|------|
|  | 2019         | 2022 | 2019           | 2022 |
| <b>Racialized status</b>                 |              |      |                |      |
| Racialized population (15-64 years)      |              | 76.9 |                | 69.3 |
| Youth (15-24 years)                      |              | 49.0 |                | 53.0 |
| Core aged (25-54 years)                  |              | 86.8 |                | 76.4 |
| Older (55-64 years)                      |              | 75.7 |                | 59.9 |
| Non-racialized population* (15-64 years) |              | 79.3 |                | 74.6 |
| Youth (15-24 years)                      |              | 62.0 |                | 64.1 |
| Core aged (25-54 years)                  |              | 89.0 |                | 84.2 |
| Older (55-64 years)                      |              | 67.2 |                | 58.2 |
| <b>Immigration status (15-64 years)</b>  |              |      |                |      |
| Landed immigrants                        | 81.0         | 81.8 | 68.5           | 70.5 |
| Landed 10 or < yrs earlier               | 79.3         | 80.9 | 62.2           | 67.8 |
| Landed > than 10 years earlier           | 81.0         | 82.3 | 71.8           | 71.9 |
| Born in Canada                           | 76.1         | 76.8 | 72.9           | 72.9 |

\* Non-racialized and non-Indigenous population.

Source: Statistics Canada. Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey Supplement, custom tabulation; Labour Force Survey, Public Use Microdata File.

**Table 16 Employment rates by Indigenous status, disability status and gender**

|  | Male workers |      | Female workers |      |
|--|--------------|------|----------------|------|
|  | 2019         | 2022 | 2019           | 2022 |
| <b>Indigenous status</b>                   |              |      |                |      |
| Indigenous population (15-64 years)        | 65.4         | 70.4 | 61.5           | 67.5 |
| First Nations                              | 60.1         | 66.0 | 57.1           | 62.5 |
| Métis                                      | 70.6         | 75.1 | 66.2           | 72.3 |
| Non-Indigenous population (15-64 years)    | 77.9         | 78.6 | 72.0           | 72.9 |
| <b>Disability Status</b>                   |              |      |                |      |
| Persons with disabilities (16-64 years)    |              | 65.5 |                | 64.9 |
| Youth (16-24 years)                        |              | 47.8 |                | 59.9 |
| Core aged (25-54 years)                    |              | 74.4 |                | 73.4 |
| Older (55-64 years)                        |              | 56.0 |                | 46.9 |
| Persons without disabilities (16-64 years) |              | 83.7 |                | 76.2 |
| Youth (16-24 years)                        |              | 64.3 |                | 63.7 |
| Core aged (25-54 years)                    |              | 92.7 |                | 83.9 |
| Older (55-64 years)                        |              | 72.8 |                | 63.3 |

**Source** Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0365-01—Labour force characteristics by region and detailed Indigenous group. Statistics Canada, Labour market characteristics of persons with and without disabilities in 2022: Results from the Labour Force Survey, The Daily, August 30, 2023.

# NOTES

- 1 Katherine Scott, 2021, [Women, Work and COVID-19: Priorities for supporting women and the economy](#), Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.
- 2 This research report uses an inclusive definition of women that embraces women, queer women, trans women and gender-diverse people.
- 3 For a discussion of gender and measurement in Canada, see the forthcoming book: *Counting Matters Policy, Practice, and the Limits of Gender Equality Measurement in Canada*, edited by Christina Gabriel and Pauline Rankin, University of British Columbia Press, forthcoming.
- 4 See Stephanie Paterson and Francesca Scala for a discussion of the use and abuse of “data” in the practice of feminist government. “Feminist government or governance feminism? Exploring feminist policy analysis in the Trudeau Era,” in *Turbulent Time, Transformational Possibilities? Gender and politics today and tomorrow*, Fiona Macdonald and Alexandra Dobrowolsky, eds. University of Toronto Press, 2020.
- 5 World Economic Forum, 2023, [Global Gender Gap Report 2023](#).
- 6 Katherine Scott, 2019, [The Best and Worst Place to be a Woman in Canada 2019](#), Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. All of the *Best and Worst* reports, which are now discontinued, are available here: <https://policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/making-women-count>.
- 7 Katherine Scott, 2022, [A Bumpy Ride: Tracking women's economic recovery amid the pandemic](#), Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.
- 8 Katherine Scott, 2022, [“New national action plan to end gender-based violence falls short,”](#) *The Monitor*, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.
- 9 According to Statistics Canada, there was a 64-per-cent rise in crimes against members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community in 2021. Almost half of the hate crimes reported were “violent,” including assault, harassment and uttering threats. Maria Wolff and Mike Hager, March 23, 2023, [“Police-reported hate crimes jumped a record 27% from 2020 to 2021: Statscan,”](#) *The Globe and Mail*.
- 10 In fall 2022, over one-third (35 per cent) of Canadians reported that it was difficult for their household to meet their financial needs in the previous 12 months. When asked whether their household had the resources to cover an unexpected expense of \$500, 26 per cent said that they would be unable to do so—29 per cent of women and 24 per cent of men. The vast majority of Canadians were concerned with rising gasoline and food prices; almost half (44 per cent) said they were very concerned with their household’s ability to afford housing or rent. The Daily, February 13, 2023, [“One in four Canadians are unable to cover an unexpected expense of \\$500,”](#) Statistics Canada.

**11** In the CCPA index, a weighted average score is generated for each province. For the purposes of this report, the average of the five weighted provincial scores in each domain is used to represent the national value, recognizing that these scores do not capture information about gender differences in the territories. The CCPA Gender Gap Index figures do not directly align with the WEF index's scores because of differences in the methodology, the data sets used, and the geographies included in the analysis. The emphasis in this report is on what the individual indicators can tell us about gender equality and what, taken together, the trend data suggest about progress in Canada and the different regions of the country.

**12** The Daily, July 27, 2023, "[Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2022](#)," Statistics Canada.

**13** Jim Stanford, January 14, 2020, "Canada experienced the biggest employment jump in 40 years in 2019—and now wages are going up too," *The Toronto Star*.

**14** Katherine Scott, 2021, [Women, Work and COVID-19: Priorities for supporting women and the economy](#), Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

**15** There was also a significant year-over year boost in temporary work among women in 2022, up by 9.2 per cent, compared to men, who experienced a decline.

**16** Higher rates of immigration are an important factor in shaping today's economy, offsetting, in part, the exit of the baby boom generation from the labour market. While the borders were closed for several months in 2020, immigration levels—including temporary foreign workers and international students—increased significantly in 2021 and 2022. The Daily, March 22, 2023, "[Canada's population estimates: Record-high population growth in 2022](#)," Statistics Canada.

**17** See: Ana Ferrer and Bessma Momani, 2020, "[The startling impact of COVID-19 on immigrant women in the workforce](#)," *Policy Options*. The employment gap between immigrant and Canadian-born women aged 25 to 54 years was 8.2 percentage points in 2022.

**18** Peter Zimonjic, April 28, 2022, "[Canada's working-age population is older than ever, StatsCan says](#)," *CBC News*.

**19** According to the 2021 census, among racialized women aged 15 years and older, nearly three-quarters (73 per cent) are immigrants to Canada. Of this group, 32 per cent immigrated to Canada within the last 10 years. Statistics Canada, Table 98-10-0308-01—Visible minority by immigrant status and period of immigration.

**20** We rely on the Canadian Income Survey to calculate employment income and low-income rates. The most recent information is available for 2021.

**21** James Orlando, 2022, [Filling the Job Vacancy Gap in Canada](#), TD Economics.

**22** This information relies on market income for all women aged 16 years and older, which includes employment income as well as net investment income, private retirement income, and other income.

**23** Statistics Canada, Table 11-10-0091-01—Average and median market, total and after-tax income of individuals by selected demographic characteristics.

**24** Statistics Canada, Table 11-10-0088-01—Income of individuals by disability status, age group, sex and income source.

**25** Statistics Canada, Table 11-10-0091-01—Average and median market, total and after-tax income of individuals by selected demographic characteristics.

**26** New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island bucked the trend. The overall rate of poverty in these provinces fell by 1.2 and 0.8 percentage points, respectively, driven largely by declines in men's rate of poverty.

**27** Ontario was the only province where the gap in women and men's poverty narrowed.

**28** Annual poverty rates by gender are not available publicly by Indigenous or immigration status.

**29** Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0332-01—Visible minority by individual low-income status and generation status.

- 30** Christoph Schimmele, Feng Hou and Max Stick, 2023, [Poverty among racialized groups across generations](#), Statistics Canada, Economic and Social Reports, Catalogue no. 36-28-0001.
- 31** See: Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn, 2017, "The gender wage gap: Extent, trends and explanations," *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. 55, No. 3, pp. 789-865.
- 32** In 2021, government transfers made up an even larger share of women's total income than before the pandemic (20.8 per cent vs. 18.1 per cent). Statistics Canada, Table 11-10-0239-01—Income of individuals by age group, sex and income source, Canada, provinces and selected census metropolitan areas.
- 33** Katherine Scott, 2022, "[The crisis in the care economy shows no sign of letting up](#)," *The Monitor*, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.
- 34** Statistics Canada, 2020, "[Education Indicators in Canada: An International Perspective 2022](#)," *Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics*, Catalogue no. 81-604-X. See also: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 81-582-X, [Report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program, March 2023](#).
- 35** Katherine Wall, 2021, "[Gendered impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the proportion of youth neither in employment nor education at the start of the school year](#)," *Insights on Canadian Society*, Catalogue no. 75-006-X.
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