

State of the **INNER CITY**



drawing on our strengths

**Drawing on Our Strengths:
State of the Inner City Report 2015**

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"High and Rising Revisited: Changes in Poverty and Related Inner City Characteristics 1996 to 2011" by Darren Lezubski and Jim Silver

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"Indigenous and Newcomer young people's experiences of employment and unemployment" by Keely Ten Fingers

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"Beneath the Surface and Beyond the Present, Gains in Fighting Poverty in Winnipeg" by Jim Silver

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TABLE 1 State of the Inner City Reports 2005 – 2014

Date	Reports	Topics
2005	<i>The Promise of Investment in Community-Led Renewal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describing inner city - Statistical overview - Housing, employment development and education • A view from the neighbourhoods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comparative analysis of Spence, Centennial and Lord Selkirk Park
2006	<i>Inner City Voices: Community-Based Solutions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A portrait of West Broadway and North Point Douglas • Inner City Refugee Women: Lessons for Public Policy • Bridging the Community-Police Divide: Safety and Security in Winnipeg's Inner City
2007	<i>Step by Step: Stories of Change in Winnipeg's Inner City</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building a Community of Opportunity and Hope: Lord Selkirk Park Housing Developments • Costing an Ounce of Prevention: The Fiscal Benefits of Investing in Inner City Preventive Strategies (cost to themselves and society of young women entering the street sex trade) • Is Participation Having an Impact? (how do we measure progress in Winnipeg's Inner City? A participatory approach to understanding outcomes)
2008	<i>Putting Our Housing in Order</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, people and Winnipeg's inner city • Voicing housing experiences in inner city Winnipeg • From revitalization to revaluation in the Spence neighbourhood • Homeownership for low-income households: outcomes for families and communities
2009	<i>It Takes All Day to be Poor</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven individuals document their experiences living on a low income budget • Tracking poverty in Winnipeg's inner city 1996 – 2006 (analysis of census data) • Lord Selkirk Park: Rebuilding from Within (how community and government can work together to make change for the better)
2010	<i>We're in it for the Long Haul</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Together we have CLOUT: model of service delivery and analysis of "the Just City" • Early Childhood Education and Care in the Inner City and Beyond: Addressing the Inequalities Facing Winnipeg's Aboriginal children • Squeezed Out: The impact of rising rents and condo conversions on inner city neighbourhoods
2011	<i>Neo-Liberalism: What a Difference a Theory Makes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manitoba's Employment and Income Assistance Program: Exploring the Policy Impacts on Winnipeg's inner city • Housing for People, Not Markets: Neoliberalism and housing in Winnipeg's inner city • Policy and the Unique Needs of Aboriginal Second-Chance Learners
2012	<i>Breaking barriers, building bridges</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who's accountable to the community? (two way accountability government to community-based organizations) • Fixing our divided city: Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth, inner city and non-inner city and Aboriginal Elders' dialogue on breaking down barriers
2013	<i>A Youth Lens on Poverty</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature of youth & poverty: safety, housing and education • Youth photovoice
2014	<i>Community, Research and Social Change</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Its more than a collection of stories", looking back on 10 years of State of the Inner City Reports and investment in inner city • Community-based supports and the child welfare system

Drawing on Our Strengths in 2015: Introduction

By Molly McCracken, with Angela Myran and Alex Gachanja

This year's State of the Inner City Report is comprised of three chapters. Together they suggest strongly that, while a great many poverty-related problems remain, there are many strengths. Efforts in recent years by the inner city community together with public investment are gradually beginning to produce positive results.

The long decline in inner city population has been stemmed and population is growing in many inner city neighbourhoods. Levels of educational attainment are improving. Labour force characteristics, especially unemployment and labour force participation rates, have shown improvements. The incidence of poverty has dropped more in Winnipeg's inner city than has been the case in the non-inner city, from 47.4 percent in 1996 to 29.8 percent in 2011 (Lezubski and Silver 2015). Poverty rates are still much too high: double the percentage in the rest of the city. However, progress is being made.

Therefore it is especially important that programs that have been working continue and we continue to invest in strategies that are working.

Past State of the Inner City Reports have documented what community practitioners see first hand, every day: comprehensive, holistic & integrated responses are needed to get at the depth of spatially concentrated poverty in Winnipeg's

inner city. These responses are challenged, however, by pervasive neoliberal thinking that takes an individualistic, short-term, market-based approach to poverty reduction. Past State of the Inner City Reports such as *We're in it for the Long Haul* (2010), *Neoliberalism: what a difference a policy makes* (2011), *Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges* (2012), *Youth Lens on Poverty* (2013) and *Community, Research, Social Change* (2014)— have found that poverty reduction efforts must be long-term, holistic and comprehensive. This year's State of the Inner City Report shows that such efforts are producing positive results.

There is a growing positive energy in the inner city; community-led development plus public investment are making a difference. On any given night in the inner city there are multiple events, from meetings to address safety concerns to basketball programs run by community organizations; from organizations working to create and improve low-income housing to those planning strategies for greening their neighbourhoods. Local leaders work tirelessly to raise issues, engage in dialogue and advance common priorities.

Some of the most exciting work is being led by young Indigenous leaders following in the footsteps of those before them and finding

new and exciting ways to build better futures. This is not to say that problems are solved; far from it — many persistent and systemic challenges remain. But residents and organizations continue to come together to address the challenges of poverty.

This was exemplified when, as a response to Mayor Brian Bowman's summit on racism with its entrance fee of \$50 per person, a group of leaders from Aboriginal Youth Opportunities (AYO) held an open space racial inclusion forum, "Our Summit Winnipeg," at Oondena Circle at the Forks to break down barriers, build understanding and move toward reconciliation. This work continues with the creation of the 13 Fires Conversation Series. Winnipeg is fortunate to be able to benefit from the constructive and inclusive dialogue initiated by AYO. Many other community-based organizations are making similarly important contributions to positive change in Winnipeg's inner city. Racism and poverty will not end overnight. Unpacking assumptions, building understanding and healing the divide take time. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Manitoba acknowledges AYO and the many community leaders, volunteers and people who, in their daily lives, challenge discriminatory assumptions and inspire change.

Creative activism and community development responses emerge in the face of systemic barriers to citizens' full participation in all sectors of our society. Manitoba's economy is doing well compared to elsewhere in Canada, with the lowest unemployment rate in the country at the end of 2015 (Statistics Canada 2015). But these benefits are not equally shared.

We hear this every year when we meet with community-based organizations in the inner city frustrated by systemic barriers. This year, we met just after the *MacLean's* article, "Welcome to Winnipeg: where Canada's Racism Problem is at Its Worst," had been released (MacDonald 2015). The article explained to Canadians what many inner city Winnipeg leaders and residents

have known for years: that systemic racism is a profound and persistent problem.

One community leader at the meeting asked all assembled to line up in a continuum of privilege. The white men were placed at the top of the line, then the white women, the ethno-racial men and women, the Indigenous men and lastly Indigenous women. It was a humbling experience for some of our group of colleagues in the line, each representing a different population on the scale of power and privilege. This exercise illustrated on a very personal level the story statistics have long shown us, with privilege comes access to power and resources.

Racialization is the process by which social meaning is attached to perceived physical differences, and the political and economic forces that support and reinforce these perceptions (Henry and Tator 2009). We see clearly how racialization manifests itself in Winnipeg, with much higher numbers of Indigenous and ethno-racial Newcomer groups living in poverty. This racialized poverty intersects with gendered poverty, ability, sexual orientation and age.

Poverty rates are highest and most persistent amongst the Indigenous population. In 2011, 49 percent of Indigenous people lived below the poverty line in the inner city (Lezubski and Silver 2015). It is Winnipeg's shame that Indigenous people who lived on this land for thousands of years before colonization experience the highest rates of poverty in our community. Indigenous people continue to draw on their strengths and lead the change that needs to happen; change that is our collective responsibility. 2015 is a pivotal year in this positive change, with the release of *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Justice Murray Sinclair calls on us to remember the past, honour the stories of survivors and move forward together in pursuit of reconciliation.

An important tool to understand the interconnections between Indigenous people, coloni-

zation, poverty, education and the labour force is *Decolonizing Employment: Aboriginal Inclusion in Canada's Labour Market*, a pivotal new book by Shauna MacKinnon, one of the founders of the State of the Inner City Report series. MacKinnon's research uses Manitoba and inner city Winnipeg as a case study to examine the damaging effects of colonial and neoliberal policies (2015). She concludes that a fundamental shift is required, based in long-term financial support for comprehensive, holistic education and training that includes cultural reclamation and small supportive learning environments along with supports to transition into the labour force (MacKinnon 2015). Policy makers, educators and employers must better understand how to respond to Aboriginal people, which includes recognizing past mistakes, integrating decolonization approaches and adequately resourcing reconciliation efforts (MacKinnon 2015).

As a result of racialization, Newcomers also face barriers to social inclusion and high levels of poverty. The poverty rate for recent immigrants in the inner city was 36.6 percent in 2011 (Lezubski and Silver 2015). Manitoba's strong focus on immigration has meant that the number of newcomers has increased, especially in the inner city where many settlement agencies are located and housing is less expensive than in suburban neighbourhoods. Newcomers face many of the same challenges that Indigenous people, albeit for different reasons.

Statistically, Newcomers often lag behind in employment and earnings, and recent immigrants have a 20 percent lower rate of labour force participation (Lahouraria. 2011).¹ This can be attributed in part to factors such as language ability, social networks, and level of education. But even when controlling for the same levels of education, work experience, skills and qualifications, ethno-racial immigrants experience higher rates of unemployment and lower incomes (Yan

et al 2012). Credentials from other countries are not recognized or are devalued, requiring additional years of education at personal financial cost. In addition, recent immigrants face the "catch 22" of the Canadian experience rule: you must have Canadian experience to obtain a job; but you need a job to obtain Canadian experience (Foster 1998).

Indigenous people and Newcomers are very different but both are more at risk of living below the poverty line than the rest of the population (second generation ethno-racialized and white people). The community-based organizations guiding this year's State of the Inner City Report wanted us to identify and describe the systemic barriers that Indigenous people and Newcomers face in trying to find employment. Finding a job is not necessarily a ticket out of poverty, but is a key indicator of well-being. There are many things that need to be in place to enable any paid work, and not to mention a good job. Education, life skills, child care, housing, transport, and if there are addictions or mental health issues they must be managed.

In "Indigenous and Newcomer Experiences of Employment and Unemployment," researcher Keely Ten Fingers spoke to 46 Indigenous and Newcomer young adults. Her description of their experiences represents a sampling of what young racialized people in Winnipeg's inner city experience on a daily basis. These young adults want to participate in the labour force and land a good job that provides for themselves and their families. But they face formidable barriers, most notably systemic racism and discrimination.

Many participants referenced working in or attempting to find work in precarious jobs. These low-paying and often part-time jobs typically do not provide benefits or job security, are not unionized and do not offer opportunities for advancement. The global shift over the past forty years towards the supply of precarious work

¹ Thanks to Alex Gachanja for undertaking a literature review that is the basis of this section.

Our Project Partners All Support Youth and Young Adults in Different Ways

Supporting Employment and Economic Development (SEED) Winnipeg

SEED Winnipeg offers a variety of programs on financial literacy. Two in particular are offered to young people. *Money stories: grounding Aboriginal youth in the stories of their elders* is a partnership between SEED, Children of the Earth High School and the Aboriginal Senior's Resource Centre. The program brings money management to youth through the lens of traditional cultural teachings. Participants are supported by Elders, Junior Facilitators, and SEED facilitators to learn budgeting, record-keeping, community economic development, credit, banking and more. Junior Facilitators are program graduates from the youth program who are provided with training and supported job opportunities facilitating money management training, developing program offerings for other youth and providing administrative support at SEED.

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre — Future is Yours

The Future is Yours program empowers Aboriginal youth with skills that can be applied within their personal lives and employment careers. Aboriginal culture is explored with a focus on building participants identity and self-confidence. The program offers opportunities for workplace skills training and connects participants with volunteer experience in their areas of interest. Last intake, the Future is Yours program had over 141 applicants for 15 available spaces. The Future is Yours program is part of a continuum of services offered at Ma Mawi from infants all the way to adulthood. The program is funded by the City of Winnipeg's Oshki Anishinabe Nigaaniwak Aboriginal Youth Strategy.

Community Education Development Association — Pathways to Education

CEDA-pathways to education program supports students to complete their high school education, move into post secondary education or training and ultimately a successful career. A holistic medicine wheel approach is used and supports students with advocacy, academic and basic needs such as transportation. Students have opportunities for mentorship and job experience. As well, students are supported one-one with a parent support worker. CEDA Pathways also offers job opportunities to senior students as youth mentors. They are funded by the province of Manitoba, Pathways Canada and a number of other sources

Community Unemployed Help Centre

Community Unemployment Help Center provides free services to individuals in the area of information and advocacy, especially related to Employment Insurance (EI) and Employment and Income Assistance (EIA). In addition, counseling and referrals are made for individuals that seek these services. The Community Unemployment Help Centre not only assists individuals, but also addresses systemic issues through social policy analysis and the public interest law. They receive core funding from the province of Manitoba, United Way of Winnipeg and The Manitoba Law Foundation.

restricts options available to young people, and if they are Indigenous or Newcomers they face barriers to securing these types of jobs.

This research does not focus on the number or quality of jobs available for such young workers, but we know that good jobs are increasingly difficult to find. Globalization, technological changes, outsourcing all lead to the replacement of good, unionized, permanent, high-paying jobs with part-time, temporary positions to cut

down on costs (Marquardt 1998, Galabuz 2006, Silver 2014).

A survey of 4,000 workers in Toronto, for example, found that as many as 44 percent of working adults are in jobs with some degree of precarity, with racialized Indigenous and ethno-racial groups facing even higher rates of job precarity than white men and women (Pepso, 2013:7).

Young people experience higher rates of unemployment and poverty than the general pop-

ulation. The unemployment rate for the general adult population in Manitoba is 5.3 percent, but for the youth population aged 15–24 it is double this, at 10.7 percent (Statistics Canada 2015). The youth unemployment rate in the inner city was 11.9% in 2006, more current data is unavailable (Lezubski and Silver 2015). For most youth, entry into the labour market begins with a “student job”, particularly in service industries (Marquardt 1998:71). Youth unemployment has traditionally been less of a policy priority as it’s assumed that young people are will be pursuing post-secondary education (Marquardt 1998). However many of the young people that Keely Ten Fingers interviewed are supporting themselves and their families on low-wage precarious jobs and the cost of post-secondary education is a barrier to equipping young people with more skills in order to qualify for a better job.

Ten Fingers’ paper confirms what previous research has shown: that for young Indigenous and Newcomer people the transition from school to work is fraught with experiences of racism, discrimination and barriers. In response to these challenges, community-based organizations have developed innovative responses to support inner city people’s pursuit of education and employment. In the face of these barriers, we have a massive opportunity to invest further in this community-based expertise, and support young people to leverage good jobs. Innovative social enterprises offer supportive environments for training and employment for poverty-reduction and needed environmental goals (Fernandez 2015). Expansion of these enterprises through government procurement, combined with a Labour Market Intermediary to help multi-battered workers transition from training to work, would provide inner-city youth with the supports they need to succeed in the labour market (Bernas and MacKinnon, 2015).

We are grateful to the young people who shared their stories in this year’s State of the Inner City Report, to the community-based or-

ganizations who participated as members of the advisory committee and to the many community-based organizations who participate every year in guiding the research questions in the report. We have many strengths from which to draw, and together slowly we will end discrimination together, build understanding and allocate resources where they are needed to eliminate poverty in Winnipeg’s inner city.

What is especially exciting about this year’s State of the Inner City Report is that we are able to provide evidence that in at least some respects, and despite the many ongoing problems, gains are being made in Winnipeg’s inner city. The improvements are partial—much more remains to be done. But the fact that key indicators are improving suggests strongly that at least some of the things that are being done in Winnipeg’s inner city are working. In turn, if we increase public investment in the indicatives that are working, more vulnerable people can benefit.

The process of change in fighting the complex and racialized poverty that persists in Winnipeg’s inner city is necessarily a relatively slow and cumulative. But the evidence in this year’s State of the Inner City Report is that, slow though the process may be, positive change is underway.

We should continue on this path, and indeed, accelerate the process.

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High and Rising Revisited: Changes in Poverty and Related Inner City Characteristics 1996 to 2011

By Darren Lezubski and Jim Silver

In 2000 the two of us along with the late Errol Black published “High and Rising: The Growth of Poverty in Winnipeg” (Lezubski et al. 2000). We used 1996 Census of Canada data to determine the incidence and some of the characteristics of poverty in Winnipeg, and particularly Winnipeg’s inner city. We found that poverty rates were exceptionally high — shockingly so, in fact — especially but not only in the inner city, and especially but not only among Aboriginal people and single-parent households.

Based on that earlier study we concluded that the inner city was at a critical juncture. Data from the early 1970s to 1996 painted a picture of an inner city in crisis, with declining population, negative labour force trends and a dramatically high and rising incidence of poverty. We felt that immediate action was necessary, and that without such action conditions in the inner city would be likely to get even worse.

In this chapter of the *State of the Inner City Report 2015* we have revisited our earlier work, using custom Census data and 2011 National Household Survey data, so that the analysis that

follows is fifteen years after our initial study that used 1996 Census data. During that time many anti-poverty initiatives have been implemented, community-based organizations have flourished and the provincial government has made reasonably substantial investments in the inner city. We believe it is important to determine whether and to what extent these initiatives have affected poverty in Winnipeg’s inner city.

A Summary of Findings

Fifteen years later, what do the numbers say? In general we find that important gains are being made, but much work remains to be done.

Population

- Population growth in the inner city since 2001 has been the largest in over forty years;
- The immigrant population, particularly recent immigrants, has increased substantially in recent years after declining for a decade;

¹ Data used in this article are custom census and National Household Survey data purchased from Statistics Canada through the Community Data Program and the previous Census Data Consortium. These custom data make it possible to assemble quantitative information for unique geographical areas such as Winnipeg’s inner city and individual neighbourhoods.

- The inner city remains a relatively young population with a high concentration of children under four years of age;
- Middle-aged adults are among the fastest growing segment of the inner city population, while seniors are declining in number.

Families

- The steady increase in the percentage of lone-parent families in the inner city peaked in 2006;
- Male lone parents and common-law couples are the fastest growing families in the inner city.

Housing

- The number of home owners in the inner city has increased almost 10 percent;
- Housing overcrowding is twice as prevalent in the inner city as the non-inner city;
- Over the past twenty years the proportion of inner city dwellings requiring major repairs has climbed steadily;
- Over the past decade the average monthly shelter cost increased by 4 percent for home owners, and almost 10 percent for renters in the inner city.

Education

- Improvements in levels of educational attainment are evident, but the proportion of inner city adults with less than a high school diploma is double the proportion in the non - inner city;
- More than 17,600 adults in the inner city have a university degree;
- While education levels have improved in general, trends are mixed for different population groups; for example, there was relatively little improvement among Aboriginal adults.

Labour Force

- The overall Aboriginal unemployment rate in the inner city has fallen substantially;
- Unemployment rates for inner city males and females have moved in opposite directions: male unemployment rates have risen; female unemployment rates have declined;
- The inner city labour force participation rate bottomed out in 1996, and since then has improved significantly.

Incomes

- Total incomes for males and females in the inner city are rising faster than in the non-inner city;
- While household incomes are growing faster in the inner city than the non-inner city, they remain low: inner city households have \$61.35 of income for every \$100 dollars of income in the non-inner city;
- Over the past decade female employment incomes in the inner city increased at twice the rate of inner city males.

Low Income (Poverty)

- Since 2001 low-income rates for inner city households based on the Low-Income-Cut-Offs (LICO) have fallen steadily. However, inner city low-income rates still remain more than double the non-inner city;
- Child poverty rates in the inner city appear to be declining, but remain exceedingly high, particularly for children under six years of age.

Overall, we conclude from these data that significant gains have been made over the fifteen-year period, particularly with respect to population, levels of educational attainment, labour force characteristics, employment income, and low-income or poverty measures.

It is important to note that because of the introduction of the National Household Survey

Long Form Census and National Household Survey

In June 2010 the Government of Canada chose to do away with the mandatory long form census and replace it with a voluntary National Household Survey (NHS). A mandatory census was still conducted in 2011 but it consisted of only ten questions. All remaining information was collected by the NHS.

The content of the NHS is similar to that of the 2006 Census long form questionnaire. However, due to the change from a mandatory to a voluntary survey, it is impossible to determine with certainty whether, and to what extent, differences between 2006 and 2011 are attributable to an actual change, or to non-response bias. This is a bias created in the data when non-respondents differ from respondents. In Manitoba, the unweighted response rate to the NHS was 69.1 percent, meaning almost one in three households did not participate.

The main quality indicator for the NHS is the global non-response rate (GNR). The GNR is a combined measure of total non-response and partial non-response (missing information on questionnaires that were returned). All data disseminated from the 2011 Census and 2011 National Household Survey are subject to suppression. Two different thresholds are used to determine whether data should be suppressed. For the Census, data are suppressed if the non-response rate is 25 percent or more, whereas for the National Household Survey the global non-response rate threshold for suppression is 50 percent or more.

Overall, the NHS has produced useful data at the national and provincial levels, but there are concerns that data quality becomes less reliable for smaller communities/geographical areas. This is unfortunate as many data users were dependent upon the long form Census as the main source to provide reliable small area data. What this means is that in some important respects, the 2011 National Household Survey data are not as good as what we had with the long form Census, and not as good as what we need to do proper analysis.

The newly-elected federal government recently announced a return to the long-form Census in 2016.

(NHS) in 2011, comparisons between 2011 NHS data and earlier Census data have to be used with caution. Throughout this chapter, data from the 1991 to 2006 Censuses are treated separately from 2011 data from the NHS, although for the sake of simplicity Census and NHS data are shown together in graphs.

Public Investment in the Inner City

Since about 2000, many positive anti-poverty initiatives have emerged from within Winnipeg's inner city. Most of these have been the work of inner city community-based organizations (CBOs), and the vast majority have been funded by the provincial government. For example, in 2000 the provincial government introduced their Neigh-

bourhoods Alive! Program, which now operates in six inner city areas (neighbourhoods and clusters of neighbourhoods) in Winnipeg, provides core funding to Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations, encourages citizen engagement and the development of neighbourhood-based housing and green plans, and promotes a multi-pronged approach to neighbourhood renewal (Wiebe 2014). Through Neighbourhoods Alive! the provincial government had invested some \$72 million to 2014 (Stewart and Williams 2015). The provincial government has supported innovative employment development initiatives such as BUILD and Manitoba Green Retrofit, which have been successful in moving significant numbers of inner city and especially Aboriginal people into the paid labour force (Bernas and Hamilton

2013). Significant amounts have been invested in social housing, much although not all of it in the inner city. This includes the building of 1500 units of social housing and another 1500 units of affordable housing since 2009 (Brandon 2015), and the very substantial investment in improvements to public housing complexes (Silver et al. 2015). Manitoba Housing's portfolio was described in 2009 as being "in terrible condition — reportedly among the worst in Canada" (Carter 2009: 42). The provincial government responded with an \$84 million investment in Manitoba Housing stock, and then an additional two-year plan (2009–2011) that invested another \$226 million in Manitoba Housing units, while Budget 2013 "promised another \$100 million per year over three years to restore and redevelop housing units in its portfolio, with an additional \$34 million per year to repair housing stock" (Brandon 2015: 191). In addition, the provincial government has regularly raised the minimum wage so that

it is now among the highest in Canada, and has more recently introduced the Rent Assist Program, which will produce significant benefits for low-income renters (Manitoba 2015). Substantial public investments have been made in effective alternative educational initiatives in low-income areas, such as the emergent North End Community Campus on Selkirk Avenue in Winnipeg's North End — that includes, among others, the University of Manitoba's Inner City Social Work Program, Urban Circle Training Centre, the University of Winnipeg's Department of Urban and Inner-City Studies and CEDA-Pathways to Education — and the redevelopment of the old Merchants Hotel into the educational and student housing complex to be called Merchants Corner (MacKinnon and Silver 2015). Significant public investment has been directed at the creation of more childcare spaces, and better conditions for childcare workers (McCracken and Prentice 2014). In addition, the provincial government endorsed

Note on Data and Geographic Boundaries

Throughout this chapter readers will see two population figures for the inner city. The figure 127,435 is from the 2011 Census. The second figure, 121,950, is the total inner city population based upon the 2011 National Household Survey. While admittedly a source of possible confusion, throughout this chapter both numbers are used. When Census variables such as age and family types are examined, the Census population total is used. When NHS variables such as labour force characteristics, income, education or particular population groups such as Aboriginal persons or visible minorities are examined, the NHS population figure is used.

A further point of possible confusion is the geographical boundary of the inner city. Between the release of 1996 and 2001 Census data, the geographical boundary of the inner city expanded to include three additional neighbourhoods: Luxton, Glenelm (formerly known as West Elmwood) and Chalmers.

Geographical boundaries change over time, and this must be recognized to ensure accurate interpretation of historical data. For readers who may wish to refer back to the original "High and Rising" chapter, it is important to note that data in that chapter refer to the previous (old) inner city boundary. Historical data cited in this chapter have been adjusted to reflect the current inner city boundary. This means that data for 1996 and earlier have been adjusted to include the three additional neighbourhoods noted above. For example, the previously published 1996 inner city population of 108,695 is amended to be an estimated 123,685 ($108,695 + 15,720 = 123,685$). The additional 15,720 population is based upon the neighbourhood population totals for Chalmers (9,810 people), Glenelm (3,250 people), and Luxton (2,660 people). Due to the practice of random rounding used by Statistics Canada, these revised totals are estimates and should be used as such.

many aspects of the community-based, anti-poverty plan, *The View from Here 2015: Manitobans call for a renewed poverty reduction plan* (Bernas 2015). These are positive initiatives. But have they had any impact in Winnipeg's inner city?

decades of decline, the inner city population is rebounding. It declined from 161,300 in 1971 to 119,670 in 2001, a loss of 41,630 people. At the same time the population of Winnipeg was growing from 535,220 to 619,545, a gain of 84,325 people. The inner city population as a proportion of Winnipeg's population dropped during this thirty-year period from 30.1 percent, to 19.3 percent. This dramatic outflow of people from the inner city is evidence of the deteriorating

Population Change

A starting point is to measure inner city population change since 1996. On this front, after

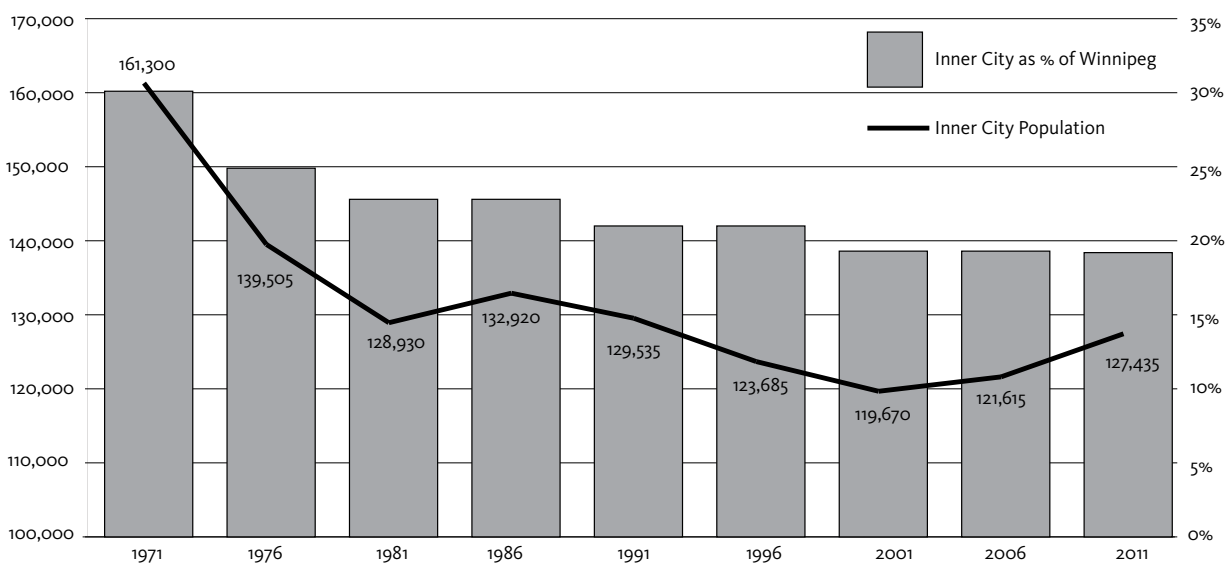
FIGURE 1 Inner City Population as Percentage of Total Winnipeg Population, 1971 to 2011

Year	Inner City	Winnipeg *	Inner City as % of Winnipeg
1971	161,300	535,220	30.1%
1976	139,500	560,880	24.9%
1981	128,930	564,465	22.8%
1986	132,920	594,555	22.4%
1991	129,535	616,790	21.0%
1996	123,685	618,475	20.0%
2001	119,670	619,545	19.3%
2006	121,615	633,455	19.2%
2011	127,435	663,615	19.2%

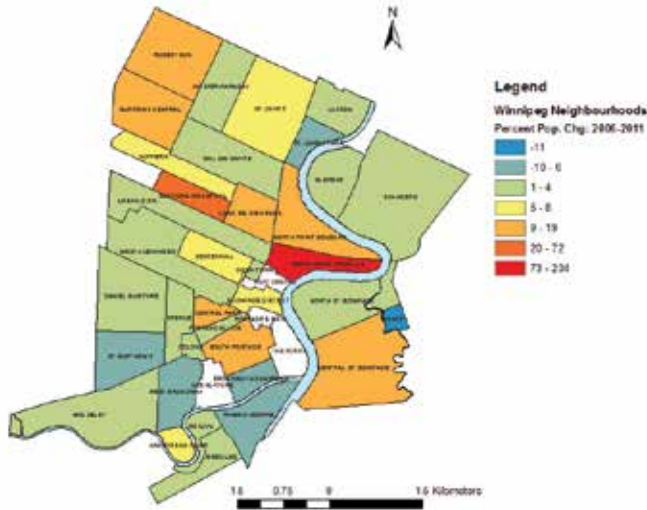
* Winnipeg total refers to the Census subdivision (CSD)

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, various years. Inner city population figures reflect current Inner City boundary.

FIGURE 2 Total Inner city Population as Percentage of Winnipeg, 1971 to 2011

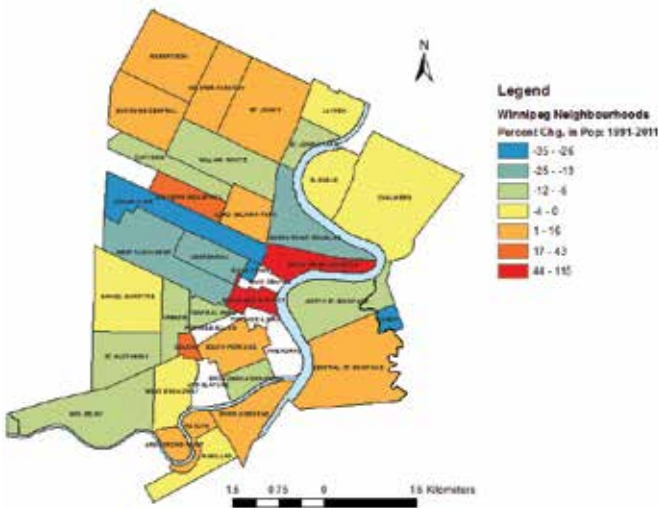


MAP 1 Percent Population Change by Neighbourhood in Winnipeg's Inner City: 2006–2011



SOURCE: Statistics Canada, custom tabulations of the Census of Population, various years. Mapping courtesy of Cynthia Dietz, U. of Manitoba Libraries.

MAP 2 Percent Population Change by Neighbourhood in Winnipeg's Inner City: 1991–2011



SOURCE: Statistics Canada, custom tabulations of the Census of Population, various years. Mapping courtesy of Cynthia Dietz, U. of Manitoba Libraries.

socio-economic and other conditions that prevailed in the inner city during the period from 1971 to 2001.

The 2011 population in the inner city was 127,435, a 4.7 percent increase from 2006. As a percentage of the overall Winnipeg population, the inner city has held steady for the past decade. This halt in population decline and slight upturn in population numbers is evidence, we believe, of improvement in inner city conditions since 2001.

The inner city includes thirty-nine neighbourhoods. From 1991 to 2011, fourteen saw overall population gains, with the largest percentage increases occurring in the Exchange District (114.6 percent increase), South Point Douglas (84.2 percent increase), and Dufferin Industrial (43.3 percent increase).

However, during the most recent five year period, 2006 to 2011, thirty-one of the thirty-nine inner city neighbourhoods saw population increases, with the largest percentage gains occurring in South Point Douglas (204.3 percent increase), Dufferin Industrial (72.0 percent increase), and North Point Douglas (19.1 percent increase). That most of the population growth has occurred in the most recent period suggests that positive change in the inner city is a slow, cumulative process.

Data for individual inner city neighbourhoods, listed in alphabetical order, are shown in Figure 13.

Composition of Population

In addition to overall population gains since 2001, considerable change has taken place in the composition of the inner city population, much of which appears to be driven by immigration.

Several population groups are examined in detail in this chapter. These include the Aboriginal population (based on identity), the visible minority population, immigrants and recent immigrants, and when data are available, persons

FIGURE 3 Inner City Neighbourhoods Showing Total Population, 1991 to 2011

Neighbourhood	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	% Change 2006 – 2011	% Change 1991 – 2011
Armstrong Point	360	365	400	360	385	6.9%	6.9%
Broadway – Assiniboine	5,340	5,405	5,445	5,080	4,975	-2.1%	-6.8%
Burrows Central	4,850	4,870	4,725	4,805	5,340	11.1%	10.1%
Centennial	2,740	2,210	2,385	2,225	2,335	4.9%	-14.8%
Central Park *	4,365	4,470	3,205	3,555	4,050	13.9%	-7.2%
Central St. Boniface	6,585	6,120	6,000	6,215	6,960	12.0%	5.7%
Chalmers	9,810	9,810	9,520	9,475	9,740	2.8%	-0.7%
China Town **	835	475	550	605	620	2.5%	-25.7%
Civic Centre	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	185	-	-
Colony	570	660	625	715	735	2.8%	28.9%
Daniel McIntyre	10,400	9,885	9,720	9,750	10,040	3.0%	-3.5%
Dufferin	2,370	2,130	1,755	2,090	2,215	6.0%	-6.5%
Dufferin Industrial	150	135	100	125	215	72.0%	43.3%
Exchange District ***	205	240	345	420	440	4.8%	114.6%
Glenelm ****	2,330	2,320	2,255	2,195	2,250	2.5%	-3.4%
Inkster – Faraday	4,070	4,095	3,965	4,135	4,250	2.8%	4.4%
Legislature	55	65	-	-	-	-	-
Logan – CPR	480	435	300	300	310	3.3%	-35.4%
Lord Selkirk Park	1,290	1,100	1,345	1,365	1,500	9.9%	16.3%
Luxton	2,710	2,660	2,575	2,565	2,660	3.7%	-1.8%
McMillan	3,630	3,760	3,540	3,420	3,525	3.1%	-2.9%
North Point Douglas	3,205	2,895	2,255	2,225	2,650	19.1%	-17.3%
North St. Boniface	1,935	1,865	1,880	1,775	1,840	3.7%	-4.9%
Portage – Ellice	n/a	n/a	860	1,105	1,115	0.9%	-
River-Osborne	4,540	4,615	4,710	4,880	4,780	-2.0%	5.3%
Robertson	4,120	4,050	4,125	4,205	4,620	9.9%	12.1%
Roslyn	4,170	4,255	4,190	4,145	4,210	1.6%	1.0%
South Point Douglas	380	395	175	230	700	204.3%	84.2%
South Portage	1,930	1,900	1,695	1,860	2,050	10.2%	6.2%
Spence	4,870	3,940	3,750	4,260	4,430	4.0%	-9.0%
St. John's	8,270	8,100	7,835	7,725	8,370	8.3%	1.2%
St. John's Park	610	585	555	575	555	-3.5%	-9.0%
St. Matthews	6,390	6,365	5,885	5,795	5,730	-1.1%	-10.3%
The Forks	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tissot	165	185	150	135	120	-11.1%	-27.3%
West Alexander	4,755	4,415	4,145	4,000	4,125	3.1%	-13.2%
West Broadway	5,455	5,190	5,040	5,325	5,330	0.1%	-2.3%
William Whyte	6,620	6,230	5,745	6,220	6,295	1.2%	-4.9%
Wolseley	8,140	8,165	7,830	7,610	7,725	1.5%	-5.1%

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, custom tabulations of the Census of Population, various years.

* Central Park (formerly North Portage); ** China Town (formerly Main Street North); *** Exchange District (formerly Old Financial District); **** Glenelm (formerly West Elmwood).

with a disability (activity limitation) and female lone-parent families.² More detailed analysis of the homeless or hard-to-house population would be useful, but the necessary data are not available. For several reasons discussion of particular population groups is limited to a fifteen-year window, from 1996 to 2011.³

Overall, the population groups examined comprise a large share of the inner city population, but the categories are not mutually exclusive. Recent immigrants, for example, are a subset of the immigrant population, and Aboriginal persons or visible minorities can also be included in the female lone-parent and persons with a disability counts. Individual group percentages cannot be summed to arrive at the overall population.

Over the past fifteen years visible minorities and Aboriginal people have steadily increased as a percentage of the inner city, and they are a higher proportion of the inner city population than of the non-inner city population. In 2011 immigrants accounted for 26 percent of the inner city population, and 40 percent of these were recent immigrants who arrived in Canada between 2006 and 2011. The data show an inner city characterized by more diversity.

Due to the introduction of the National Household Survey in 2011, analysis of the percentage

change of population groups is measured over two periods: 1996 to 2006, and 2006 to 2011. The findings indicate stark differences between the two periods, differences that may reflect problems with the NHS data. For example, the data suggest that between 2006 and 2011 the number of recent immigrants in the inner city increased by almost 60 percent, whereas the number of Aboriginal persons grew by less than 1 percent. In the previous decade, 1996 to 2006, the Aboriginal population in the inner city increased by almost 20 percent, whereas recent immigrants declined by close to 30 percent.

The data also suggest that the number of female lone parents in the inner city fell by almost 7 percent from 2006 to 2011. It is difficult to say with certainty whether these findings reflect how the population composition is really changing, or if the results are due to non-response bias in the NHS. However, 2011 family data that are based on the Census, not NHS, also show a declining number of female lone parents in the inner city. Total income data in constant 2010 dollars show female lone parents in the inner city saw their income drop by 5.3 percent between 2005 and 2010, while female lone parents in the non-inner city saw incomes climb by 1.8 percent. This may indicate that some “higher income” female lone parents are leaving the inner city.

²Detailed data for the immigrant population in 2006 are not available. The time period that defines “recent” for recent immigrants has changed over time. In 1996 “recent immigrant” referred to those who had arrived between 1986 and 1996, while the 2001 data refer to those who arrived between 1991 and 2001. Beginning in 2006 the data refer to a five-year time period, meaning 2006 recent immigrant data refer to those who arrived within the previous five years (2001 to 2006). The same five-year time frame is used for 2011 data. Readers should also note that according to Statistics Canada, the NHS data do not provide an accurate estimate of disability. Questions that ask about activity limitations on the NHS were intended as filter questions for a follow up survey, the Canadian Survey on Disability. As a result, it is essential that users of the NHS Activity Limitation (disability) data be aware that the data cannot be used as an accurate estimate of the population with a disability.

³In some cases the data have not been available at the inner city level until relatively recently. In other cases, earlier data are available but changes to how variables were defined affect the ability to correctly and accurately compare earlier data. For example, Statistics Canada defined and measured the visible minority population in a significantly different way prior to 1996. There was also a substantial change in Aboriginal data with Aboriginal identity as opposed to ancestry becoming the common method of counting the Aboriginal population. Data based on Aboriginal identity only became widely available starting with the 1996 Census.

FIGURE 4 Population Groups Showing Percentage of Inner City and Non-Inner City Population, 2011

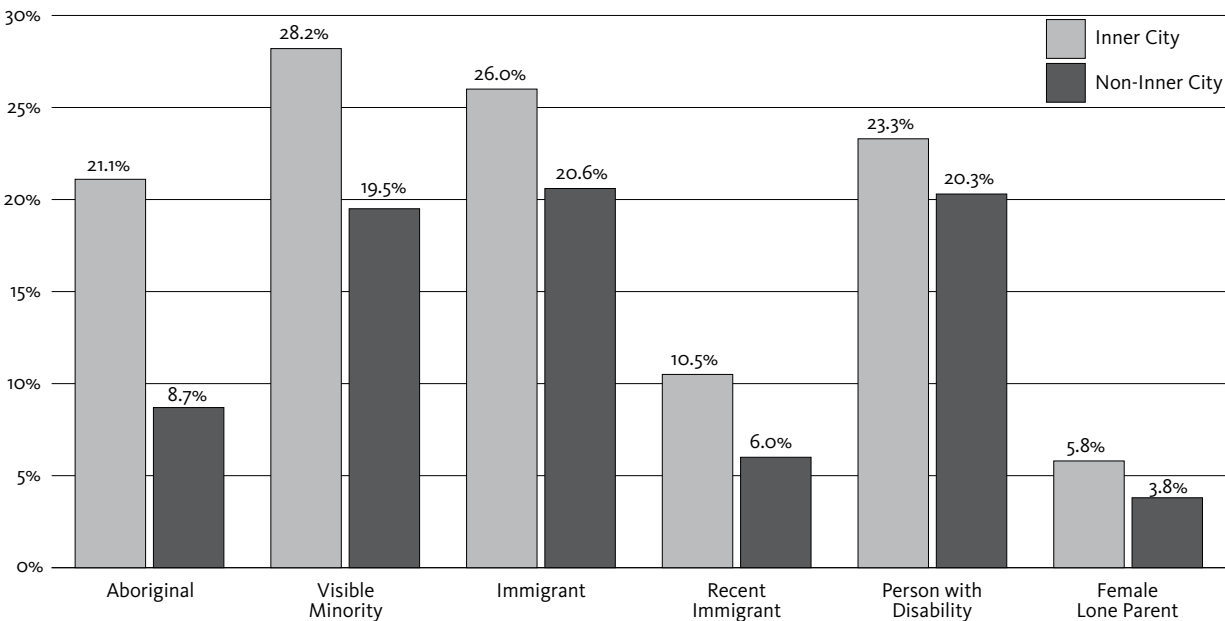


FIGURE 5 Median age for Select Population Groups, 2011

Population Group	Inner City	Non-Inner City	Winnipeg
Total population	35.4 years	39.9 years	39.0 years
Aboriginal	25.5 years	26.8 years	26.4 years
Visible minority	31.5 years	31.5 years	31.5 years
Immigrant	41.7 years	45.9 years	44.9 years
Recent Immigrant	29.9 years	30.6 years	30.4 years
Persons with disability	53.2 years	58.9 years	57.8 years
Female Lone Parent	41.2 years	46.7 years	45.5 years

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey, Semi - Custom Profile (custom geography), & Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey Target Group Profiles (custom geography).

Inner City GNR = (27.7%), Non - Inner City GNR = (19.8%), Winnipeg GNR = (21.3%)

Population Age Structure

For several decades the inner city has been characterized as a young population, and this remains true. Median age is a useful measure for comparing how “young” or “old” populations are. The median age of Winnipeg’s inner city population in 2011 was 35.4 years — half the population were below 35.4 years of age and half were above. The population in the non-inner city is 4.5 years older than the inner city, with the median at 39.9 years.

The Aboriginal population and recent immigrants (those who arrived between 2006 and 2011) are younger populations, with median age values of 25.5 years and 29.9 years respectively. Persons with a disability and the overall immigrant population in the inner city are relatively “older.” Female lone parents tend to be younger in the inner city than female lone parents elsewhere, and as mentioned above they also tend to have lower incomes than female lone parents in the non-inner city.

FIGURE 6 Percentage Change by Age Groups, Inner City and Non-Inner City, 1991 to 2011

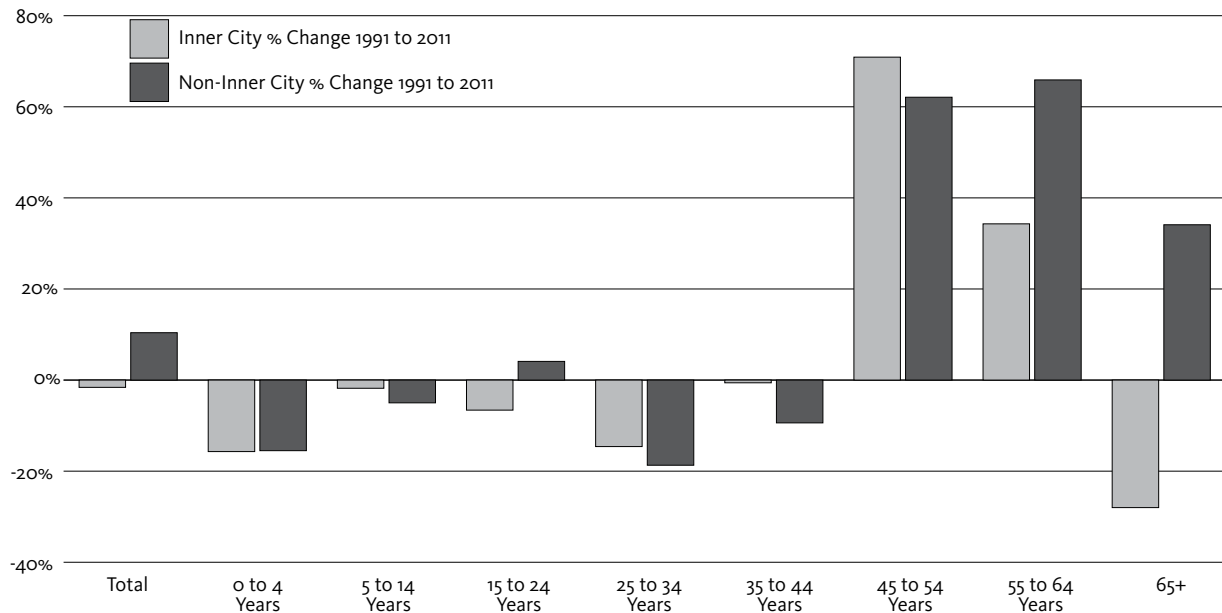
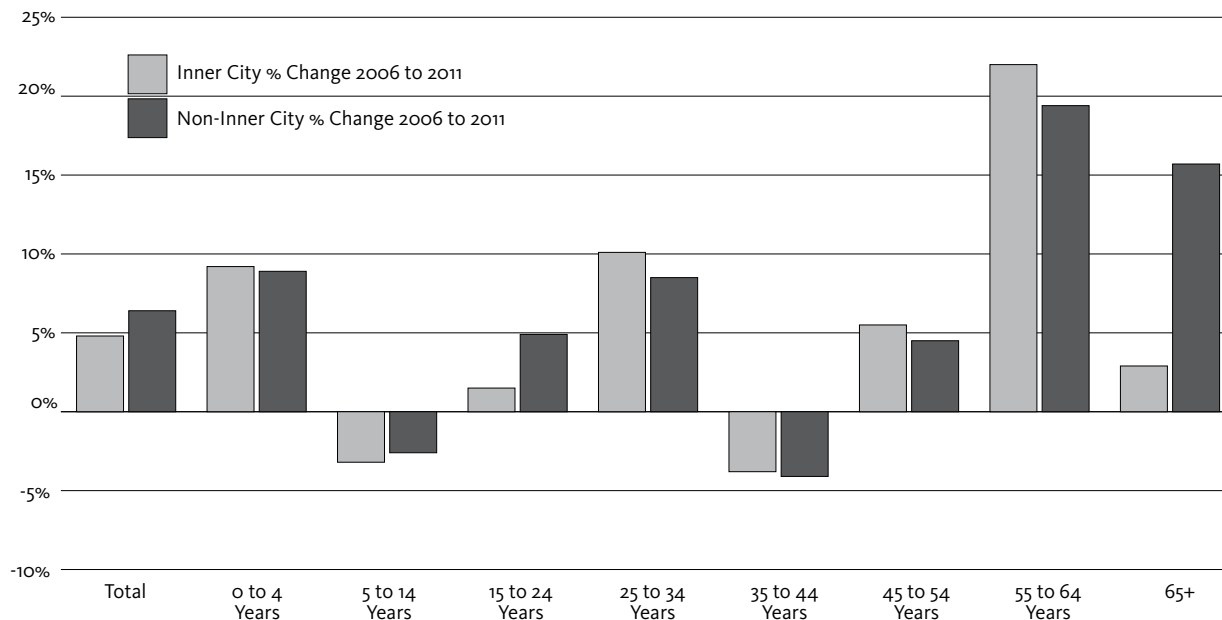


FIGURE 7 Percentage Change by Age Groups, Inner City and Non-Inner City, 2006 to 2011



Generally, the inner city is home to a high concentration of very young children (under four years of age), and young adults in the 20 to 35 age group. Conversely, the number of

seniors (65 years of age and over) appears to be declining.

Interpretation of the age structure is complex because there are substantially divergent

FIGURE 8 Percentage of Census Families by Family Structure, Inner City and Non-Inner City 1991 to 2011

Family Type	Inner City				
	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011
Total couple families *	74.9%	73.2%	70.4%	68.0%	69.6%
Married	81.6%	80.3%	76.4%	74.2%	72.7%
Common-law	18.4%	19.7%	23.6%	25.8%	27.3%
Total lone-parent families	25.1%	26.7%	29.6%	32.0%	30.4%
Female lone parent	86.3%	86.8%	83.3%	83.5%	81.5%
Male lone parent	13.6%	13.2%	16.7%	16.5%	18.6%
Family Type	Non-Inner City				
	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011
Total couple families *	86.3%	85.5%	83.6%	83.0%	83.1%
Married	91.8%	91.1%	89.3%	88.3%	87.1%
Common-law	8.2%	8.9%	10.7%	11.7%	12.9%
Total lone-parent families	13.7%	14.5%	16.4%	17.0%	16.9%
Female lone parent	84.1%	84.7%	83.0%	82.7%	79.4%
Male lone parent	15.9%	15.3%	17.0%	17.3%	20.6%

* In 1991 census family data couples were classified as “husband/wife families”.

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, 1991 Census Custom Tabulation Basic Profile; 1996 Census Custom Tabulation Basic Profile; 2001 Census Semi-Custom Basic Profile; 2006 Census Semi-Custom Profile; 2011 Census Semi-custom Profile (custom geography).

patterns over the past twenty years. In general, the data paint a picture of an inner city getting somewhat older, but with fewer seniors 65 years of age and over. The middle age population has been growing. In the most recent decade, 2001 to 2011, young adults have increased, while declines among seniors are less pronounced. Over the most recent five-year period the inner city experienced some of the largest population gains in the past forty years. These gains are evident among most age groups, with substantial increases among young children 0 to 4 years of age, coupled with a modest increase among seniors.

Census Families

Census family refers to a married and / or common-law couple, with or without children, or a lone parent with at least one child. A couple may be of opposite sex or same sex.

Two-parent census families still comprise the majority of families in the inner city. How-

ever, over the past two decades lone-parent and common-law families have increased as a proportion of all families. The number of common-law couples in the inner city grew by more than 60 percent over the past twenty years, while the number of married couples declined by more than 3 percent. Common-law couples now account for 27.3 percent of all couples, up from 18.4 percent in 1991.

The original “High and Rising” found a growing percentage of single-parent families in the inner city. It now appears the percentage of lone-parent families peaked in 2006, with rates dropping in both the inner city and non-inner city to 2011. The largest percentage point drop occurred in the inner city. While most lone-parent families are headed by a female, male lone-parent families — although their numbers are still small — have been the fastest growing family type in the inner city over the past twenty years.

Over the past twenty years the number of children living in census families in the inner

FIGURE 9 Percentage Change in Census Families by Family Type, 1991 to 2011

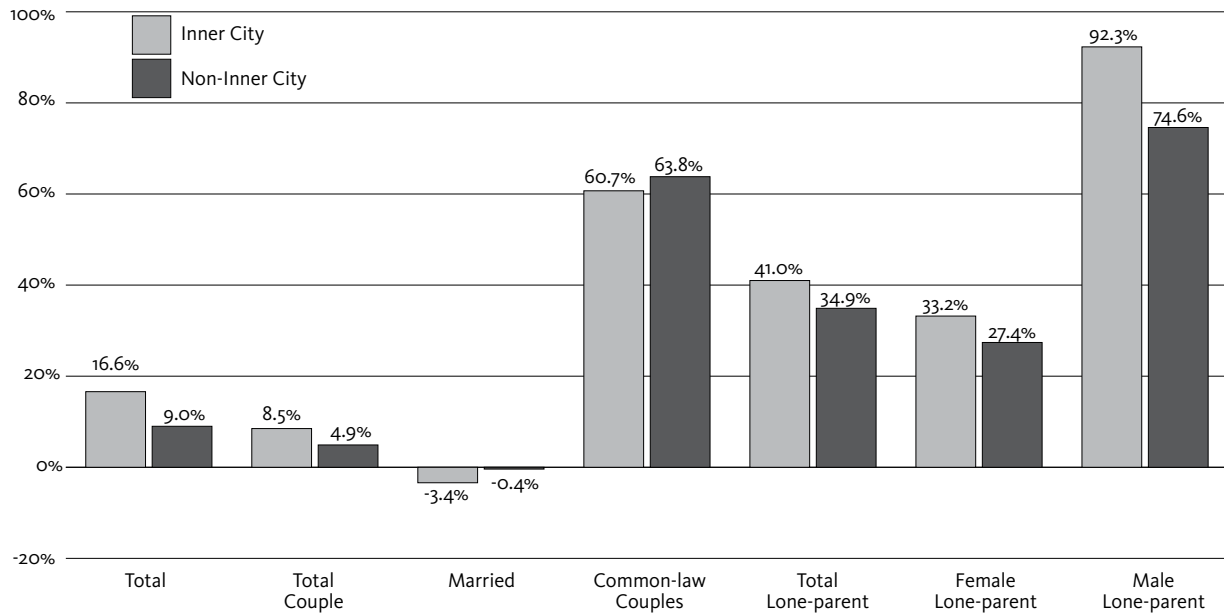
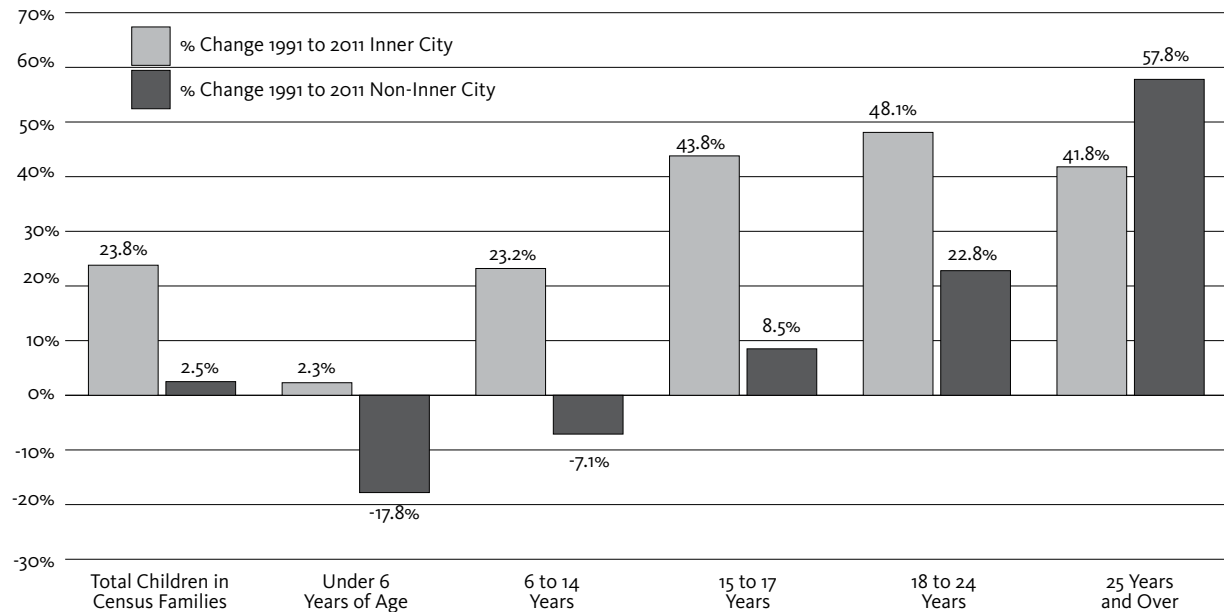


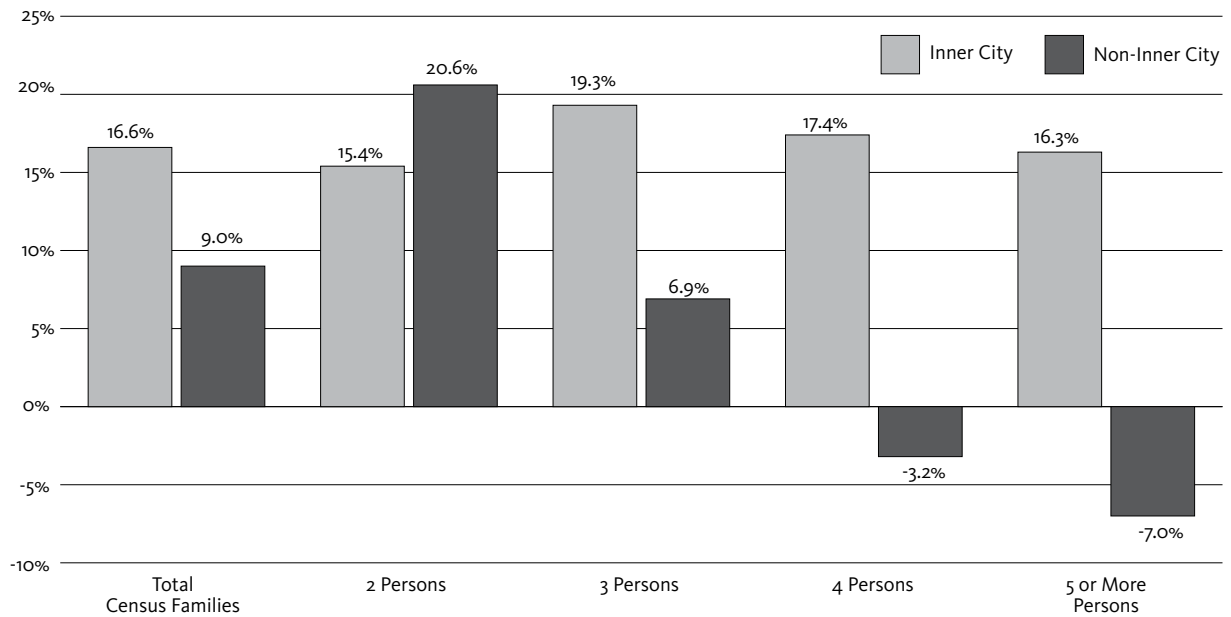
FIGURE 10 Percentage Change in the Number of Children in Census Families by Age, 1991 to 2011



city has increased by more than nine times the rate in the non-inner city. The inner city has a substantial concentration of young children, with an evident increase in the number of children

under 14 living in Census families in the past two decades. Most of the growth in the non-inner city has been among older children 18 years of age and over living at home.

FIGURE 11 Percentage Change in Total Census Families by Family Size, 1991 to 2011



Families tend to be larger in the inner city, which can create problems with housing. According to the NHS, only 10 percent of dwellings in the inner city had four or more bedrooms.

Over the past twenty years the fastest growing family size in the inner city has been three-person families, with a growth rate of 19.3 percent from 1991 to 2011. Over that same period larger families of four or more persons increased in the inner city, and declined in the non-inner city. Whether this reflects an inner city housing stock better suited to accommodate larger families, or is producing overcrowding in the inner city, is difficult to determine from the data.

Households and Housing

A household is a broad concept encompassing all persons living in the same dwelling, whether

related or not. Dwellings are distinct from households. A dwelling refers to the physical attributes of a set of living quarters.

Over the past twenty years the number of private households in the inner city has fluctuated, generally mirroring changes in population. Overall, the number of private households in the inner city fell by just under 2 percent. However, a shift occurred in housing tenure as the number of home owners in the inner city grew by 9 percent, while the number of renter households fell by 8.2 percent.

Data on housing suitability (overcrowding) are available from the 2011 National Household Survey.⁴ Housing suitability refers to whether a dwelling has enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the household, based on the age, sex, and relationships among household members.

Approximately 12 percent of inner city households experience overcrowding, twice as high as

⁴ While suitability (crowding) has always been an important component of an aggregate housing indicator called “core need,” the 2011 NHS provides suitability data as a standalone variable. In the past, data on the number of persons per room were used as an indicator of crowding by dividing the number of persons in the household by the number of rooms in the dwelling.

FIGURE 12 Percentage of Owner-Occupied Households, 1991 to 2011

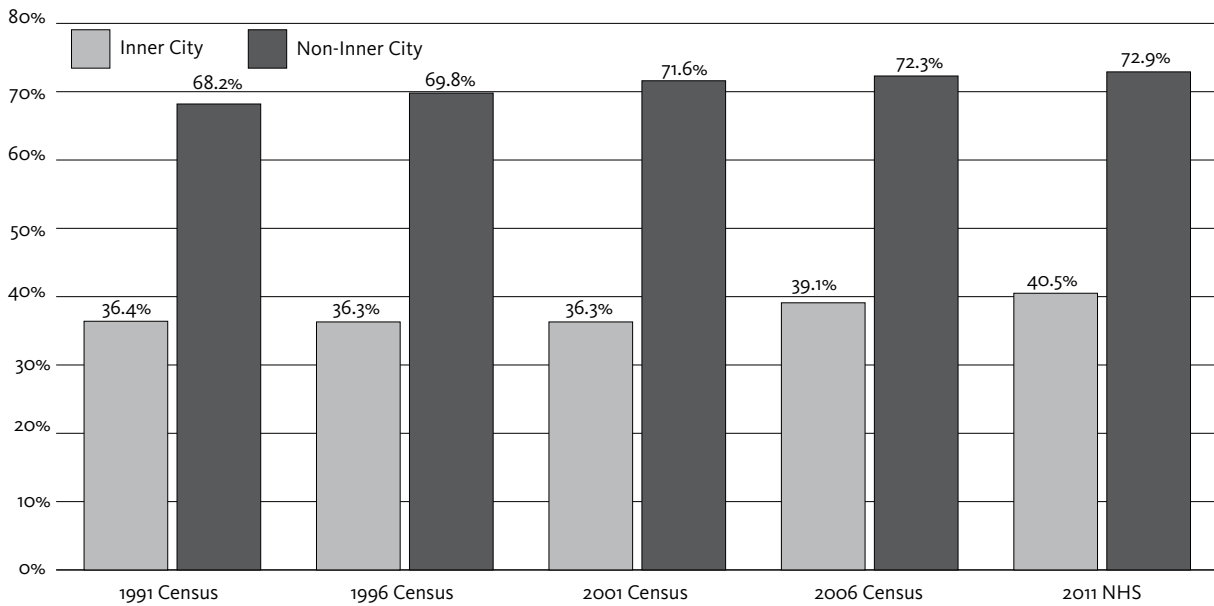
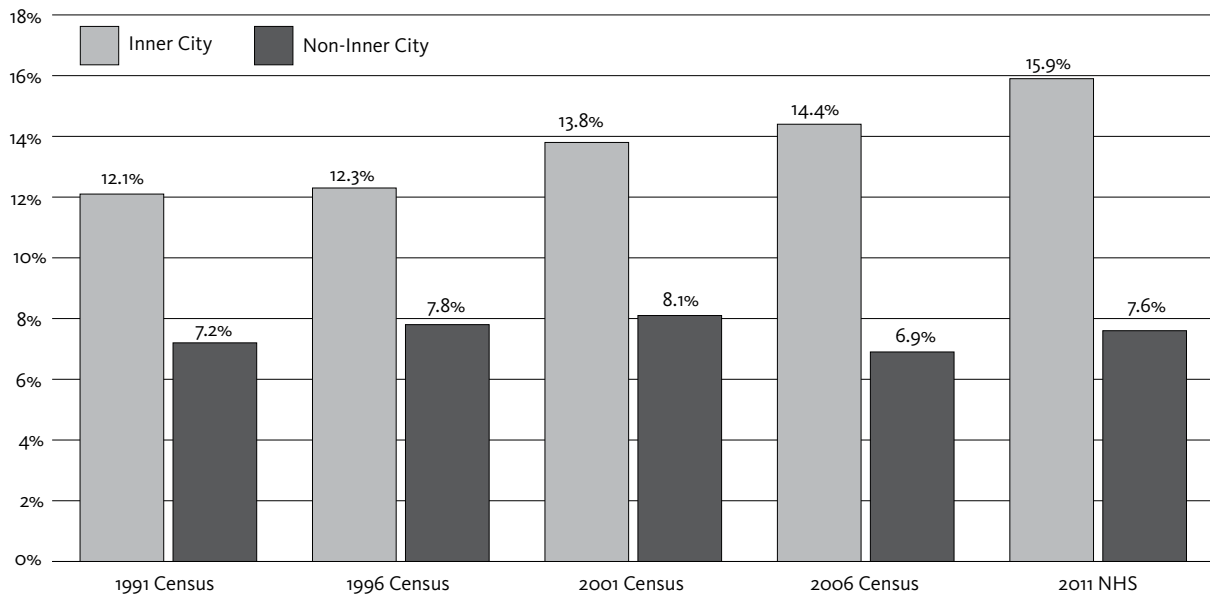


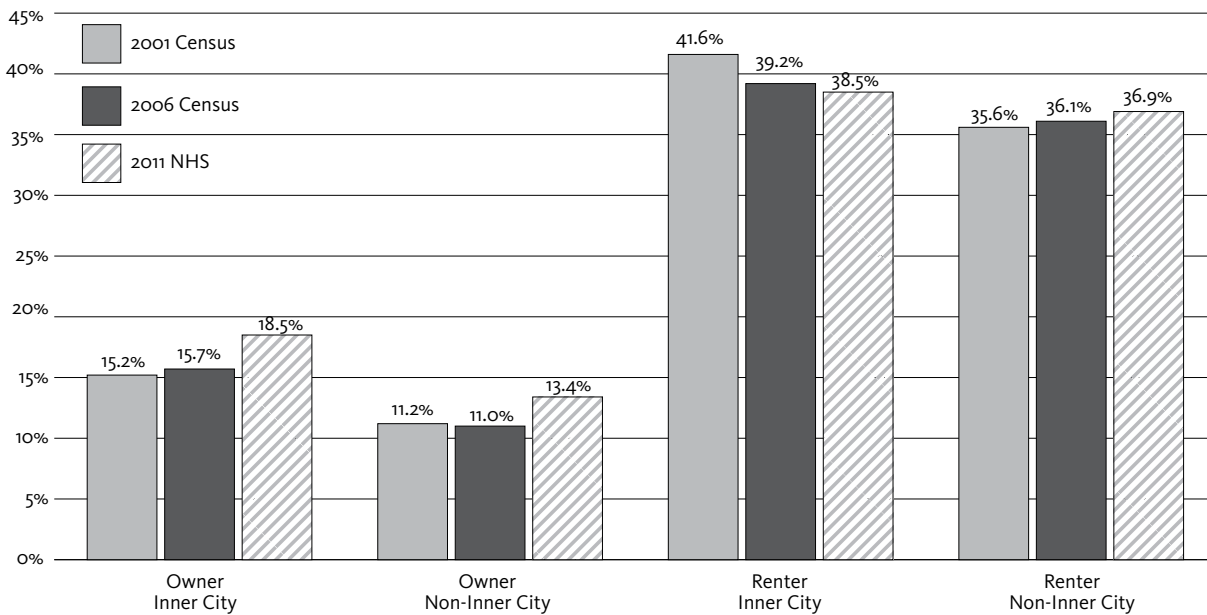
FIGURE 13 Percentage of Occupied Private Dwellings Requiring Major Repairs, 1991 to 2011



the non-inner city. Comparable housing suitability data are not available for earlier time periods, meaning it is not possible to track how this measure has changed over time.

Home ownership rates in the inner city are much lower than the non-inner city. In 2011 just over 40 percent of inner city households owned their home, compared with almost 73 percent of

FIGURE 14 Households by Tenure Showing Percentage Paying 30 Percent or More of Household Income on Shelter 2000 to 2010



non-inner city households. However, over the past twenty years the rate of home ownership in the inner city has been stable, and since 2006 has been increasing. Much of the increase in home ownership in the inner city occurred between 2006 and 2011, when the number of home owners grew by an estimated 600.

The proportion of dwellings requiring major repairs is high in the inner city. Over the past twenty years the percentage requiring major repairs has been slowly but steadily increasing. In 2011, almost 16 percent of all dwellings in the inner city were deemed to require major repairs, compared to 7.6 percent in the non-inner city. “Major repairs” includes, for example, defective plumbing or electrical wiring and structural repairs to walls, floors or ceilings. The age of the housing stock may account for the high and growing rate of dwellings deemed to require major repairs. Just over 60 percent of the dwellings in the inner city were built prior to 1960, compared to just over 30 percent in the non-inner city.

The rate of households spending more than 30 percent of their income on shelter is higher in

the inner city than the non-inner city. Approximately 30 percent of inner city households paid more than 30 percent of their income on shelter costs in 2010, compared to approximately 20 percent in the non-inner city.

Renter households are much more likely to experience housing affordability problems. In 2010, more than a third, 38.5 percent, of renter households in the inner city were experiencing housing affordability issues compared to 18.5 percent of home owners.

Educational Attainment⁵

One of the most noteworthy characteristics of inner city education levels over past decades has been the high rate of adults who do not complete high school. In 2011, almost 20 percent of inner city adults aged 25 to 64 had less than a high school diploma, double the non-inner city rate. However, there appears to be some improvement in the inner city, even allowing for data comparability issues. NHS data suggest the number of adults in the inner city who do not have a high

FIGURE 15 Adult Population (both sexes) Showing Highest Educational Attainment Level, 1996 to 2011

Highest level of Education	Inner City							
	1996 Census *		2001 Census *		2006 Census **		2011 NHS **	
Total Population	99,265	100.0%	97,720	100.0%	67,125	100.0%	69,445	100.0%
No high school certificate	43,990	44.3%	37,730	38.6%	14,900	22.2%	13,840	19.9%
High school certificate	10,335	10.4%	11,275	11.5%	17,285	25.8%	17,490	25.2%
Postsecondary Education	44,915	45.2%	48,715	49.9%	34,945	52.1%	38,110	54.9%
Highest level of Education	Non-Inner City							
	1996 Census *		2001 Census *		2006 Census **		2011 NHS **	
Total Population	390,365	100.0%	396,015	100.0%	274,260	100.0%	290,215	100.0%
No high school certificate	127,950	32.8%	118,615	30.0%	35,790	13.0%	31,695	10.9%
High school certificate	46,415	11.9%	46,585	11.8%	70,415	25.7%	73,110	25.2%
Postsecondary Education	216,015	55.3%	230,815	58.3%	168,060	61.3%	185,405	63.9%

* Population 15 years and over. ** Population 25 to 64 years of age

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, 1996 Census Custom Tabulation Basic Profile; 2001 Census custom tabulation CT-6; 2006 Census Semi-Custom Profile; 2011 National Household Survey, Semi - Custom Profile (custom geography).

Inner City GNR = (27.7%), Non - Inner City GNR = (19.8%).

school certificate dropped 7.1 percent between 2006 and 2011, to 19.9 percent. The proportion of adults in the inner city with less than a high school education was considerably higher a decade ago, reaching 44 percent in 1996.

Just over half, 55 percent, of inner city adults had some postsecondary education and 46.2 percent of those held a university degree. That represents 17,610 inner city adults with a university degree. Five years earlier the 2006 Census counted 14,080 inner city adults with a university degree.⁶ It is likely that the significant improvements in these numbers are at least in part the consequence of provincial government investments in Adult Learning Centres and in specialized edu-

cational initiatives such as those on Selkirk Avenue in Winnipeg's North End, expansion of the University of Winnipeg and Red River downtown.

Although education levels are improving in the inner city, trends are mixed for different population groups. There appears to be relatively little improvement in educational attainment among Aboriginal adults in the inner city: the number with no high school certificate increased only slightly between 2006 and 2011. In 2011, an estimated 4,840 Aboriginal adults in the inner city did not have a high school certificate, up from 4,795 in 2006, although the comparison should be treated with caution due to the problems in comparing NHS with Census data.

⁵ In 2006 Statistics Canada changed how education variables were captured on the Census, meaning direct comparability to earlier data is limited to broad categories. Adding to the complexity, in the past education data were often reported for the population 15 years of age and over. This meant data included some who could still be in the midst of completing their education. It has now become common place to report educational attainment data for adults 25 year of age and over. Unfortunately, much of the earlier education data for population groups such as immigrants and Aboriginal persons are based on the 15 years and over age group.

⁶ Postsecondary education encompasses a wide range and type of schooling and training. This includes trade qualifications such as registered apprenticeship certificates and Journey person designations. Also included are college and other non-university training such as pre-employment or vocational certificates and diplomas and programs completed at community colleges, institutes of technology, and vocational centres. University certificates or diplomas are awarded for non-degree programs of study completed through a university.

FIGURE 16 Population Groups Showing Percentage of Adults 25 to 64 Years of Age With No High School Certificate, Inner City 2011

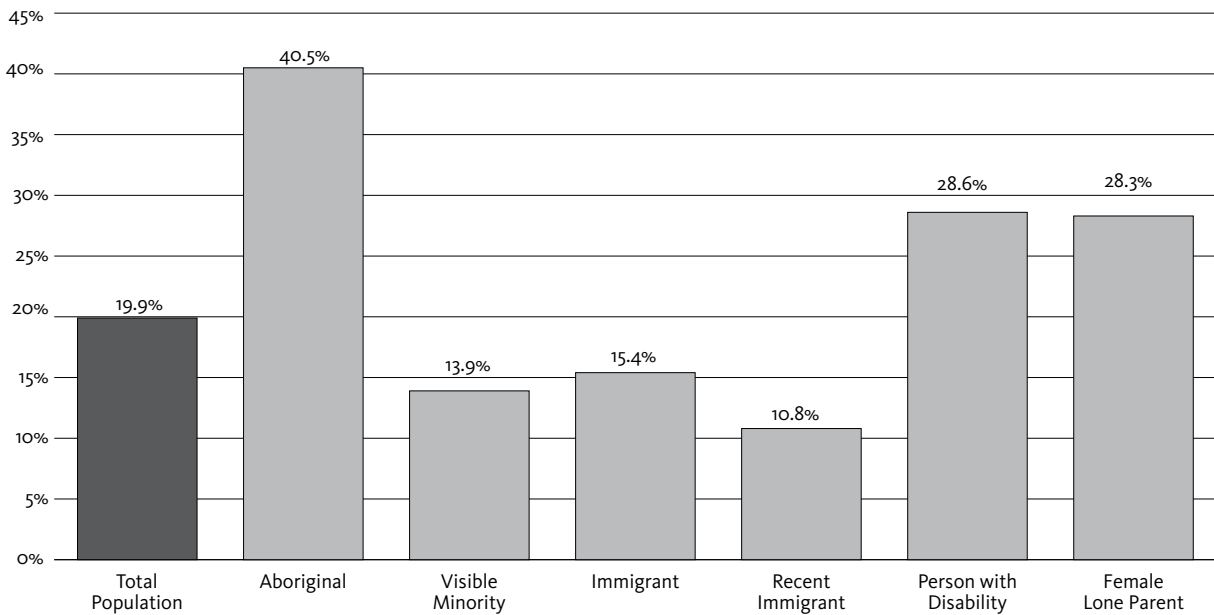
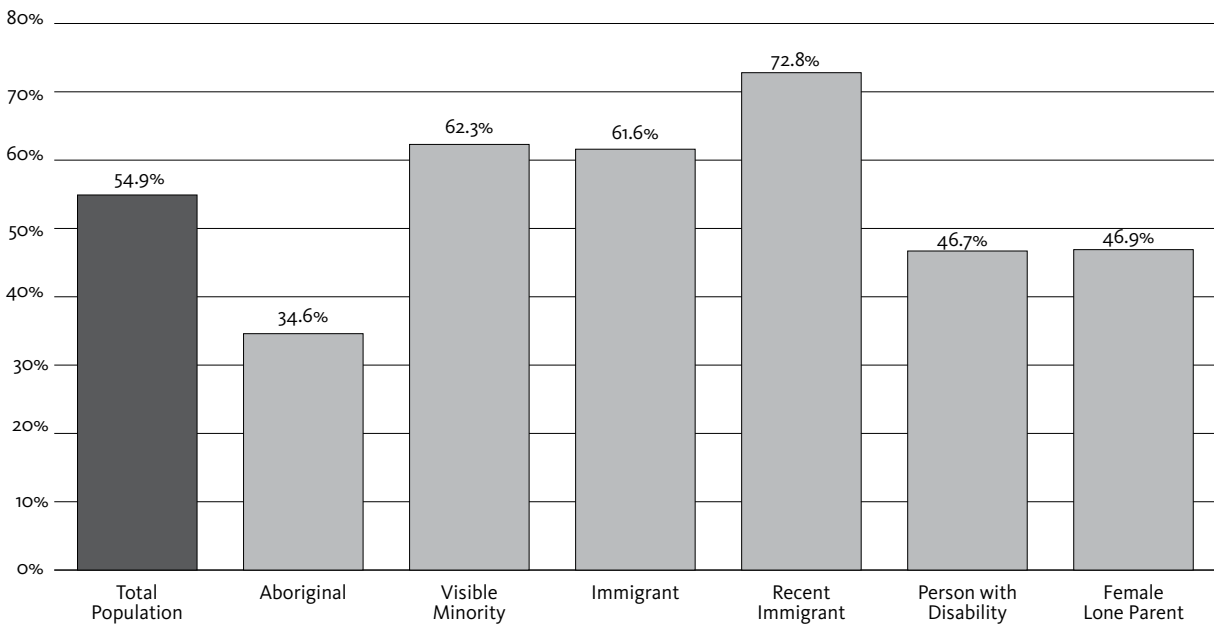


FIGURE 17 Population Groups Showing Percentage of Adults 25 to 64 Years of Age with Post-Secondary Education, Inner City 2011



Visible minorities in the inner city show signs of improvement in educational attainment. Unfortunately, detailed data for immigrants in 2006

are not available. There has been substantial improvement between 2006 and 2011 in the rate of female lone parents and persons with a disability

who did not have a high school certificate. In the case of female lone parents, the NHS estimates there were 1,550 female lone parents in the inner city without a high school certificate in 2011, down from 1,800 in 2006. Among persons with a disability the inner city estimate is 4,665 persons based on the 2011 NHS, down from 5,140 in 2006. These numbers reflect a decline of 13.9 percent and 9.2 percent respectively. If the figures for these two groups are accurate, this represents substantial improvement. However, both population groups are relatively small, meaning percentages can show substantial change when the actual size of the population changes little.

Labour Force Characteristics

Perhaps the most remarkable area of turnaround since the original “High and Rising” is in labour

force characteristics. Labour force participation rates in the inner city are climbing; unemployment rates are falling. However, inner city male and female unemployment rates have moved in opposite directions: male unemployment rates have increased; female rates have declined.

Inner city rates continue to lag behind the non-inner city when it comes to labour force characteristics, but overall trends point to measurable improvement. In 2011 the inner city unemployment rate for both sexes was 2.7 percentage points higher than the non-inner city. In 1996 the difference was 8.2 percentage points.

Unemployment rates in the inner city peaked in 1996, falling in 2001 and again in 2006. Over the past twenty years changes in the inner city unemployment rate have mirrored those for the non-inner city. The difference, however, is in the magnitude. While the unemployment rate in the

Common but Important Concepts

Most people will likely have heard the terms “unemployment rate” and “labour force participation rate” but not everyone may be familiar with how these measures are calculated.

The **unemployment rate** is the number of persons who are unemployed and looking for work as a percentage of the labour force (combined number of employed and unemployed persons). The rate for a particular area, for example, the inner city, is the number of unemployed divided by the number of people in the labour force.

For example, there were an estimated 5,360 adults in the inner city who were unemployed, that is these people were not working and were actively looking for work. The labour force, which is the total number of employed and unemployed, was 66,480. Therefore, $5,360 / 66,480 = 0.0806$. Multiply this result by 100 and we get a percentage value, in this case 8.06. We round this number up to be 8.1.

The unemployment rate in the inner city in 2011 was 8.1%.

The **labour force participation rate** is the number of employed and unemployed persons actively looking for work as a percentage of the adult population 15 years of age and over.

When we calculated the unemployment rate we saw that the size of the labour force in the inner city was 66,480 adults. To calculate a labour force participation rate we divide 66,480 by the total population 15 years of age and over which, in the case of the inner city was 100,300. Therefore, $66,480 / 100,300 = 0.6628$. Multiply this result by 100 and we get a percentage value of 66.28. We round this value up to 66.3.

The labour force participation rate in the inner city in 2011 was 66.3%.

FIGURE 18 Unemployment Rate for Adults 15 Years of Age and Over, Male and Female 1991 to 2011

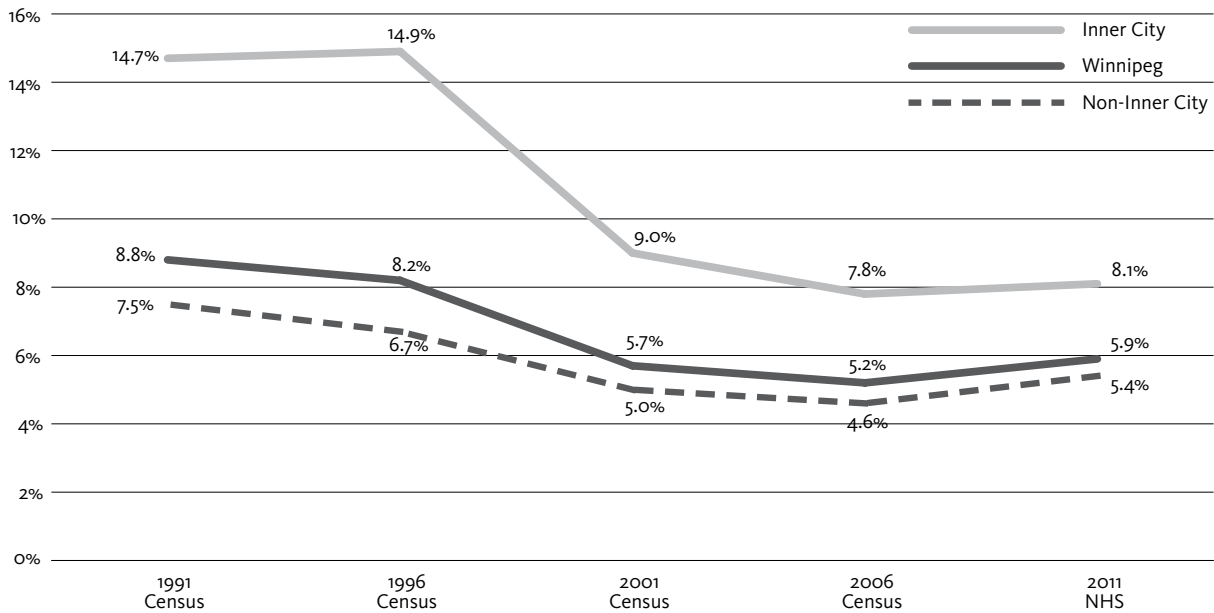
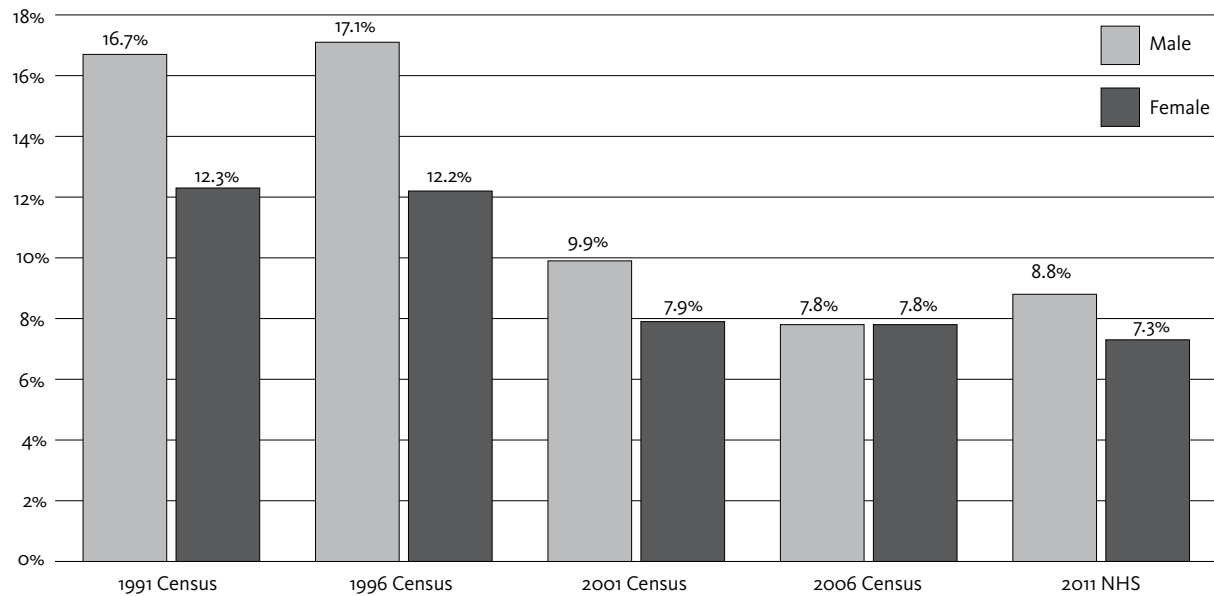


FIGURE 19 Unemployment Rate by Sex, Inner City 1991 to 2011



non-inner fell by 2.1 percentage points between 1996 and 2006, the inner city unemployment rate fell by 7.1 percentage points. A particularly positive indicator of change is the steady decline

in the number of adults 15 years of age and over who are not in the labour force, as reflected in increasing labour force participation rates, especially among females.

FIGURE 20 Labour Force Participation Rate for Adults 15 Years and Over, Male and Female, 1991 to 2011

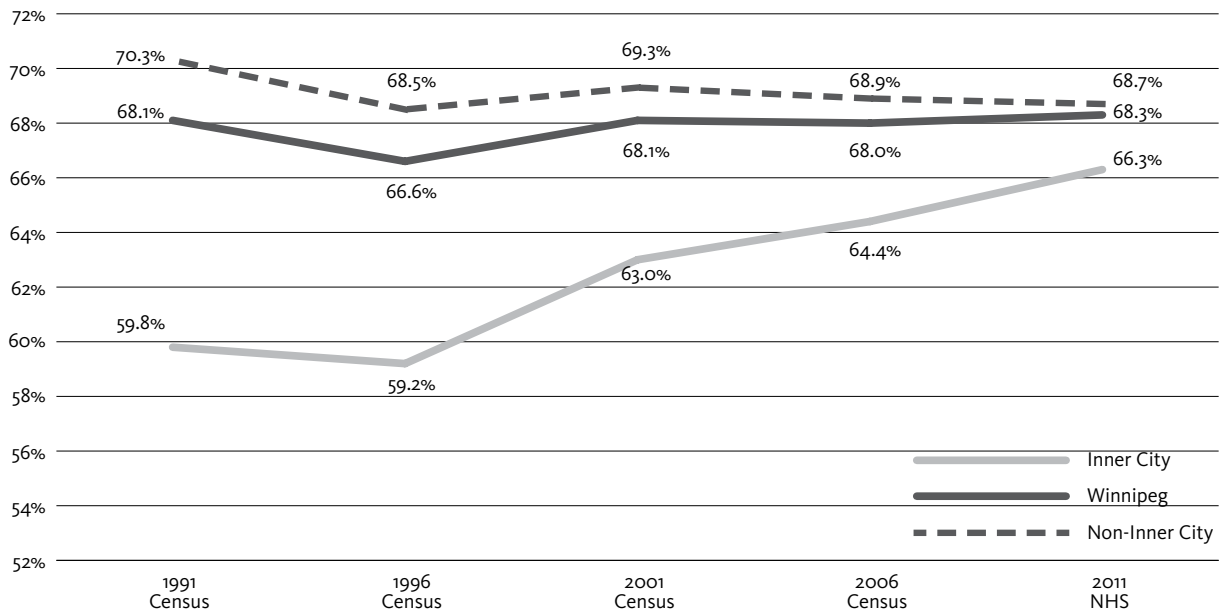
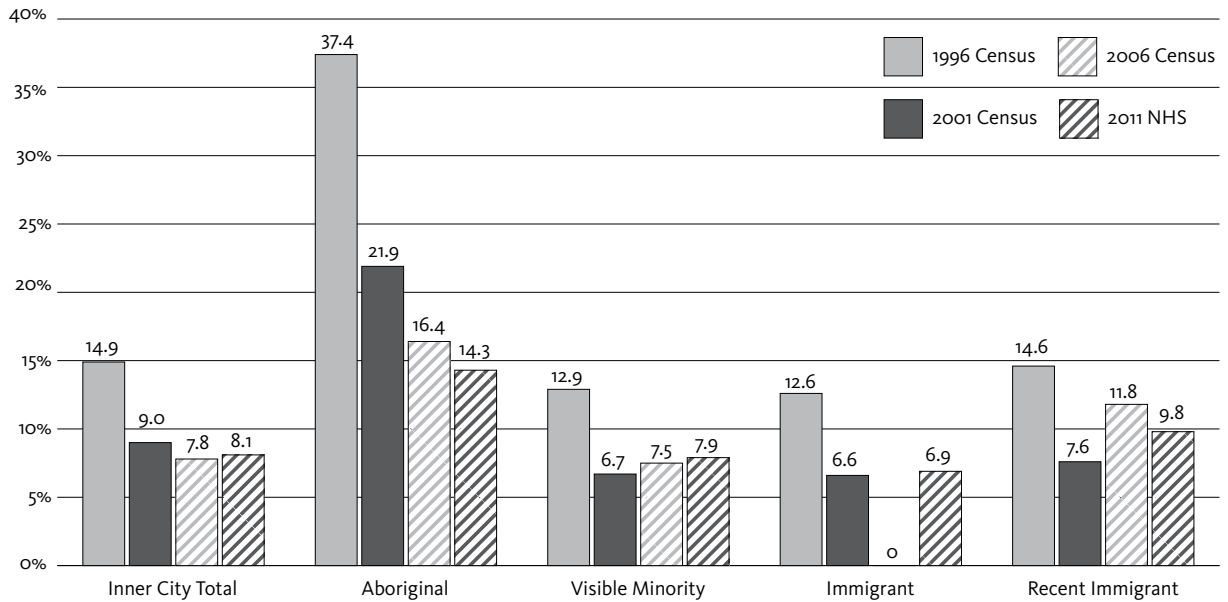


FIGURE 21 Unemployment Rate for Select Population Groups (Male and Female 15 years and over), Inner City 1996 to 2011



Similar to the unemployment rate, the inner city labour force participation rate bottomed out in 1996. Since then it has climbed, increasing 5.2 percentage points between 1996 and 2006, and

an additional 1.9 percentage points between 2006 and 2011. This is remarkable, particularly in light of the relatively little change that has occurred in the non-inner city over that same period. In

FIGURE 22 Youth (both sexes 15–24 years of age) Showing Labour Force Participation Rate and Unemployment Rate, 1996 to 2006

Year	Youth Labour Force Participation Rate		Youth Unemployment Rate	
	Inner city	Non-Inner City	Inner city	Non-Inner City
1996	59.7%	69.4%	18.6%	13.4%
2001	66.4%	72.6%	13.0%	10.4%
2006	64.1%	70.8%	11.9%	10.9%

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, 1996 Census Custom Tabulation Basic Profile; 2001 Census Semi – Custom Basic Profile; 2006 Census Semi-Custom Profile (custom geography).

other words, growing numbers of people in the inner city are making their way into the paid labour force, and they are doing so at a faster rate than is the case outside the inner city.

The 2011 Aboriginal unemployment rate in the inner city was 14.3 percent, more than six percentage points higher than the overall inner city rate. Recent immigrants also experience high unemployment rates, often several percentage points higher than the inner city rate.

Although still high, the Aboriginal unemployment rate in the inner city has fallen substantially, perhaps even dramatically, declining by 21 percentage points between 1996 and 2006, and an additional two percentage points between 2006 and 2011.

Unemployment rates for visible minorities in the inner city declined from 1996 to 2001, but have crept upward since 2001.

While detailed data on labour force characteristics by age groups for 2011 at the inner city level are not available, data from 1996 to 2006 indicate that youth (15 to 24 years of age) labour force participation rates in the inner city increased to 2001 before dropping slightly in 2006, while youth unemployment rates in the inner city declined, falling 6.7 percentage points.

Household Income

Household incomes in the inner city continue to be low compared to the non-inner city. Based upon median after-tax income, in 2010 inner city

households had \$61.35 of income for every \$100 dollars of income in the non-inner city.

Nevertheless, steady gains in household incomes in the inner city are evident.

Income data for 2000 do not provide an after-tax figure, but if we examine total (before tax) household income in constant 2010 dollars, the income gap between the inner city and non-inner city improves from \$53.48 for every \$100 in 2000, to \$58.31 for every \$100 in 2010.

Another way of looking at this is that over the decade, inner city household median incomes in constant 2010 dollars increased 2.5 times faster than non-inner city household incomes. This is a significant change from the findings of the original “High and Rising,” which found inner city incomes declining in real terms.

Data from the National Household Survey indicate recent immigrants in the inner city had the lowest total median income among the population groups examined, although they had the smallest gap when inner city and non-inner city incomes are compared. The difference between total median incomes for recent immigrants in the inner city compared with the non-inner city was only \$2,695. In other words, recent immigrants experience relatively low incomes whether they live in the inner city or not.

Female lone parents in the inner city had the highest total median income among the population groups examined — that is, Aboriginal, visible minority, immigrant, recent immigrant and persons with disabilities. They also had the

FIGURE 23 Total Median Household Income in Constant 2010 Dollars Showing % Change, 2000 to 2010

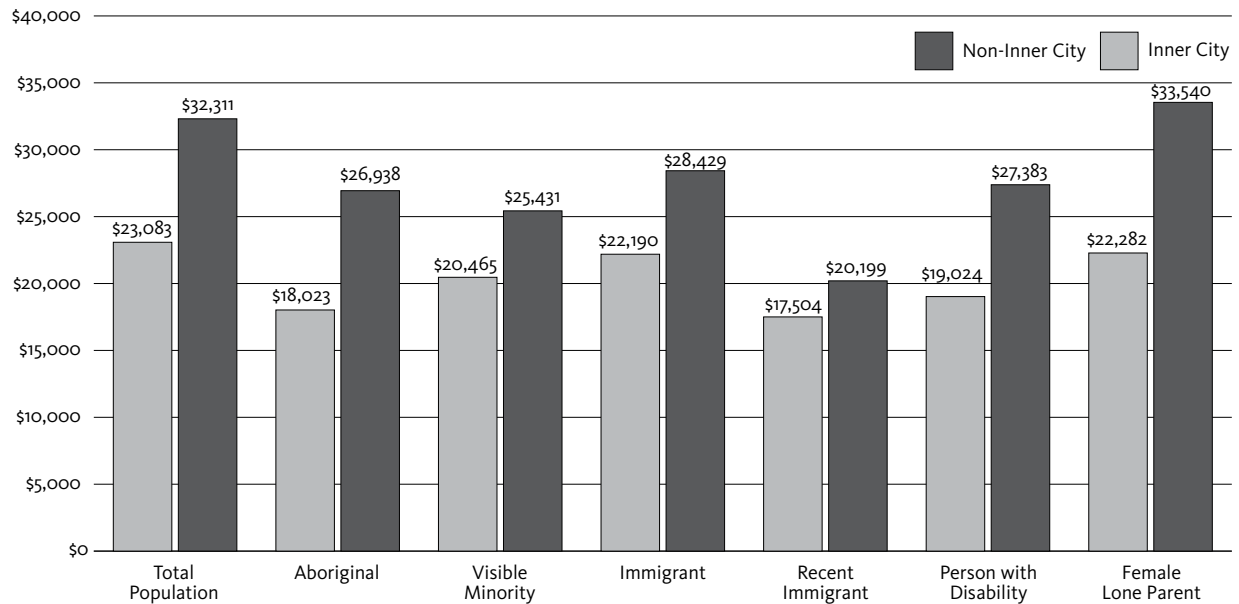
Area	2000 Census	2005 Census	2010 NHS	% change 2005 to 2010	% change 2000 to 2010
Inner City	\$32,498	\$35,234	\$37,725	7.1%	16.1%
Non-Inner City	\$60,764	\$61,891	\$64,691	4.5%	6.5%
Winnipeg	\$53,481	\$55,213	\$57,925	4.9%	8.3%

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Semi – Custom Basic Profile; 2006 Census Semi-Custom Profile (custom geography); 2011 National Household Survey, Semi - Custom Profile (custom geography).

Inner City GNR = (27.7%), Non – Inner City GNR = (19.8%), Winnipeg GNR = (21.3%).

Constant dollar calculations based upon Winnipeg CPI 2000 = 95.8; Winnipeg CPI 2005 = 106.5; Winnipeg CPI 2010 = 118.1. CPI base year 2002 = 100, Source: Statistics Canada CANSIM Table 326 - 0021

FIGURE 24 Total Median Income (Male and Female) for Select Population Groups, 2010



largest inner city to non-inner city income gap. Female lone parent total median incomes in the inner city were \$11,258 less than female lone parent incomes in the non-inner city.

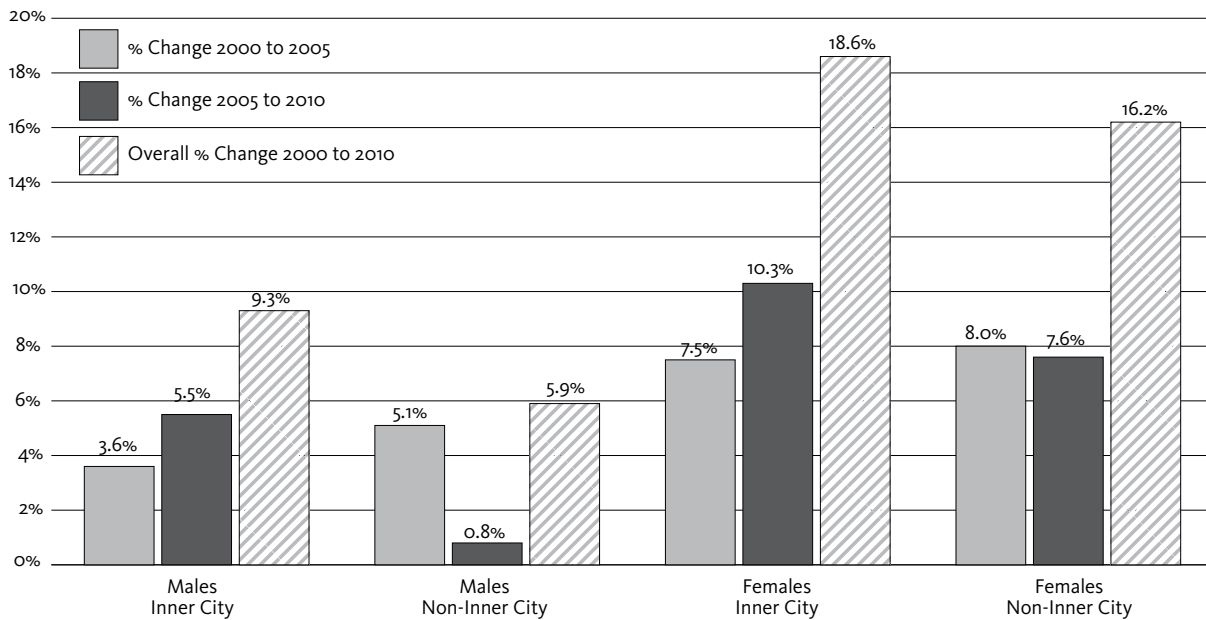
Calculated in constant 2010 dollars, percentage change data suggest total income has increased for most population groups in the inner city, with Aboriginal persons showing the largest gain (8.6 percent increase). Recent immigrants also appear to have seen total incomes rise between 2005 and 2010, while persons with a disability saw little change, and visible minorities and female lone parents both declined between 2005 and 2010.

Employment Income

Employment income refers to total income received as wages and salaries, and/or self-employment income; full-time employment is classified as 30 hours or more per week of work for pay or in self-employment.

Inner city employment incomes have grown over the past decade when calculated in constant dollars, with female employment incomes growing faster than male employment incomes. Over the past decade female employment incomes in the inner city increased by 18.6 percent, double the 9.6 percent rate for inner city males. In the case of both inner city males and inner city fe-

FIGURE 25 Percentage Change in Average Employment Income (worked full year, full time) by Sex in Constant 2010 Dollars, 2000 to 2010



males, employment income is growing faster than is the case for non-inner city females and males.

This is yet another area in which improvements can be seen in recent years in Winnipeg’s inner city.

Low Income (Poverty)

Perhaps the most striking finding in the original “High and Rising” was the growth and intensity of poverty in the inner city. We found poverty rates that were astonishingly high — almost 50 percent in the inner city and higher still for single parents and the Aboriginal population. We concluded that:

the problem of poverty in Winnipeg has reached crisis proportions. It is a massive problem that requires immediate and dramatic response. It is no longer acceptable, if it ever was, to ignore or to pay lip service to the high incidence and

rapid growth of poverty in Winnipeg and its accentuated concentration in the inner city (Lezubski et al. 2000: 43)

Our concern was that if left unchecked, things would only get worse.

Yet the incidence of poverty as measured by Statistics Canada’s Low Income Cut Offs (LICO) has fallen steadily since 2001.⁷

Low-income rates in the inner city remain high, and are more than double the non-inner city rates. Nevertheless, rates appear to be improving. Consider, for example, that the difference in low-income rates between the inner city and non-inner city narrowed from a high of 28.8 percentage points in 1996, to 18.1 percentage points in 2011.

Assessing how conditions have changed over time has become more complicated because of the introduction of the National Household Survey in 2011, and the move toward use of the Low-

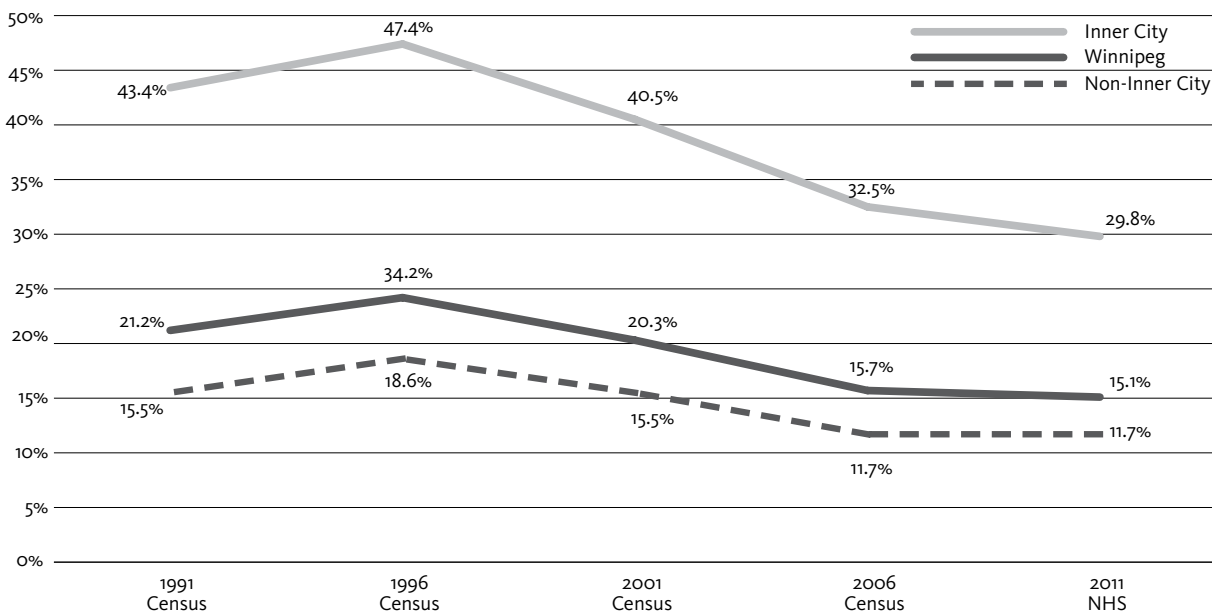
⁷ The original “High and Rising” chapter found inner city household low-income rates in 1996 had reached 50 percent, a threshold deemed to warrant serious attention. In the data cited here the inner city figures for 1991 and 1996 have been amended to reflect the expanded inner city boundary currently in use.

FIGURE 26 Percent of Population in Households Showing Incidence of Low Income (LICO), Inner City, Non-Inner City and Winnipeg 1991 to 2011

Year	Inner City	Non-Inner City	Winnipeg
1991 Census	43.4%	15.5%	21.2%
1996 Census	47.4%	18.6%	24.2%
2001 Census	40.5%	15.5%	20.3%
2006 Census	32.5%	11.7%	15.7%
2011 NHS	29.8%	11.7%	15.1%

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, 1991 Census Custom Tabulation Basic Profile; 1996 Census Custom Tabulation Basic Profile; 2001 Census Semi-Custom Basic Profile; 2006 Census Semi-Custom Profile; 2011 National Household Survey. Custom Tabulation, CPP Table 1.
 Inner City GNR = (27.7%), Non-Inner City GNR = (19.8%), Winnipeg GNR = (21.3%)

FIGURE 27 Percentage of Households by Low Income Rate (LICO), 1991 to 2011



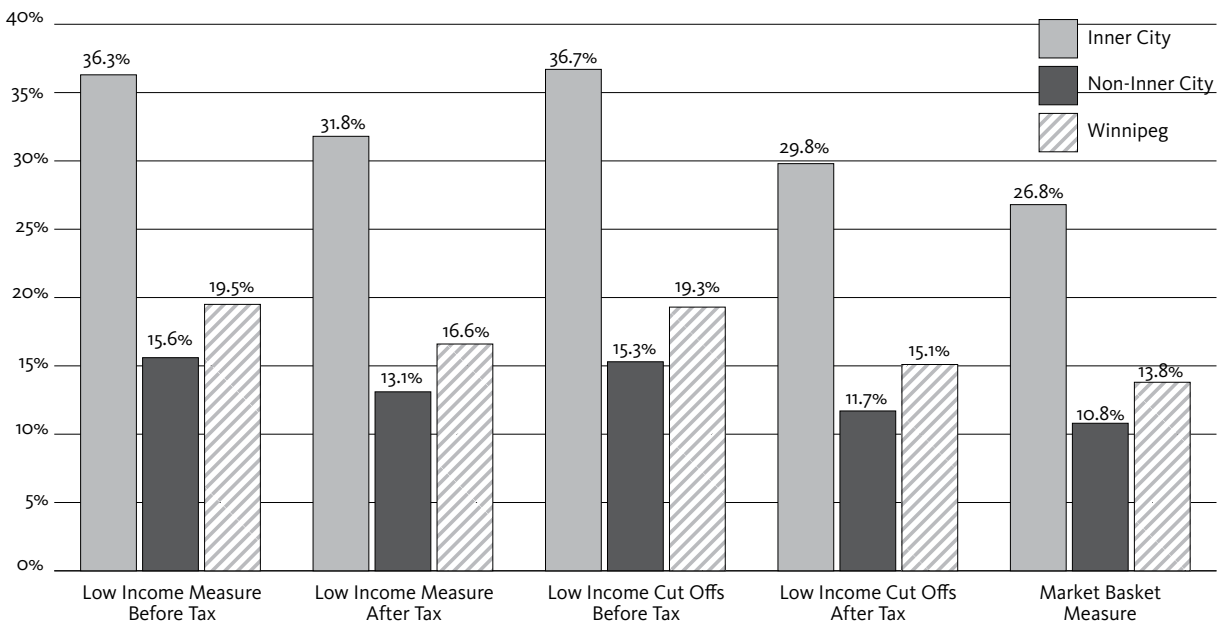
Income Measure (LIM) rather than the Low-Income-Cut-Offs (LICO) as the primary measure for reporting and publishing low-income data. Also, starting in 2006, low-income measures are reported for both before and after tax, whereas prior to 2006 low-income measures were only based on before-tax income.

Canada has never had an official poverty line. A number of low-income lines are used. These include the Low-Income-Cut-Offs (LICO) which are reached when a family — adjusted for size of

family and size of city or town — spends 20 per cent more than an average family on food, clothing and shelter. With the Low-Income Measure (LIM) the line is 50 percent of the median family income, adjusted for family size. The Market Basket Measure (MBM) reflects the cost of a basket of goods and services that are deemed essential for a “modest, basic standard of living” (Statistics Canada 2010).

When all of the lines are used, differences between the inner city and non-inner city are con-

FIGURE 28 Total Population (both sexes) Showing Low-Income (poverty) Rate Using Various Measures, 2011



Data on Poverty is a Cross Section at a Point in Time

An important limitation of low-income data that should be acknowledged is that unlike longitudinal data that follow the same people over time, Census and / or NHS data are cross sectional, meaning we examine a slice or cross section of a population at one particular time. This is especially important from a policy perspective. If we find “x” number of people in poverty in 2006 and found the same number of people poor in 2011, it does not imply these are the same people. Indeed, data based on longitudinal studies such as the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) have demonstrated that there is fluidity to poverty — people move in and out of poverty based upon any number of circumstances. Therefore, based on the data we have, we cannot say with any certainty whether there is an entrenched segment of the population for whom poverty is persistent and unrelenting.

sistent, but the magnitude varies. This suggests that data users should be cautious in using one line and disregarding the others. Nevertheless, this chapter will focus on the LICO because it was the measure used in the original “High and Rising” study. The ability to assess and present LICO rates has been made possible by access to a custom tabulation obtained by the Community Data Program.

Figures 26, 27 and 28 reveal at least two particularly significant things about poverty in Winnipeg’s inner city. Perhaps most importantly, it is

declining. It is true that, as measured by the LICO, poverty has been declining across Canada (Silver 2014: 15) and in Manitoba (Bernas 2015: 9), so it could be said that the decline in Winnipeg’s inner city simply mirrors a national and provincial trend. However, the drop in the incidence of poverty has been much steeper in the inner city than the non-inner city — the decline in the inner city has been more than ten percentage points greater than in the non-inner city. Second, progressive tax measures are further reducing poverty levels, as shown by the fact that after-tax poverty levels are

FIGURE 29 Low Income Rates by Age Group (Male and Female) Based on Low Income Cut Off After Tax (LICO-AT), 2011

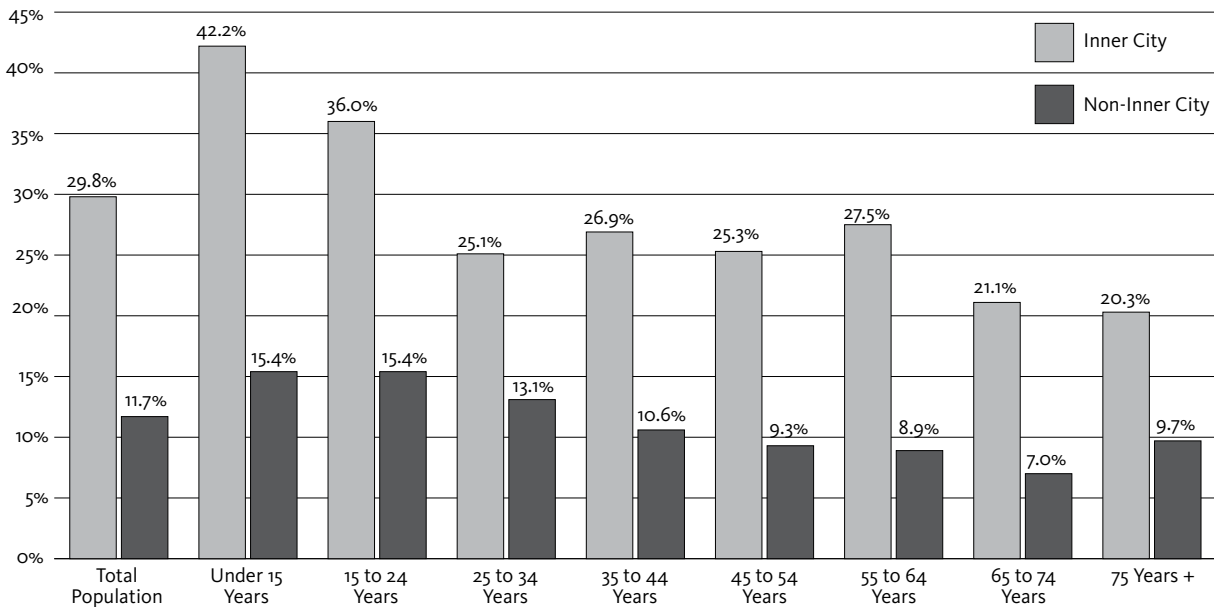
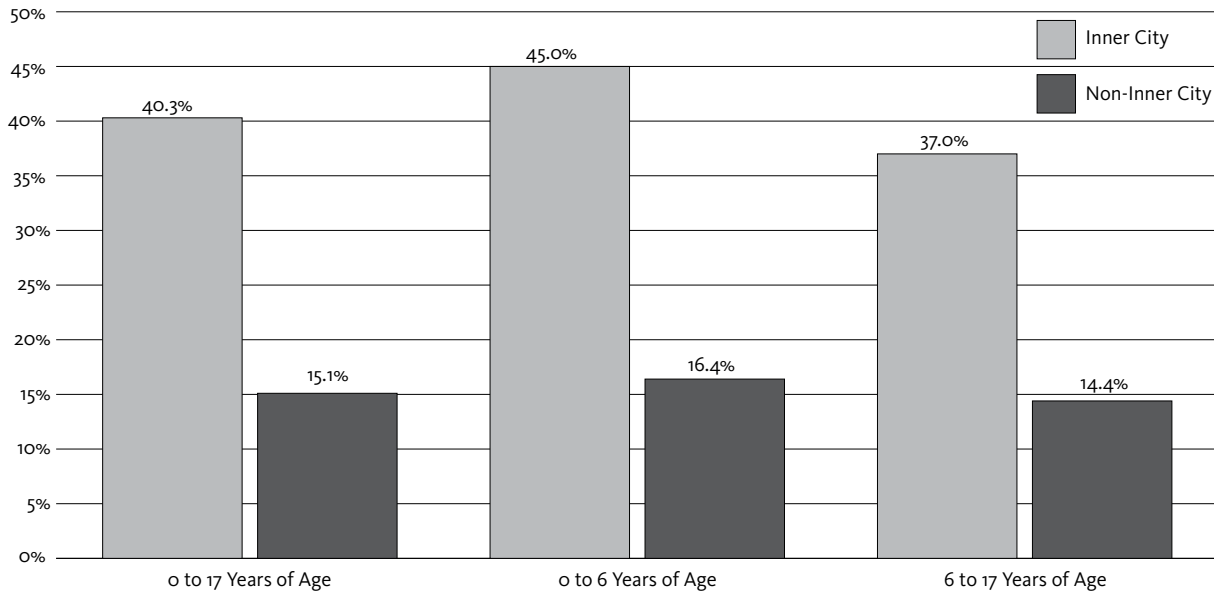


FIGURE 30 Low Income Rates for Children (Male and Female Showing Selected Age Groups) Based on Low Income Cut Off After Tax (LICO-AT), 2011



lower than before-tax — by 4.5 percentage points in the case of the LICO and 6.9 percentage points for the LIM. These indicators are significant. They suggest that anti-poverty efforts targeted specifically at the inner city are having an impact.

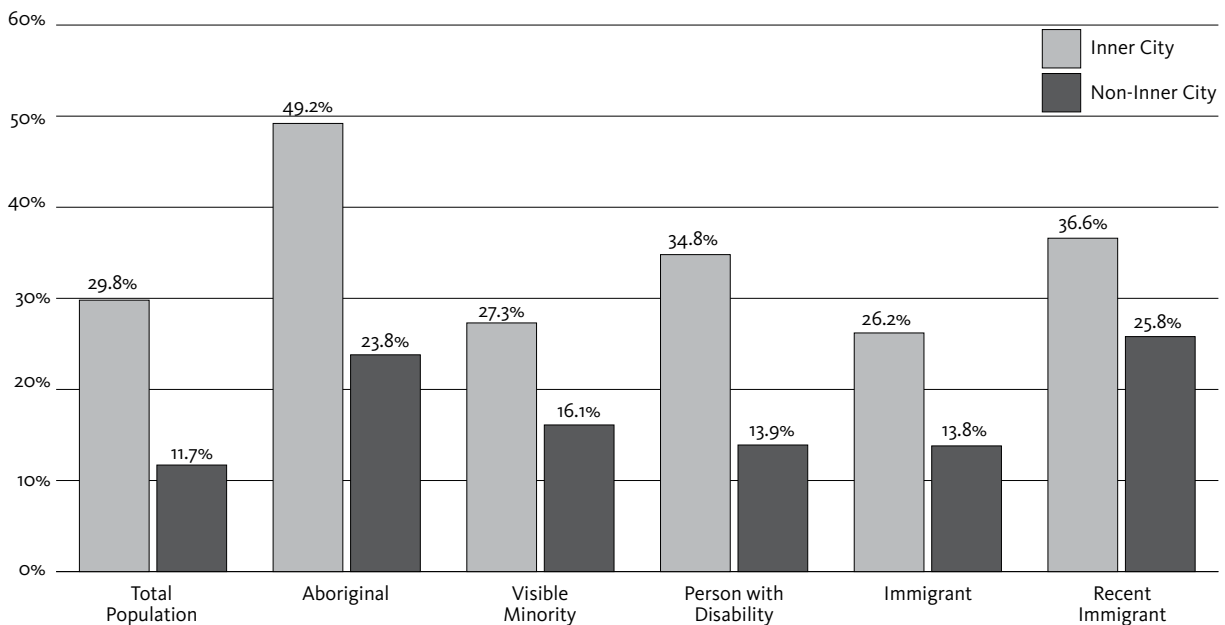
However, young children in the inner city, particularly those under age six, continue to experience poverty rates that are far too high, and that bode ill for the future unless further gains are made in inner city poverty reduction.

FIGURE 31 Select Population Groups Showing Low-Income (poverty) Rate Based on LICO-AT, 2006 & 2011

Population Group	Inner City		Non-Inner City	
	2006 Census	2011 NHS	2006 Census	2011 NHS
Total Population	32.5%	29.8%	11.7%	11.7%
Aboriginal identity	58%	49.2%	27%	23.8%
Visible Minority	27%	27.3%	17%	16.1%
Recent Immigrants	43%	36.6%	33%	25.8%
Person with Disability	38%	34.8%	16%	13.9%

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census Semi-Custom Profile & 2006 Census Target Group Profiles (custom geography); 2011 National Household Survey. Custom Tabulation, CPP Table 1.

FIGURE 32 Low-Income Rates for Select Population Groups (Male and Female) Based on Low Income Cut Off After Tax (LICO-AT), 2011



Large gaps exist between the inner city and non-inner city low-income rates among all age groups, as shown in Figure 29, but are particularly pronounced for the population under 15 years of age, where the gap is 26.8 percentage points. For children seventeen years of age and younger, low-income rates in the inner city are more than two and a half times those in the non-inner city. As shown in Figure 30, almost one-half of children under six years of age, 45 percent, are living in families with incomes below the LICO.

Given the limitations noted above, historical assessment of low-income circumstances is limited. The evidence suggests declining low-income rates in the inner city for Aboriginal people, recent immigrants and persons with a disability. However, these apparent improvements must be tempered with the realization that NHS values are being compared to earlier Census values.

According to the NHS the Aboriginal low-income rate in the inner city was 49.2 percent in 2011. The 2006 Census reported an Aboriginal low-income rate of 58 percent. If these numbers

are correct, they reveal a substantial improvement, but also underline how much work is yet to be done if low-income rates among the Aboriginal population are to be brought down to levels comparable to the inner city overall, let alone to the levels of the non-inner city.

Recent immigrants in the inner city had a low-income rate of 36.6 percent in 2011. In 2006 the Census reported a figure of 43 percent. The low-income rate based on LICO for persons with a disability in the 2006 Census was 38 percent, while the 2011 NHS found a rate of 34.8 percent.

Conclusions

The original “High and Rising” ended with a call for action and expressed concern that should things be left to themselves, conditions would likely worsen. Since publication fifteen years ago a wide range of community-based organizations and initiatives have been launched, as outlined briefly early in this chapter and as discussed further in the final chapter of this year’s State of the Inner City Report (Silver 2015). Some have had measurable outcomes while others are more intangible, but all have sought to contribute to making a difference in the lives of people who live and work in the inner city.

What are the results? It is impossible to tell with statistics alone, and the findings here are not meant to provide an indication of success or failure of programs and services delivered in the inner city. What the data presented here do suggest, however, is that, in general, characteristics in the inner city are improving.

This is especially the case in four significant areas. The long decline since 1971 in inner city population has been stemmed, suggesting an improvement in the socio-economic and related circumstances in the inner city. Levels of educational attainment are improving. Labour force characteristics, especially unemployment and labour force participation rates, have shown

particularly significant improvements. And the incidence of poverty, as measured by the LICO, has dropped more dramatically in Winnipeg’s inner city than has been the case in the non-inner city.

There are still serious poverty-related problems in Winnipeg’s inner city, perhaps most notably the terribly high incidence of poverty experienced by children. The situation has improved between 1996 and 2011, but there is a great deal more work to be done.

Although these findings do not prove that anti-poverty efforts over the past fifteen years in Winnipeg’s inner city are working — that is, we cannot prove a causal connection between those efforts and improved population, education, labour force, poverty and other indicators described above — nevertheless those data strongly suggest such a connection. Further, we believe that the probability is high that it is the investment of public dollars in community-based anti-poverty initiatives over the fifteen year period 1996 to 2011 that has contributed to the improvements shown by the data.

To the extent that this is so, it necessarily follows that such investments should be continued, because although important improvements appear to have been made, poverty and related problems persist in Winnipeg’s inner city. Of particular concern are the acute levels of poverty amongst inner city children. Should public investment in community-based solutions dry up, as has happened before, these problems would be likely to worsen yet again. We conclude, first, that it is very likely that the data presented in this chapter are evidence of the value of public investment, made consistently over lengthy periods, in community-based solutions in Winnipeg’s inner city, and second, that if the gains that have been made are to be continued, and if the problems that remain are to be improved, public investment in the inner city must be continued, and indeed, accentuated.

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Indigenous and Newcomer Young People's Experiences of Employment and Unemployment

By Keely Ten Fingers

This research project is the result of meetings of over 40 representatives from community-based organizations who met on three separate occasions to discuss research topics for this year's *State of the Inner City Report*. The discussions focused on the impact of the 2015 *MacLean's* article "Welcome to Winnipeg: Where Canada's racism problem is at its worst", which opened up important dialogue in the mainstream on racism and the systemic issues that maintain racialized inequalities. Community-based organizations are familiar with this difficult issue; it has been part of previous *State of the Inner City Reports* (2010, 2012, 2013). Practitioners in the inner city know from their work that comprehensive and holistic supports are needed to address issues of systemic racism and inequality. Practitioners wanted to unpack the systemic barriers that maintain lower income levels based on racial identities and document young people's lived experiences of trying to find work and support themselves and their families. Community groups have been working with young people to deal with these challenges for many years and focused resources are required to redress the root causes of racialized poverty and income inequality.

As has been documented in past *State of the Inner City Reports*, complex poverty and sys-

temic barriers create challenges for individuals to improve their lives. Community responses to deal with these challenges are effective but often precariously funded. Community residents struggle to deal with public services that are in silos and inflexible to their needs. It was felt that the *MacLean's* article opens up an opportunity to add to the public discourse on how to best address racism and poverty.

The purpose of this research project has been to engage Indigenous and Newcomer young adults in qualitative research to gain an understanding of:

- How are young people transitioning from education to paid work, what are the barriers, and is the pay adequate to meet basic needs?
- What are the experiences of racialized youth and young adults in employment and unemployment? What are their aspirations for the future?
- What are the policy and program responses to the issues raised by participants?

The findings of this study are based on a sample of Indigenous and Newcomer young people in the inner city. In some ways their experiences likely

mirror the experiences of young people in general. Community-based organizations advising the State of the Inner City Report were interested in the systemic barriers as identified by racialized Indigenous and Newcomer young people and what young people identify they need to break down these barriers. The overview of findings below is a summary of the 46 participants who participated in the four focus groups and identify as Indigenous or Newcomers.

A big thank you to the young people who participated in this research project for sharing your experiences and perspectives.

Overview of Findings

Indigenous and Newcomer young people have positive visions for their futures. Participants have a desire to engage with the labour force. They are motivated young people with ambitions who articulated their needs. Young people describe gaps in resources and information that demonstrates barriers to achieving their hopes and dreams.

1. Transition from Education to Paid Work, Barriers and Adequacy of Pay:

- School-based programs and training programs that provide participants with work experience are most helpful for Indigenous and Newcomer young adults in making a successful transition from education and training to paid work. Challenges in transitioning are experienced not only by the Newcomer population, but also the First Nations reserve population moving from the reserve to Winnipeg. Volunteering at the place where young people aspire to work is helpful in this transition period.
- Participants identified that success in finding paid work was a result of: having good basic skills to work through the

application process; establishing good connections or networks; having access to programs that prepare or help them find work; and individual or personal characteristics, such as practicing a strong work ethic and being able to adapt to new situations.

- Participants identified that the barriers they faced in finding paid work are: not having a grade 12 diploma or not having a degree or skills recognized in Canada. A range of other barriers were identified including: not knowing where to look for work or how to apply; school-based programs being changed or no longer offered; and not having an established network or connections in the area of work you are entering or would like to enter.
- Other barriers include not having basic needs met to be able to function effectively; not having money to pay for identification requirements, transportation costs, and criminal background checks. Social assistance policy was also identified as a barrier because it creates dependency rather than the independence individuals are seeking through finding paid work.
- There are a number of programs that participants identified that are helpful to Indigenous and Newcomer young adults in looking for paid work. Participants in this study cited Eagle's Nest, a program at St. John's High School, Youth Employment Centre, Supporting Employment and Economic Development (SEED) Winnipeg, Opportunities for Employment, and Manitoba Star.
- Participants identified that minimum wage is not "good pay" because it is insufficient to pay for basic needs, and it does not enable Indigenous and Newcomer young adults to care for their children and family

members, and does not keep pace with the actual cost of living.

2. Experiences in Employment and Unemployment, and Visions for the Future

- According to the Indigenous and Newcomer young adults we spoke to, a “good job” is one that enables individuals to pay their bills and to look after themselves and their families. It is also one where the environment and employer are non-judgmental. Some also describe a “good job” as one that provides for professional development, allows for advancement, and is secure. A number of women in this study describe it as one that is free from sexual harassment. A few describe it in terms of being in a profession that enables one to help other people.
- Participants identified that their experiences in employment involved a broad range of jobs, with participants liking the social aspect of their jobs the best, in tandem with earning money and keeping busy. Other aspects of jobs liked the best are: being provided with a bus pass; working in the community; working in the area that they live; and, being able to take care of their own children. There is a broad range of things not liked about employment experiences; being rushed when someone is learning the job; and issues of favouritism at family-owned and operated businesses.
- Indigenous and Newcomer young adults have a wide range of future employment aspirations, and they identified what they must do to achieve these aspirations, whether it is through education or training, or a combination of both. Many identified a couple of areas they would like to work in, and a desire to contribute to society and make a difference.

3. Racism

Experiences of racism emerged in the group discussion multiple times. Participants shared experiences of being discriminated against in hiring practices and on the job.

Themes emerging from experiences of racism include: racism resulting in denial of the opportunity to work, particularly through the application and interview processes; lack of understanding of newcomers and recognition of their credentials; stereotypes about how Indigenous persons and Newcomers are to look or act; and management complicity and inaction in discriminatory practices. Several Indigenous participants explained that they heard derogatory remarks about their culture and people on the job, something they identified as unacceptable.

4. Policy and Program Issues Raised

Participants identified that they would like support to find good jobs. Those that do not have a grade 12 diploma or are new to this country and do not speak English very well need particular supports. Participants indicated wanting to be involved in training programs to improve their skills to get a good job, or improve their skills on the job. Participants also wished programs they accessed or wished to access had continuous funding and remain accessible.

- Participants identified that they require knowledge about available resources and programs and resources to build basic skills for the application process. Participants identified a need for support in accessing available resources. Online information is not enough; people require supports to fill out bursary forms and learn about available funding and programs.
- Participants noted that when they were in school, built-in programs part of the school curriculum were particularly helpful to learning how to enter the labour force. Participants who had internships noted

how these were positive experiences and created a supportive environment.

- Supports to achieve educational goals are needed such as funding for post-secondary and opportunities to upgrade. Participants were interested in practicum or internship opportunities in supportive environments to learn practical skills and build a relationship with employers to help them secure a job. Recognition of Newcomers skills and credentials would make it easier for this population to find work.
- Meeting basic needs for their families and themselves (i.e. food, housing, child care, Employment and Income Assistance rates) were identified as critical for participants. Parents identified the importance of access to childcare in enabling them to search for and find work.
- Participants suggested that addressing racism can be done through building understanding of Indigenous and Newcomer cultures and peoples. It was suggested that employers set benchmarks to ensure staff is reflective of the general population and has the equivalent proportion of Indigenous and Newcomer people. However, a few believe that racism is deeply entrenched.

- Participants wanted employers to know and understand the histories and current realities of Indigenous and Newcomer young adults. They wanted them to understand that these populations are different, but are the same, in that they both want good jobs that provide for their families and allow them to give back to the community.

Methodology

A research advisory committee was formed, comprised of representatives from community-based organizations. Keely Ten Fingers oversaw the qualitative research, with the support of CCPA MB Director Molly McCracken. The project received ethics approval from the University of Winnipeg.

A university practicum student participated in conducting several of the focus groups. Community-based organizations took the lead on participant recruitment. A total of 46 participants attended the four focus group sessions held in this project. A questionnaire was administered following the signing of the participant consent form and the honorarium (\$25) receipt.

Participant Profile

The majority of participants (31 in total or 67%) identified as groups which have typically includ-

TABLE 1 Participant Profile

Characteristics	Participants
Average age	20.1 years
Gender	50% female, 44% male, 4% two-spirited
Race or cultural self-identification	67% Indigenous, 33% Newcomer
Highest level of education	41% of participants indicated Grade 12
Level of income	Only 8 participants indicated they are presently earning an income. This range widely from \$1,540–\$39,000 per year.
Caring for children	8 participants indicated they are currently caring for children.
Employment status	44% of participants are in-school or training; 39% are unemployed; 15% are employed.
Longest period of time unemployed and actively looking for work	52% of participants answered this question. Most of these (50%) indicated this was for “1 year or longer”.
Longest period of time employed at the same job or by the same employer in different positions.	41% of participants answered this question. Most of these (42%) indicated this was for “1–3 months”.

ed in the mainstream definition of Indigenous peoples in Canada, whereas 15 or 33% identified groups which may be included in the “Newcomer” population:

For a more detailed participant profile, please see the appendix.

Gender considerations

The researcher observed and noted in this report that those participants who shared experiences of sexual harassment were females, and those identifying child care issues were female participants. Only one participant stated that “employers are harder on young boys”, and there were not issues raised specific to the experience of two-spirited people or those belonging to the LGBTQ community. Only 4% of participants identified as two-spirited, which represents a significant gap in perspective and experiences.

Findings

Transitioning from Education or Training to Paid Work

Experiences of Looking for Paid Work

While some indicated positive experiences in looking for paid work, others shared experiences of the challenges in finding work without having a grade 12 diploma. School-based resources, such as that offered at St. John’s High School Career Intern program, which helps students get work experience through a placement, were cited as most helpful in the search for paid work. A participant stated that this is helpful because it can turn into a job. Another participant stated that school counsellor services “made it easy.” A few participants identified communication skills like being outspoken and well-spoken as assets in looking for paid work.

Other participants shared experiences of racism while looking for paid work:

I’ve been looking for a job for a long time, and it’s very hard — you don’t have your grade 12,

and I’m going to add this in here, and don’t get me wrong, some of it is about race, because it depends on race. Some don’t hire Aboriginals, or Black people, or Newcomers, they think you don’t know how to speak English or English is your second language.

Another participant shared that she knows she has a strong resume, which has earned her job interviews. However, like others in her community, when she goes to the interview and the potential employer sees that she is Indigenous, she is told they will call her back, but they never do.

Others shared frustration with online application processes. Potential employers indicate they will email applicants back, but they do not. A couple of participants stated they need to be taught how to better fill out these types of applications. There is also general frustration in the job search process, with one participant stating, “For past two weeks, I have been looking for a job. I took my resume out to 20 different places and still haven’t gotten a call.”

Moving from Education or Training to Paid Work

School-based programs or training programs that provide participants with work experience were cited by many as critical to making a successful transition from education and training into paid work. One participant shared the effect of having an employment centre in the school — “We had to handle the food and do customer service. They helped us with our resumes. They gave us jobs to do. And in the end, this helped us.” Another participant shared that R.B. Russell Vocational School had a work experience program, but it was shut down. A participant speaking specifically to the Newcomer situation stated, “I think things that can help when you are in the work place when you’re in school. [Also] to help build your resume, and to have workshops on employment”. The effect of programs and other supports found in a school setting was explained in this way,

Our teachers got sick of watching us wear the same clothes. They hooked us up with some clothes — that was pretty cool. That wasn't just the work experience, it was earning honest money, knowing what that was like. It's really helpful to earn honest money, 'cause I didn't know how to earn that honest money. It felt good when you earned stuff.

Training programs that provide work experience are also helpful to Indigenous and Newcomer young adults in making the transition to paid work. One participant shared that, "We need to get more programs where we get to have more training, a variety of training, or specialized training that people want for specific jobs". Another participant stated that the value of training programs is that they "give you the prerequisites that basically prep you to go and find work."

A few comments relating specifically to First Nations were made. One participant stated, "That's very tough when you come to the city, and you're a youth, and you come partially because you want to get a job because there are no jobs on the reserve. That's what's lacking is the transition." It was stated that, "Maybe offering programs for reserves. I feel like they are very isolated and they don't have the opportunities like the people in the city have."

Another participant shared her experiences of systemic challenges as a First Nations person who grew up in care:

And then I was done school, and then I had to find a job right away. 'Cause as soon as I finished school that was the end of funding from my Band. And it's really typical 'cause I grew up as a foster kid, so nobody taught me the basic life skills. I had to teach myself, and it's really difficult. So, like I'm thinking about going back to school again. And so it would be easier to like have some support from EIA, so when I'm finished school I'm not completely left to my own devices and having to figure how to make things work.

This participant is clearly articulating the need for continuous and wrap-around supports to move from school to work. Young people who grow up in care of the child welfare system may lack the opportunity to learn certain life skills and have access to social networks that would lead to good jobs.

In terms of increasing the number of Indigenous people in the labour force, participants suggested businesses have a policy to set a benchmark and employ a certain number of Indigenous persons. One participant shared that when they identified on job applications that they are Indigenous due to equal opportunity employment provisions, they did not receive calls back.

A few participants stated that volunteering was helpful to them. A few others talked about having to deal with the anxieties experienced when making the transition to work — finding transportation, including learning new bus routes; making new friends; and different emotions, such as nervousness.

Reasons for Success in Finding Paid Work

Participants had a strong interest in finding good jobs and a good general idea of how to go about doing this. Participants identified four general areas as reasons for success in finding paid work. The first area is having good basic skills for the work application process, including resume-writing and interview skills.

Establishing good connections or networking was a second general area cited as a reason for success in finding paid work. This can be done through volunteer work or through seeking the help of someone you know who works.

A third area cited as a reason for success in finding paid work includes programs that prepare or help individuals find work. Youth Employment Services and Eagle's Nest were two such programs identified. About the latter, one participant stated, "That's really a good program because they help Aboriginal youth coming from the reserve to the city, with bus tickets and teach

them how to use the bus.” Another participant shared that, “after graduation, I had to find a program to help me find work. We need more programs to get that experience, and not ‘okay, get the hell outta here, go find work’”.

Other comments related generally to the personal, individual level — having a positive attitude; being willing to adapt yourself to new situations; being committed to what you are doing and practicing a strong work ethic; and setting realistic expectations.

Barriers to Finding Paid Work

One of the most significant barriers to finding work identified by participants relates to educational requirements. In many instances, it is not having a grade 12 diploma. One participant stated, “Jobs where you’re supposed to start out at, for example McDonald’s, you have to have a high grade level.” In other instances, primarily for Newcomers, it is not having a degree recognized in Canada. One participant stated:

One of the huge barriers is, like it’s a challenge for us to kind of match our skills, experience, and education level. Some of my friends, they have Master’s Degree and PhD...back in China they are very highly educated, but here they have trouble finding good jobs. You have a PhD, but here you can’t find work and are unemployed. They have trouble fitting in the job market.

It was also stated that,

Yes, it’s a different system here, and also the language barrier is a big difference, and culture. And also lots of people find it’s hard. It’s important to find a place that will understand our visibility, support, and cultural differences.

For many Indigenous and Newcomer participants in this project, those things that they are working for and are currently lacking are the very things that serve as barriers to finding paid work.

It’s like this idea — if you are going to be a working person you are supposed to have it all together. Your housing down pat, your transportation down pat, and your family is supposed to be safe and secure. And you’re supposed to be ready to work and it’s not supposed to be a work in progress.

Many participants stated that they do not have everything “down pat.” Basic needs like housing, transportation and safety are concerns. Affordable child care was mentioned several times. One participant stated, “You can’t apply for child care unless you’re working or in school. And if you make too much money you don’t get subsidized.”

They are lacking money for identification requirements, transportation costs, and criminal background checks, with different participants stating:

Well even when I was younger, identification. Unless someone tells you that are essential for you to have your identification, even that is a barrier. Because they are all in different places, and some of them you have to pay for. Some of them you have to wait two weeks for.

How are you supposed to buy a vehicle when you’re in school? I think about like poverty, and us Indigenous people and Newcomers don’t have like a lot of support and don’t come from wealthy families. When you’re going to school you’re taking a bus. Your student loans — your education is not paid for, and you already experience these financial barriers, and you come out with a four-year degree, how you supposed to pay for everything?

Criminal checks and the vulnerable people work and those things cost money and not everyone is able to or willing to compensate you for making the money and investment in the place you want to work at. And even prior contact checks, if you grew up in care and child welfare involvement all that is going to pop up and that

can be intimidating or prevent people from even applying for those types of positions.

A number of participants identified they felt discrimination on the basis of race and gender. An Indigenous participant stated, “When I was growing up it was very hard to find a job. At 18–20 years-old, how kids that were my age, they could just go to Wal-Mart or Tim Horton’s and get a job like that, and more of my friends were getting jobs like that. Every time I went to do that, I would never get a call or anything.”

Challenges with social assistance were identified as another barrier to finding paid work. One participant shared,

When I was doing part-time work over the summer, I was on welfare to finish up a course I was taking, and my worker never gave me a lot of information. So, I mean, it gauges on your worker — they tell you what kind of access you have to the program. So, if the worker likes you and thinks you’re going to be successful, they will give you all the information and know all the little things about how to get a few bucks here or there. But if they don’t like you or they don’t think you’re going to be worth their time, you get nothing — you get to figure it out when you leave. They don’t tell you that when you’re on welfare, you can’t make more than \$200 a month before they start taking dollar for dollar back. So how are you supposed to be encouraged to get a full-time job? Now you’re trying to balance a full-time job, life, paying back welfare and still trying to get your basic needs met, without being overwhelmed, stressed, and having it affect your personal and professional life. From my perspective, when it comes to income assistance, if they don’t have an exit plan for their different levels of services, then that’s what they are creating — they are creating social dependence not social assistance.

A range of others barriers to paid work were also identified, including:

- Not knowing where to look for work and how to apply.
- School-based programs are changed or are no longer offered because of funding cuts or a change in school administration.
- Having a bad experience at a previous job and having that negatively impact your ability to get references.
- Not having an established network or connections in the area of work you are entering into or would like to enter into. One participant stated, “...you’re going into the world as an unknown entity, which means there is a lot of suspicion and distress about who you are and where you come from and why you should work there.”
- Being judged by not having an expansive vocabulary.
- Competition.

Perspectives on “Good Pay”

Participants were asked what they consider as “good pay” and for those currently working, is their pay good. There was resounding consensus that the minimum wage is insufficient to pay for basic needs and to help care for family members, and is not keeping pace with the actual cost of living. Comments on minimum wage include:

Yeah, minimum wage is going up a little over the years, but like for groceries, it’s going up more than your minimum wage. So, it’s like how do you balance that with bills and other things like that. Other things are getting higher for all the families in poverty.

It would be a substantial gap as minimum wage just went up to \$11 an hour. So you’re already looking at getting paid once every two weeks, like for most places one pay cheque is going to cover your rent, if you don’t live in subsidized housing.

I think our minimum wage should be (paid at) the standard of living.

Another respondent described the inadequacy of minimum wage when caring for the family,

No [minimum wage is not enough], because helping to take care of siblings who are looking for work. It's hard trying to pay for food. I get frustrated when some in the family don't help out while I'm working. I have to borrow to get by. Too many people in the household, and especially when they don't know how to budget. And, it's hard to get stuff for my child. We're not going let our family live on the streets. I feel sad when I see all the homeless on the streets.

Minimum and low-wages do not enable participants to pay for basic needs such as rent and food. One person stated that such wages do not allow you to buy "actual food, not Kraft dinner and stuff, which is basically what it [those wages] would cover." When asked how they pay for rent and food when they are not working, one participant responded, "You sacrifice one of them." Other talked about sacrifices in spending as a result of no job or low wages — "sometimes I have to go without medicine because welfare won't pay for it, such as antibiotics, and it's hard when you're not Treaty. I can't get my dad to sign the paper to get [Indian] status." A related issue was not yet receiving funding by the Band when she is supposed to be. Until she starting receiving it, she stated, "I'm supposed to live on \$121 per week — it's not enough."

Those who are students comment that often they are too tired to work after school, and when they work, it affects their school work. A couple of people commented that they are forced into the cycle of taking out a short-term, high-interest rate loan due to low wages.

A few commented that minimum and low wages also prevent these families from enjoying recreational activities — "a lot of families talk about the cost of the zoo. Lower income families can't do a lot now a days."

Despite the low incomes experienced by those involved in this research project, they still see the

good in the paid work opportunities they have or have had. For example, they see the importance and benefit of gaining work experience, of expanding their social networks by making new friends at work, and earning money to provide for themselves, and in some cases, for their children and/or families.

Experiences of Employment and Unemployment

Perspectives on What Makes a Job a "Good Job"

Many participants indicated a good job is one that enables individuals to pay their bills and to look after themselves and their families. One participant described "good pay" as "enough to keep you alive, and a bit happy and a bit exhausted." Another participant described a "good job" as "one where I don't have to sacrifice the needs of my family, and I can actually provide for them." When this participant was asked, what would help you so that you wouldn't have to sacrifice the needs of your family? She responded:

Flexibility of hours. Maybe listening to where I'm at, not judging me for not being in the same place that other people are who have had more support in their lives. I guess a current barrier I'm facing right now is I don't have a driver's license. So, I can't get hours in the place I want to work at, because I don't have a driver's license.

Several participants agreed that a "good job" involved a non-judgmental employer and environment. One related it to lack of understanding and the need for empathy, particularly of Indigenous peoples:

I think understanding the history of Canada's Indigenous people is pretty important. I think a lot of the times there's assumptions made that people don't want to work. But it's hard to find work when you're based on the colour of your skin. I've worked with people who have

purposely not looked at licensees if they have an Indigenous last name, so there's many of us that want to go and work but are prevented from doing (so).

Some participants described a “good job” as one that provides for professional development, allows you to advance, and is secure. A few participants, especially females, describe it as one where there is no sexual harassment, which forced a couple to leave the job, and no favouritism. The problem of favoritism was raised in a couple of situations in this research, and was related to the issue of racism. On this topic, a participant shared that:

[Favoritism is] like when you're working at a family-owned business and they're paying the family member more money for the same job. I had to leave because of their family member. They didn't listen to me and they probably thought I was a dumb Native.

A few participants described a good job in terms of professions where you get to help people, such as a teacher, child care worker or social worker.

Experiences in Employment

Participants have held a range of jobs — a day care, Best Buy, the Red River Exhibition, MTS, Tim Horton's, various restaurants, Hertz and community-based organizations. Some have worked long hours during the summer and a few hours during the rest of the year, while some have experienced working anywhere from a few to regular hours at different times.

Earning money, keeping busy and the social aspect of working are what participants like the best about their employment experiences. Some also liked that their employers would periodically check in with them to make sure they were doing okay in performing the job. One of these participants commented, “When it gets busy here at SEED, other co-workers here, when they see I need help they step-in and help.” In this example Seed Winnipeg is providing a supportive

work environment and creates particular positions to provide skills training to young people.

A couple of participants stated they liked benefits and incentives that some employers offered. One of these stated, “When you left the job, you got a severance. This is helpful because I was going back to school or training. Also, got vacation pay which was like an incentive.”

Other aspects of employment that participants liked the best are: being provided with a bus pass; working in the community; working in the area that they lived; and being able to take care of their own children.

There were a broad range of things that participants did not like about their employment experiences:

- “Derogatory remarks were made about Aboriginal culture and people in the work place.”
- “Getting called in when you're not scheduled.”
- “Being rushed when you're just learning the job.”
- “Compassionate leave is not enough for extended family.”
- Hourly rate
- Shift work
- Manual labour
- Repetitive work
- Work conflicts

As in other discussion topics, the issue of favouritism and bad experiences with family-owned and –operated business were raised here:

The good work being given to the workers that employers like and the crappy work being given to those they don't like.

I was bullied by other workers, and was made to do all the heavy stuff. Tried to talk to manager, but she was being mean too. Every day it was stressful, and so, it was hard to wake up. Also,

there wasn't enough equipment and so I had to borrow from others.

Working at a group home — they were all family and because I couldn't speak their language they put all duties on me. I was always going over-time and never got paid. When I went to the big supervisor they all teamed up on me because they were family — it was them versus me. I ended up getting let go and couldn't use them as a reference.

Experiences of Racism

There are a few themes that emerge from participants' sharing their experiences of racism. Participants felt that their responses when applying for jobs were a result of racism:

I apply at different places, they take an appointment, but don't call you back.

At "Buck or Two", I dropped off an application for two years, but nothing. It was family-owned. They think of us as criminals.

I was making cold calls looking for work, and scored an appointment. When I got there, she [the person taking the appointments] didn't want to see me.

Well there is some applications and they ask you what is your nationality and I'm like for me, if I put an Aboriginal Canadian are they going to give me a call back and stuff like that? I got a call back for this interview I was nice to them on the phone and when I went into this interview, they never barely even talked to me. They barely even said anything to me, and I am like "wow", you know?

One participant stated,

Where I work, I feel like I'm the only Aboriginal employed, and funny enough I'm the hardest worker, the most social and have a really hard work ethic. I don't need to be told you have half an hour go do this. I go do it myself.

An Indigenous participant stated, "The only job I've had is with a native organization, and that's sad."

A second theme emerging from participants when they shared their experience of racism is the lack of understanding of Newcomers and recognition of their credentials. Comments that illustrate this are as follows:

In terms of credentials and experience, that is not necessarily recognized here.

Well those are things to me that you would like to offer and share with a respective employer, to allow you [to learn about] the culture - that would help them overcome prejudice....this country is based on Newcomers. People come here for a better way life. They come from prejudice, war, poverty, and so on. And they are highly motivated, and want a better way for their children. So, I guess my question is those are the things to share to help overcome the negative perceptions.

A third theme emerging from the discussions of experiences of racism are stereotypes related to how participants feel Indigenous persons and Newcomers are to look or act. This is illustrated by the following:

I'm fair-skinned, and when I dress in a certain way, I can pass for either race. So, they judge me on how I dress.

I used to clean people's houses, and I would be watched like I was going to steal. I was not trusted.

I was working for this cleaning company, I guess the money had gone missing and it was myself and another co-worker who was white, and my boss who was white. My boss took it upon herself to search me entirely, going as far as emptying my bra and everything. And my white co-worker didn't receive the same treatment.

The participant who provided the comment above was asked if there was any recourse for that. She stated, "I never went back to work. It was my first time employed...I never went back."

A fourth theme is management complicity and inaction in discriminatory practices. For example, one participant stated that there were “people making fun and talking bad about my culture, and management not doing anything about it.” Another participant stated, “It’s not only racism, but discrimination for sure” and explained that she was denied a lunch break though she had been working since 7 a.m.

Future Aspirations of Participants

Participants have a wide range of future employment aspirations — from being a cosmetologist to a pharmacist, from being a social worker to being a business owner. They know what they must do to get there, whether it is through education or training or a combination of both. Many identified a couple of areas they would like to work in. Many identified a desire to contribute to society and make a difference. As one example of these things, one participant stated,

I want to become a chef. I want to enroll in Red River culinary arts, and graduate from there and become a chef, possibly have my own restaurant and become a bartender. If not, I’ll become a correctional officer to inspire kids. I was a youth in and out of there too, and youth they say to the staff, ‘you don’t know how it is.’ I want to be that person to inspire, because I was right in there before. I want to inspire change not just in Aboriginal youth but all the youth that go in and out of there — that’s my dream job.

Policy and Program Responses Raised

Programs Needed

Programs that are needed include those that help people get good jobs, especially those that do not have a grade 12 diploma or are new to this country and do not speak English very well. For example, Indigenous participants in this study cited the Eagle’s Nest program as an effective program in this area for Indigenous young

adults because it targets not only those in grade 9 to 12, but those who have not completed their grade 12. It helps them to earn certificates such as for CPR. Another program that was cited as an effective program was that which was run by the Children of the Earth school. This program provided information on money management, how to dress for interviews and other things not known to participants prior to the program. For Newcomers, programs should focus on literacy and building basic skills, and also explore a mentorship model where those who have successfully gone through similar experiences help those who are new to the country.

The need for more training programs, including when a person is just starting a new job, and the need to fund more inner-city programs, were also identified.

Making It Easier to Find Good Jobs

Increasing knowledge about available resources will help Indigenous and Newcomer young adults to find good jobs. One participant stated, “I just find it hard to get this information and it’s a bit of a mess. It’s hard to get information.”

Access to programs and resources for employment is needed, such as workshops on resume-building, preparing for interviews, and generally preparing for the application process. Support to prepare for paid work by providing some work experience or provide volunteer opportunities, and also informing you of your rights as a worker, designed for these youth populations is needed as well.

Participants also identified the need to address different educational barriers, including the basics such as filling out forms and applications. One participant stated:

I think there’s like a pretty large amount of barriers to education for Newcomers, and specifically for the Indigenous community. There needs to be more places that help you access programs and bursaries. Someone that can help

people fill them out. You're applying to an access program, you're applying but you don't have your grade 12, as an individual student who hasn't been in school for like 15 years. Filling out those bursary applications — it's very daunting and if you're filling them out online, it's even harder.

Similarly, another respondent stated:

Do you have Internet? Do you have a laptop? Are you able to navigate yourself through those forms? We need more accessible places to help people with those kinds of things that are very important. To just explain the process of student loans to people too, to try and get through to student loans. Like good luck and you know they are just short, they don't want to explain things to you — 'oh, read the website'.

Participants would like the opportunity to upgrade their education to the level of the type of job they want. Some also see the need to re-examine educational requirements because “most of our people don't have high levels of education”. Increased educational funding supports are also needed.

Training with a practicum component is critical to transitioning into work. It affords not only the practical skills, but can help build a relationship between the individual and their potential employer that can turn into a work opportunity. One participant stated, “Training at the place where you want to work [is important], because through that you get work experience and they would likely hire you.” If you do not find work where you are trained, the training you receive can still be a benefit. For example, one participant stated, “Training is important because it gives you experience. Like if you were in a mall, so they might like that you were working in the same kind of work”. Some participants stated that they would like training opportunities in the area where they live.

Mentorships, internships and recognition of skills and credentials for Newcomers who obtained

these in other countries were also identified as making it easier for this population to find work.

I think a lot of Newcomers would appreciate internship work....a program or school will have connections with the certain employer, so they can introduce them or connect them. Even doing say, an internship, doing part time, 10–15 hours per week just give to satisfy the requests to fill in the hours per week. That's a great opportunity for students to get a taste of the country.

Having basic needs met, such as housing, and having access to child care and transportation, are needed to help make it easier for Indigenous and Newcomer young adults to find and maintain paid work. One participant stated, “If you don't have a fixed address, or home, if you do find one, it's a landlord who's selling drugs. Quality housing is too expensive.” Another participant was concerned about problems arising as a result of access to child care — “Where are you going to leave your child? I don't want to risk CFS being called in.” The impact of not having your basic needs met was explained by one participant who said:

When I transition into work it's always difficult to feed myself. Because with the budget I have now, I need to meet the needs of my husband and my son, but then I have a limited budget...I go to work and I'm hungry for 8 hours. And I'm supposed to go home and be a functional parent...we're hungry and we're weak. You can't focus on the job you're doing. It's hard to meet the needs of others when behind the scenes you're not having your needs met.

Stopping racism and more support from supervisors and managers were identified as additional ways to make it easier to find paid work also.

Addressing Racism

Increasing understanding of Indigenous persons and Newcomers, and learning about stereotypes and the importance and benefit of diversity were

identified as ways to address racism. Speaking out was identified as another way. One participant stated, “Stand up for yourself, and say the right words for yourself. And, carry a recorder with you when talking to the boss. They don’t see us as credible, or see us as liars. So, when you go to court, you have evidence.” Being politically active and showing solidarity was also identified as a means to combat racism. One participant stated, “We showed them when we voted — when we stand together, we can do it.”

While some participants felt that racism can be addressed through building understanding and implementing specific policy measures, a couple of participants see it as social or personal issue. One of these participants stated, “Racism is more of a social issue than to do with hiring”. Another stated, “If someone tries to stop discrimination, it’s not going to work because discrimination is within a person”.

What Employers Should Know About Indigenous Persons and Newcomers

Participants explained what they what employers to know about them:

- “We’re different, but we’re also the same.”
- “We’re not going to leave, we need a job, and we need to support our family members.”
- “We’re a little guarded. We have to be because our grandparents got put through things, and what we went through growing up. We’re still in Indian Residential School, as far as I’m concerned, because we’re still treated the same.”
- “We’re resilient to have to deal with these times and issues.”
- “They need to know we were here first.”
- “They don’t know how kind we are — including when they first came here.”
- “When it hits the fan, they’ll come to us once again — we know how to survive.”

- “Be respectful to our young women and all our people.”
- “Employers should back their workers when they’re being treated poorly by customers or clients.”
- “We’re not criminals.”

Conclusion

The experiences of Indigenous and Newcomer young adults in Winnipeg demonstrate that much needs to be done to prepare them to successfully transition into good jobs. They require programs and services that meet their unique needs and aspirations. This includes school-based and training programs that help them to more easily find paid work, better prepare for the application process, provide them with work experience, enables them to expand their networks and connections to potential employers, to gain a grade 12 diploma, and act as opportunities that translate into paid work. Funding for such programs must be reinstated in some cases, and in other cases, funding must be enhanced.

Indigenous persons and Newcomers in the city aspire to “good jobs” and “good pay”, which involve respectful environments where people have an understanding of their cultures and peoples, and that meets their basic needs and enables them to take care of themselves, their children and families while being able to contribute to society. Racism must be addressed through building understanding, combatting stereotypes, and exercising solidarity. It is a significant barrier to these populations finding work and to the quality of the work environment.

The minimum wage is not “good pay” and is insufficient to meet the basic needs of these populations.

The stories shared by participants in this research project demonstrates that the Indigenous persons and Newcomer populations are not similarly situated to the mainstream popu-

lation, and in fact, are at great disadvantage because of poverty, marginalization and racism. Therefore, mainstream responses will not have a meaningful effect. Employers, the different levels of government, high schools and post-secondary schools, and training programs must work with

these populations and the community-based organizations working with these populations to develop and implement a range of resources and supports required to ensure these populations achieve their aspirations of looking after themselves, their families and communities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from the focus groups conducted by Keely Ten Fingers, the advisory committee to this project and CCPA Manitoba have the following recommendations.

1. *End discrimination and racism*

- Participants courageously shared experiences of racism and discrimination in job-searching and employment experiences. We all have a responsibility to end racism and discrimination through education and ongoing respectful dialogue. Business associations and other associations have a role to play to educate employers about the impacts of discrimination and to build understanding and respect across cultures and races. Employers can do this on their own initiative as well.

2. *Supports to complete grade 12 and transition to post-secondary education needed:*

- Participants identified that finding work without having grade 12 education is a struggle, supports need to be in place to ensure students complete high school and have access to post-secondary education. Programs like CEDA Pathways

to Education provide holistic and wrap-around supports and improves graduation rates using a holistic, Indigenous approach.

3. *Funding for post-secondary education*

- Participants identified a desire to pursue post-secondary education but the ability to pay for an education is a barrier. Student loans do not always make post-secondary education available, young people explained they are unsure of how they would repay a student loan. Post-secondary education should be made accessible to students who face barriers, provide funding for education and ensure adequate funding for post-secondary institutions. Steps need to be taken to make education accessible regardless of income level, this includes:
 - Equitable funding for First Nations K–12 students and adequate funding to pursue area of interest in post-secondary education.
 - Transitioning student loans to student grants, as per the *View from Here 2015* recommendation 3–8.

- Fully-funding Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) recipients to pursue post-secondary education, including living expenses, as a universal policy.

4. *Ensure school-based work experience and job search skills in place*

- Participants referenced in-school employment training and vocational training programs as providing them with job-search skills and work experience. These opportunities should be available to all students.

5. *Funding for pre-employment and employment programming*

- All interested young people should have access to programming that reflects their culture and builds belonging, identity, self-esteem and self-confidence.
- The new federal government has an opportunity to scale up existing successful initiatives that support young people on their journey to good jobs. The new federal government should undertake consultations with organizations in Winnipeg's inner city working with young people in order to understand how best to support community-based organizations to scale up programs and provide long-term sustainable, predictable funding.
- The provincial First Jobs Strategy announced this summer is promising and should be evaluated to measure impact.
- The City of Winnipeg's Oshki Anishinabe Nigaaniwak Aboriginal Youth Strategy supports many Aboriginal-led organizations and programs in the inner city. Currently the funding not indexed to inflation. Consideration should be given to cost increases and funding to meet program

demand to ensure this Strategy achieves its goals.

- Winnipeg has a long-history of tri-level governmental agreements. With the new federal government there is an opportunity to renew these agreements and include a strong focus on youth pre-employment supports, training and supports to access to good jobs.
- Restore and increase funding to successful community-based programs that support youth, including education and the transition to employment.
- Available programs, services and funding for education and training should be more available to young people. Participants identified needing assistance in applying for programs and bursaries, including requiring access to computers and the internet at no cost.

6. *Funding for supportive work environments*

- Participants identified that supportive work environments helped them explore job interests. Support should be available to create and maintain internships, practicum placements and mentorship opportunities in the non-profit sector, public and private sector.
- Participants pointed out that many opportunities are only available in the summer, young people are interested in job opportunities year-round.
- Social enterprises and the provincial social enterprise strategy offer promise to create supportive training and employment experiences for people with barriers to improvement. These should continue to be supported and scaled up.

7. *Labour Market Intermediaries*

- Labour Market Intermediaries (LMIs) bridge the gap between supply and demand

to support Aboriginal peoples to transition from training to successful employment. BUILD Inc has received contributions from the province and the federal government to consult with stakeholders around the design and development of a potential Winnipeg based Aboriginal focused LMI model. A final report is expected in early Spring 2016. Funding will need to be available to implement this model.

- Participants identified discrimination in job-seeking and in the work force, LMIs address racial discrimination in the workplace through interventions such as cultural reclamation, decolonization, and anti racism training in the workplace.

8. *Equity in hiring and skills recognition*

- Businesses and non profits should look at the employment equity benchmarks established in the public service and hire so that the workforce is reflective of the population overall.
- Participants identified skills and credential recognition as a barrier for Newcomers. Recognition Counts at SEED Winnipeg provides low interest loans to assist Newcomers in skills recognition, upgrading and training needed for employment in the fields for which they have education and experience obtained outside of Canada. Federal and Provincial governments should increase funding to programs like Recognition Counts so that all Newcomers can transition into employment opportunities that are commensurate with their education, skills and experience.

9. *Protect all workers from unfair labour practices (as per the View from Here 2015 recommendation 2–11)*

- Participants conveyed experiences where their rights as workers were violated and

they were not respected in the workplace. There is a need to increase accessibility of information on worker's rights, especially in non-unionized workers.

- Non-unionized workers do not have anyone to advocate on their behalf and only benefit from minimum employment standards related to minimum wage, hours worked, paid vacation and termination.
- *The View from Here* recommends the province put together a process of appeal for non-unionized workers who believe they were wrongfully dismissed, to allow these workers to have their case heard by an appeal board with procedures similar to grievance-arbitration procedures in collective agreements.

10. *Fair minimum wage*

- Participants confirmed what research has shown, the minimum wage is not adequate to meet basic needs. *The View from Here 2015* and *Make Poverty History Manitoba* recommend the minimum wage be increased to the equivalent of the Low Income Cut Off (LICO) Before Tax for a single parent with one child, which in 2014 is \$15.53 / hour, through pre-announced steps by 2020.

References

- Bernas, Kirsten. 2015. *The View from Here 2015: Manitobans Call for a Renewed Poverty Reduction Strategy*. Winnipeg: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Manitoba and the Canadian Economic Development Network.
- Make Poverty History Manitoba. 2015. Prioritized policy recommendations. www.makepovertyhistorymb.com

Appendix: Detailed Participant Profile

- The average age was 20.1 years.
- 50% (23) of respondents were female; 44% (20) were male; 4% (2) were two-spirited; and 1 participant didn't answer.
- 11 respondents identified as "Aboriginal"; 7 as "First Nations"; 8 as Ojibway, Cree, Anishinaabe, or Oji-Cree; 5 as Metis; 3 as African; 2 as Eritrean; 1 as Filipino; 1 as Chinese; 1 as Jamaican; 1 as Black; 1 as "Black/White/Jamaican/Scottish/Metis"; 1 as Canadian; and 4 did not answer.
- 19 indicated their highest level of education was grade 12; 13 as Grades 9–11 (most of which were still currently in school); 3 as English Language Literacy; 4 as some College or University; 4 as having received a Post-Secondary Degree; 1 as grade 7 (currently in school); 1 as receiving a GED; and 1 did not answer.
- 8 respondents indicated they were presently earning an income, which ranged from \$1,540 per year to \$39,000 per year. The average of these is \$16,692.50. The remaining participants indicated: they were presently receiving social assistance or employment income assistance; are being cared for by parents (these were nearly all younger-aged participants); are receiving Band post-secondary funding; or have no income.
- 34 respondents indicated they have no children in their care; 8 indicated they have children in their care, which ranged from 1 to 4 kids, with an average of 1.5; 1 indicated she was expecting; and 3 did not answer.
- 20 respondents indicated they are currently "in school or training"; 18 respondents indicated they were currently "unemployed"; 5 indicated "employed part-time"; and 2 as "employed full-time".
 - Of the 20 respondents who indicated they are currently "in school or training": 1 has been in this status for "1 day-1 month"; 2 for "2–4 months"; 2 for "5–8 months"; 2 for "9 months to 1 year"; 13 for "1 year and longer"; and 1 did not answer.
 - Of the 18 respondents that indicated they are currently "unemployed": 3 did not answer; 4 have been in this situation for "1 day to 1 month"; 7 for "2–4 months"; 1 for "9 months to 1 year"; 4 for "1 year or longer".
 - Of the 5 who indicated "employed part-time": 1 has been in this status for "1 day

- to 1 month”; 1 for “2–4 months”; 1 for “9 months to 1 year”; and 2 for “1 year or longer”.
- Of the 2 who indicated “employed full-time”: 1 has been in this status for “5–8 months”; and the other for “1 year or longer”.
 - Of the 24 who answered the question, “What is the longest period of time that you have been unemployed but were actively looking for work?”, responses were: 5 indicating for “1–3 months”; 3 for “4–6 months”; 1 for “7–9 months; 2 for “10 months to a year; and 12 for “1 year or longer”; and 1 did not answer.
 - Of the 19 who answered the question, “What is the longest period of time that you have been employed at the same job or by the same employer in different positions”, responses were: 8 indicating for “1–3 months”; 4 for “4–6 months”; 1 for “7–9 months”; and 6 for “1 year or longer”.

Beneath the Surface and Beyond the Present: Gains in Fighting Poverty in Winnipeg's Inner City

By Jim Silver

Poverty continues to be a major problem in Winnipeg's inner city. Far too many people live lives of severe hardship, often characterized more by despair than by hope. The costs to all of us of allowing these conditions to persist are high. Indeed, from many perspectives, it is irrational to allow this situation to persist. It is also, of course, deeply immoral.

Yet beneath the surface, much good work is being done. The foundation is being laid for significant change. This is not to say that there is some quick and easy solution that has been discovered. There is not — there is no silver bullet. But if we continue to build on the foundation that has now been laid by increasing our investments in solutions that have been shown to work, our children and grandchildren will have the opportunity to live in a different and better city. The gritty, hard-scrabble Winnipeg of today, with its mean streets and stunted ambitions would blossom, as tens of thousands of those previously locked in poverty added their skills and creativity to the building of a new future.

We know that the anti-poverty initiatives that have been undertaken in recent years and are being continued and even added to today are starting to produce positive results. The long decline in the population of Winnipeg's inner city has

been stemmed; levels of educational attainment and rates of unemployment and labour force participation in the inner city are improving; incomes are rising faster in the inner city than the non-inner city; and the incidence of poverty is dropping faster in the inner city than in the non-inner city (Lezubski and Silver 2015). This strongly suggests that the strategy being used in the inner city is working, and peoples' lives are gradually being improved. It is important that we continue on this path.

Poverty in Winnipeg

Nevertheless, although gains are being made and the foundation for real change is being laid, much of the data reveal the persistence of serious poverty. So while it is important to show that progress is being made, it is equally important to acknowledge that poverty remains a very serious problem and more remains to be done.

The *Manitoba Child and Family Report Card 2015* reported that the child poverty rate in Manitoba was 29 percent in 2013 using the Low-Income Measure, or LIM — the highest among Canadian provinces (Frankel and Northcott 2015). Darren Lezubski (2014: 120) analyzed Census Canada and National Household Survey data



for 2011, and found that 49.6 percent — almost one-half — of Aboriginal children in Winnipeg under six years of age lived in households with incomes below the LIM. David MacDonald and Daniel Wilson of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found that in Manitoba, just over 30 percent of Metis, Inuit and non-status First Nations children and 62 percent of status First Nations children 18 years of age and younger were living in families with incomes below the LIM (MacDonald and Wilson 2013: 17). The latest food bank data show that 63,791 Manitobans used food banks in March, 2015, a 57.6 percent increase since 2008–2009, and that 41.9 percent of these were children under the age of 18 years (Food Banks Canada 2015: 21).

It is important to note that this paper is about poverty and responses to poverty in Winnipeg's inner city, while the data cited above are either city-wide or province-wide and so are not strictly

comparable. Further, to the extent that the data mentioned above are province-wide and include on-reserve First Nations people, the federal government bears a share of the responsibility for the problem. Nevertheless, these caveats notwithstanding, it is clear that poverty and particularly the poverty experienced by children continue to be major problems in Manitoba, and in Winnipeg's inner city.

The Damage Caused by Poverty

It can be extremely damaging for children to be raised poor. This is especially so because poverty now is so complex. Today's complex poverty too often includes not just a shortage of income, but also dilapidated housing, poor health, troubles in school, racism, the lasting and damaging effects of colonialism, domestic and street-level violence, and social exclusion. Too often,



those suffering these conditions internalize their problems, blaming themselves for their poverty, leading to a lack of self-confidence and self-esteem and a sense of hopelessness about a better future (Silver 2014a: Chapter Four). Children growing up in these circumstances can be damaged — physically, emotionally, educationally, even spiritually, in the sense of the erosion of the human spirit — leading to an intergenerational form of poverty.

The high rates of poverty experienced by Aboriginal children need to be viewed with particular alarm because the Aboriginal population in Manitoba and in Winnipeg continues to grow faster than, and to be younger than, the non-Aboriginal population. From 2006 to 2011 the Aboriginal population in Winnipeg grew by 14.7 percent, more than three times the 4.2 percent growth of Winnipeg's total population. In 2011, 28.7 percent of Aboriginal children were under

the age of 15 years, almost double the 15.7 percent of the non-Aboriginal population (Lezubski 2014: 23, 33). It has been estimated that by 2017 one in three Manitoba children under the age of 14 will be Aboriginal (Statistics Canada Demographic Division 2005). What these demographics mean is that the damage caused when children grow up in poverty is likely to grow exponentially if we do not stem these problems now.

These problems become clear when we examine data on educational outcomes. In the highest income quintile in Winnipeg, 98.5 percent of youth graduate high school on time; in the lowest income quintile that rate drops to 55.4 percent (Brownell et al. 2012: 207); in the lowest income neighbourhoods in Winnipeg the rate drops further still, with around 25 percent of young people graduating high school on time (Brownell et al. 2004). This represents a massive loss of human talent and creativity. These



educational problems start young, as evidenced by Early Development Instrument (EDI) scores, which measure children's readiness for school at age five. In the highest income quintile in Winnipeg, 23 percent of children are not ready for school at age five; in the lowest income quintile, 38 percent are not ready; in Point Douglas in Winnipeg's North End, 42 percent of children age five — more than four in ten — are not ready for school (Santos et al. 2012: 10–13). This is a direct reflection of the complex poverty these children experience. In fact, while EDI scores are worse for Aboriginal than non-Aboriginal children, when analysts correct for socio-economic status the differences in school readiness between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children disappear. It is poverty, not Aboriginal identity, which is the problem.

The persistence of complex poverty matters to all of us. When young people do not complete school, they are unlikely to find satisfying and well-paid jobs. We lose their natural skills and abilities; they contribute less than would otherwise be the case to our total tax revenue; and they are much more likely to be recipients of various costly social services. In producing poor educational outcomes, poverty adds to the costs that all of us pay (Silver 2014a: 110–114). The same is the case with health: those who are poor are more likely to experience poor health, of all kinds, thus adding to society's growing health care costs (Brownell et al. 2012). The children of those who are poor are much more likely to be in the care of Child and Family Services. Manitoba has one of the highest rates in the world of kids in care — almost 10,300, 87 percent of whom are Aboriginal (Manitoba Family Services 2015) — and this has become a dramatically growing cost to society. For example, between 2004 and 2012 the budget for child welfare in Manitoba grew by 350 percent, leading journalist Catherine Mitchell (2012) to ask: "Is child welfare the new health care, the insatiable black hole of the [provincial] budget?" These rising child welfare costs are a direct consequence of poverty: in the highest-income urban neighbourhoods in Manitoba, the incidence of children in care is 0.3 percent; in the lowest-income neighbourhoods it is 14.1 percent (Brownell 2013: 8). This means that children in the lowest-income neighbourhoods are 47 times more likely to be in care than children in the highest income neighbourhoods. The same pattern prevails with criminal activity and incarceration. The poor, and especially the racialized poor, are more likely to be incarcerated, and the costs of incarceration are high and growing. The Province of Manitoba's justice budget has grown from \$300 million in 2006 to \$500 million in 2014 (Bernas 2015), and the cost of keeping an inmate in a provincial cell was \$84,225 per year in 2011 (Mallea 2011: 121–123). When all these



costs that are a function of poverty are added together, the total is dramatic.

In short, poverty is costly. We all pay for it. We would be wise and prudent to invest aggressively and creatively in solutions that will drive down the incidence of poverty and reduce these many costs.

What is Being Done Now?

We know a great deal now about what works well to reduce the incidence of poverty, and in fact much more is currently being done to combat poverty than many Winnipeggers may realize. What follows are some examples:

Neighbourhoods Alive!

Established by the NDP government in 2000, this creative, place-based, community-led approach to poverty reduction has invested some

\$72 million into Manitoba’s lowest-income urban neighbourhoods (Williams and Stewart 2015), twelve of them in Winnipeg’s now sprawling inner city. Core funding is provided to Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations (NRCs), which work with citizens in these neighbourhoods to identify and implement solutions. Most NRCs are highly effective as catalysts of what is best seen as “community-led development,” which is based on the view that it is the people who live in a low-income neighbourhood who should be shaping the poverty-reduction initiatives that are adopted in that neighbourhood. The level of community engagement in these neighbourhoods has increased significantly, and in some of these neighbourhoods population is growing after decades of decline (Lezubski and Silver 2015). Gains continue to be made in areas such as housing, employment, youth engagement and neighbourhood safety (Wiebe 2014). In ad-



dition, the provincial government's Non-Profit Organization Strategy — initiated in response to pressure from the inner-city community — has provided multi-year funding, or core funding, to other community-based organizations, producing benefits similar to those produced by the core funding to NRCS.

Low-income Housing

Since 2009 the provincial government has committed to the building of 300 units per year of social housing — ie., housing in which rent is geared to income and thus affordable to low-income families — plus 300 units per year of affordable housing, for which rent is based on median rents in the private market. The provincial government is committed to a further 500 units of each by 2017. Decent quality, affordable hous-

ing is in terribly short supply all across Canada, yet it is the necessary condition for low-income families and communities to overcome their poverty. The provincial NDP government has acted more aggressively in this crucial policy area than other provincial governments. The current provincial government has also invested heavily in existing Manitoba Housing units, making important renovations that are improving the quality of residents' lives and extending the lifespan of the housing stock. This has had a particularly positive impact in areas like Lord Selkirk Park and Gilbert Park, large public housing complexes in Winnipeg's North End, where conditions have been significantly improved as the result of provincial government investment in community-led initiatives (Cooper 2013; Silver et al. 2015).

Education

The provincial government has invested heavily in alternative education strategies in low-income areas. A notable example is the Selkirk Avenue education hub, which has emerged over the past decade and is about to become, in effect, a "North End Community Campus." This entire education strategy has been made possible largely as the result of community-led efforts together with provincial government funding and funding from various foundations. There now exists, in a one block area on Selkirk Avenue, the University of Manitoba's Inner City Social Work Program, the Urban Circle Training Centre, the University of Winnipeg's Department of Urban and Inner-City Studies — these three programs are highly effective — and the Makoonsag Intergenerational Childcare Centre, which gives first preference to students attending one of the above educational institutions (MacKinnon & Silver 2015). By 2017 the old Merchants Hotel will be transformed into Merchants Corner, with 30 units of subsidized housing for Selkirk Avenue students with children, and a unique sharing of space and resources by the UW's Department

of Urban and Inner-City Studies and the North End high school support program, CEDA-Pathways to Education. The provincial government is investing more than \$15 million in Merchants Corner, and its creation will be the next big step in this strategic approach to education in a low-income area. The results are already proving to be transformational. The same is the case in Lord Selkirk Park, where a new childcare centre, established in early 2012, is piloting the Abecedarian approach to childcare — a first in Canada — and producing dramatic results for children and their families (Silver et al. 2015).

Jobs

The large investment in infrastructure made possible by the one percent increase in the PST will put thousands of people to work, and the current provincial government has long set aside a certain proportion of such jobs for those otherwise trapped in poverty. Nothing moves a family out of poverty faster than landing a good job. The Province has also invested significantly in social enterprises that employ low-income, inner city residents (Bernas and Hamilton 2013). These include program investments in BUILD (Building Urban Industries for Local Development) and fee-for-service contracts with MGR (Manitoba Green Retrofit), which train and employ inner city residents in useful, environmentally productive work. The Province has committed to investing \$250,000 per year for the next three years to implement a Social Enterprise Strategy that will grow the social enterprise sector and create more first jobs for people who face barriers to accessing the labour market (CCED-Net Mb and Province of Manitoba 2015). This is a case of building on and expanding initiatives that have been shown to work well.

Families

Some families in Winnipeg's inner city have been damaged over the years by intergenerational poverty and, in some cases, by the ongoing legacy of



colonialism and the residential schools. The provincial government has recently invested in the Boldness Project and in Thunderwing, two innovative and highly promising programs located in the heart of Winnipeg's North End. Each builds on particular forms of sophisticated, locally developed experiential knowledge, and a holistic and humanistic philosophical approach, to work with families to solve tangible and immediate problems, improve educational outcomes and neighbourhood safety, and ultimately to make systemic changes that can facilitate and strength-



en low-income families and neighbourhoods. In these efforts, as is the case with other successful community efforts, the provincial government is working especially closely with highly skilled and experienced inner city community workers to make the kinds of changes that will, in time, produce significant reductions in the incidence of poverty.

Rent Assist

The provincial government's new Rent Assist program, introduced in 2014, is much more significant than has yet been recognized. Low-income people who are renting in the private market will be eligible for a rental subsidy up to 75 percent of the median market rent. Rent Assist is

open to all low-income renters, including those on social assistance and those not, and including single individuals as well as families. Most low-income people are renters. What is being developed, then, is something akin to a guaranteed annual income. The inner city community pressed for this program, and the current provincial government responded with something that is cutting edge in social policy. Being protected from overwhelming rental costs will be a major step forward for the vast majority of those who are poor in Winnipeg and beyond. It is also reasonable to expect that the Rent Assist program will result in reduced food bank usage, since high rents are one of the important causes of reliance on food banks.

What Ought to be Done Next?

We need to continue to build on the solid foundation that is described above, and that has been laid in recent years by a provincial government that has worked in close cooperation with inner city communities. A notable example of that cooperation is the provincial government's endorsement of many of the recommendations of the community-based anti-poverty plan, *The View from Here 2015: Manitobans call for a renewed poverty reduction plan*. Low-income housing is also a good example of the inner city community and the provincial government working well together: the inner city community has made demands for investment in social housing (Bernas and MacKinnon 2015); the government has set public targets and timelines (and has just committed to doing the same for poverty indicators more generally), and has invested large sums to meet those goals. Done consistently, year after year over a generation and more, this will make a big difference in poor people's lives. Rent Assist will make a dramatic difference, and the gains that it will produce would be accelerated if the basic needs allowance of those on Employment and Income Assistance were to

be doubled as called for in *The View from Here 2015* and in the *Manitoba Child and Family Report Card 2015*. Childcare appears poised to move in a positive direction, with a provincial government commitment, announced in the 2015 Speech from the Throne, to move toward a universally accessible childcare system by creating an additional 12,000 spaces over the next five years. This process should start with new childcare centres focused on low-income areas where the returns on investment will be greatest. Low-income children, many otherwise poorly prepared for school at age five, will experience significant gains; parents, otherwise trapped on welfare, will take advantage of the growing numbers of innovative education and employment opportunities to improve their circumstances. The Abecedarian approach to childcare has proved extremely effective in low-income Lord Selkirk Park. We should replicate this initiative in other low-income neighbourhoods, because it works well and the benefits will accrue to all of us.

Innovative education strategies are working well, and should also be expanded. There are 192,600 people in Manitoba with literacy levels so low they cannot participate fully in society (Silver f/c: 1). They are overrepresented among the poor. We should locate a literacy program within walking distance of every low-income neighbourhood in Winnipeg, thus making it possible for people to improve their probability of securing jobs and participating fully in society. Literacy programming is relatively inexpensive, and will therefore produce particularly high rates of return. Adult Learning Centres (ALCs) that offer the mature grade 12 also work well. In the case of Aboriginal people, for example, large numbers leave school before graduating, but large numbers return to school as adults. If we expand the availability of ALCs, more Aboriginal and other low-income people will seize the opportunity to upgrade their education and move into the paid labour force.

Gains have been made in moving those living in poverty into the paid labour force, and Manitoba's minimum wage is now among the highest in Canada. However, the provincial government should now move to the living wage level of just over \$15 for a one-parent one-child family in 2013 dollars, by the year 2020, as recommended in *The View from Here* (Bernas 2015). Those who work full-time should not be forced to live in poverty, and the evidence is that reasonable and regular increases in the minimum wage that can be anticipated and planned for by employers do not reduce total employment (Silver 2014a: 129–130).

A critical next step in supporting the labour market attachment of people with barriers to employment is to put in place Labour Market Intermediaries (LMIs) that have been shown to work well elsewhere and that have been advocated for here in Winnipeg (MacKinnon 2015; 2014). LMIs help ease the transition from training to employment by providing support to both employers and employees. The provincial government has indicated its support for the establishment of an Aboriginal community-based LMI, and has provided funding to support a community-led process that will develop a model that could be implemented in Winnipeg.

A dramatic expansion of these targeted and successful education and employment initiatives will move growing numbers into the paid labour force. When parents are working, families are strengthened. Healthier families produce healthier children. A virtuous cycle starts to replace the vicious cycle that is now so dominant and destructive.

It is important to add that the gains that have been made in Winnipeg's inner city in recent years have occurred despite a dearth of funding from the previous federal government. It is very much to be hoped that the new federal government will join the fight against poverty by investing in the strategies that are identified above and that appear to be working well.

Conclusions

A lot of money has been invested in recent years in Winnipeg's inner city, most of it by the current provincial government. Despite almost no publicity about the many positive developments that have resulted, the foundation is being laid for significant gains. This is beginning to show in the data, with important positive changes in inner city population, education and employment, and the incidence of poverty (Lezubski and Silver 2015), suggesting that the things that are being done are working. If we build on this foundation by significantly increasing our investment in the kinds of solutions that have been shown to work well, we will see still more gains reflected in the poverty data and in the lives of those who are poor.

Many outside the inner city might say or think: "What does this have to do with me? Why should I care that other people that I don't know happen to be poor?" The answer to these questions is obvious: it is simply too expensive to allow this poverty to persist; we will all be better off — in many ways, including economically — if we insist that the provincial government continue to invest, and indeed, significantly increase its investments, and that the new federal government make such investments in the kinds of solutions described above. We know, from hard-earned practical experience and now from at least some of the data, that these are solutions that work.

We also know, unfortunately, that the momentum that has been painstakingly developed

can be easily shut down. Governments too shortsighted or ideologically unable to understand the long, slow process by which these gains are made, can bring the whole process to a halt by doing either of two things: continuing to invest in anti-poverty solutions but only at the current level, which has been enough to lay the foundation but is not enough to drive down poverty rates to the extent that is possible; or worse still, by reducing the current level of investment. If either were to happen, far too many people would continue to be mired in complex poverty, the societal costs of which would continue to grow, and all Manitobans would be the worse for the failure.

This is a glass half full/glass half empty conclusion. A strong foundation for poverty reduction has been laid in recent years, and although most of this is unknown to Manitobans, credit needs to be given for this progress. Most of it is attributable to provincial government investments in community-led solutions. Increased investment in solutions that we now know to work would drive down poverty rates lower and lower over time. On the other hand, investment at the same level, or even worse, reduced investment, would serve to further entrench the problem of poverty.

Given the strong foundation for poverty reduction that has been laid, and the great damage — to all of us — that is caused by Winnipeg's deep and persistent poverty, it follows that the case for increased investment to build on this foundation is simply too strong to ignore.

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