

Winning Inclusive Solutions (WINS): **Examining Post-Pandemic Economic Disparities in Canada**



Winning Inclusive Solutions (WINS) Canada acknowledges that we live and work on the traditional territory of many Indigenous nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples.

Today Canada is home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and our acknowledgment reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous people.

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Winning Inclusive Solutions (WINS) is a not-for-profit founded in 2018 by Dr. Hitu Sood. WINS is a not-for-profit organization that raises awareness on inclusivity in Canada's workforce. Our vision is to eliminate workplace exclusion and discrimination in Canada.

Through our advocacy, we envision more equitable workplaces in which diverse members of Canadian society can flourish.

We encourage individuals with diverse viewpoints and experience to come together to share their experiences and perspectives to advance inclusivity and belonging in the workplace for all members of Canadian society. The key to equity is a paradigm shift that sees all members of Canadian society being accepted and valued for their distinctive strengths. This shift can be brought about only by questioning the status quo.

We intend to achieve this through three main initiatives:

The Diversity Forum: This is our national tri-annual newsletter. It has been established to promote dialogue and discussion with the broader community to highlight a range of views on issues affecting under-represented groups in Canadian society.

Road to Success: This initiative highlights diverse professionals' skills and strengths in a variety of ways. We provide a public platform for diverse professionals as speakers. We offer an embracing community of support in which diverse professionals can learn and network with like-minded others. In addition, we offer Diversity Equity Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) consulting to employers, government service providers and other organizations. Through all this, we are finding proactive ways to bring employers, diverse professionals, and policymakers together to forge a novel, growth driven approach that benefits all.

Showcasing Diverse Voices: This initiative uses thorough community research that involves interviews, questionnaires, surveys, case studies and focus groups to examine the unique challenges of the groups we are representing and recommend solutions for an equitable society.

The purpose of our Showcasing Diverse Voices initiative is to provide evidence that will infuse WINS' upcoming advocacy work with employers, government, and society at large. This is part of our ongoing work to understand and create awareness of the inequities faced by different segments of Canadian diverse population.

As part of Showcasing Diverse Voices in February, 2021 WINS launched an online survey to understand the viewpoints and unique challenges of skilled immigrants. It helped us to create awareness of the employment issues faced by immigrants.

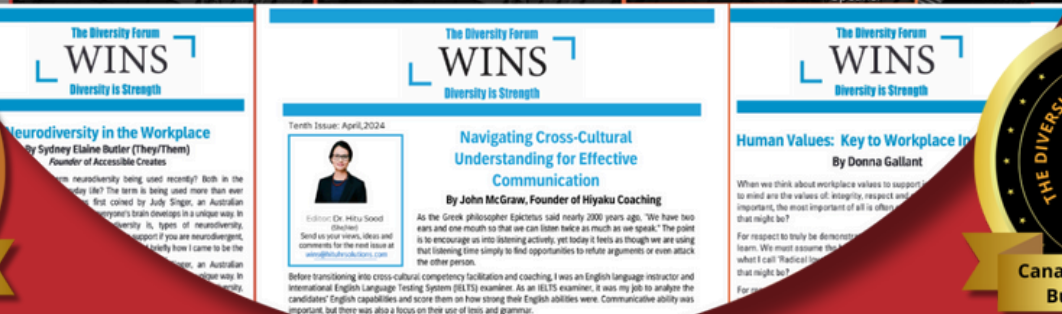
In 2022, we examined the employment inequities that Canadians faced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic either because of gender, race, or differences in ability. It provided evidence that created awareness of the employment issues faced by different populations especially women and people with disabilities during the pandemic.

In September 2023, WINS launched an online survey to understand the economic disparities that Canadians face because of gender, sexual orientation, race, or differences in ability. We would like to thank our co-sponsor for the research Pride at Work Canada. We'd also like to thank our corporate sponsors for 2023: Canada Life, HUB International, Kinaxis Canada, Weichert Workforce Mobility and TMX Canada.

Sponsorships enable us to continue our advocacy work. Please consider donating or sponsoring one of our programs.

Recognition and Events

WINS was nominated for CanadaSME Awards two consecutive years (2022 & 2023).



Through a comprehensive survey in 2023, WINS sought to unravel the intricacies of economic disparity among various segments of the population in Canada directly affected by the current economic landscape. This survey delved into the economic experiences and perceptions of individuals from diverse vulnerable communities, encompassing inquiries about the rising cost of living, the impending risk of a recession, and the prevailing precarious working conditions. Many vulnerable communities were surveyed, including marginalized and racialized groups, as well as newcomers, in comparison to their Canadian-born counterparts. Furthermore, the survey probed into the significant impact of economic precarity on mental health and social life within these communities.

This report presents a thorough analysis of the survey results, a culmination of efforts to shed light on the challenges confronting diverse communities. By examining the disparities experienced by diverse groups, WINS aims to illuminate issues for identifying actionable strategies to support and uplift these communities.

Background and Rationale

Canada is a culturally and ethnically diverse nation with people from various demographic backgrounds. As an advanced economy, it is crucial that every member of the society has equitable access to economic opportunities. The global pandemic has further exacerbated the inequities in Canada. The social impact as well as economic repercussions are only beginning to unravel. The pandemic has significantly impacted the Canadian economy, drawing attention to persisting inflation in news media and public discourse (Chen & Tombe, 2023).

The impact of such periods of economic stress are disproportionate on certain segments of the population such as racialized groups, women, sexual minorities. (Yaya et al., 2020; Ferrant & Thim, 2019; Rich et al., 2020). In light of this, specific economic challenges faced by such segments of the population need to be further investigated. The effects of rising interest rates, the high cost of living, social issues such as healthcare, housing coupled with precarious working conditions are impacting different groups in disparate ways. (StatsCan, 2022b). Amidst the prevailing economic climate in Canada, news reports and the general public alike are experiencing heightened stress and financial pressure due to the escalating cost of living, higher interest rates, and increased layoffs (CanadianPress, 2023).

Past Statistics Canada data highlights the prevalence of poverty among vulnerable communities, including marginalized and racialized groups, as well as newcomers, in comparison to their Canadian-born counterparts.

In 2019, the unemployment rate for racialized individuals was 8.8%, in contrast to the 5.3% rate for non-racialized individuals (Schimmele & Stick, 2023). Additionally, the median income for racialized individuals in the same year was \$36,200, while their non-racialized counterparts earned a median income of \$53,000. The disparities extended to employment conditions, with 41.5% of racialized individuals in Canada engaged in precarious employment in 2017 compared to 30.8% of non-racialized individuals (Schimmele & Stick, 2023).

Furthermore, as of 2021, poverty rates among racialized groups were notably high, with 10.8% of South Asian, 15.3% of Chinese, and 12.4% of Black Canadians living in poverty (StatsCan, 2022a). These statistics underscore the economic challenges faced by vulnerable communities in Canada, emphasizing the immediate need for effective strategies to address these disparities. The data also reveals that transgender men (12.9%) and women (12.0%) were more likely to experience poverty than their cisgender counterparts. Alarming, more than one in five (20.6%) non-binary individuals lived in poverty, more than twice the national rate (StatsCan, 2022a). These groups, experiencing a higher prevalence of poverty, are particularly vulnerable during periods of economic uncertainty and in the face of rising consumer prices, as observed in 2023.

Methods

To investigate the issues discussed above, survey questions were designed to capture key economic indicators and experiences, such as income, expenses, employment status, and perceptions of economic stability. Survey Monkey was used to collect responses. The questionnaire consisted of 32 multiple-choice questions and one open-ended question. The average completion time was 10-12 minutes. After key demographic information was identified about each participant, survey questions focused on the impact of current economic climate on the participants' income, employment, housing, food, mental health, financial stability, government assistance, and their point of views on government efforts to improve economic disparities.

The survey responses were then analyzed using statistical methods to identify trends and patterns, and the findings are here presented in this comprehensive report. To ensure the validity of our research, we made sure that multiple members of our organization independently analyzed the survey data. To ensure reliability, we engaged in frequent testing and examined significant comments on particular topics that we received from participants.

General respondents' profile

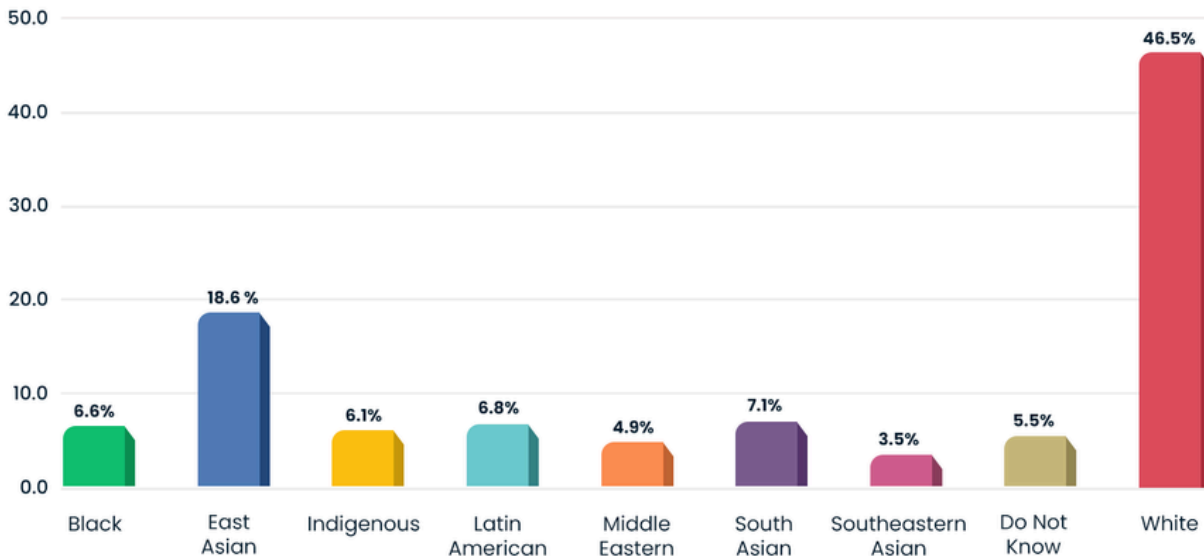


Figure 1: Racial background of all respondents

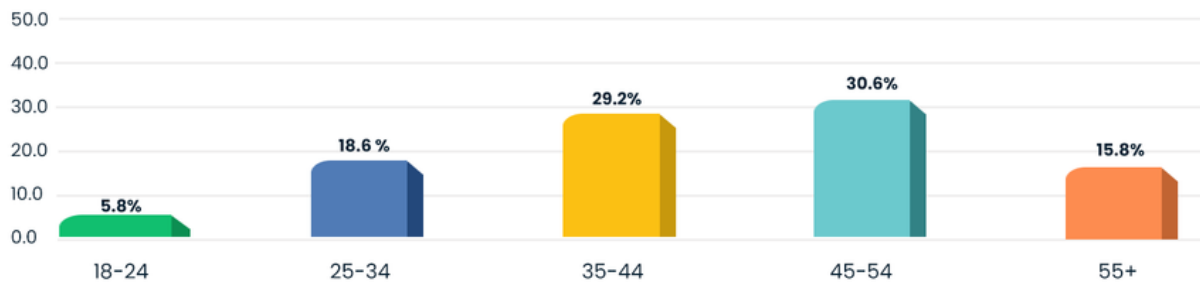


Figure 2: Age groups of all respondents

A total of 777 responses of people who currently live in Canada were received between the above data collection period at the completion rate of 84%, with the average time spent on the survey being 4.5 minutes. Overall, 36.9% of respondents identified as belonging to a racialized group, which is defined traditionally as a visible minority other than Indigenous peoples who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in color, while 46.5% identify as white (Figure 1), while 84.2% fall within working age between relationship, 30.9% are single and never married, and 11.2% are widowed divorced or separated, in line with the age distribution. The majority of respondents have a bachelor's degree or higher at 66.7% (Figure 3), allowing us to analyze the effect of education on various factors of economic well-being.

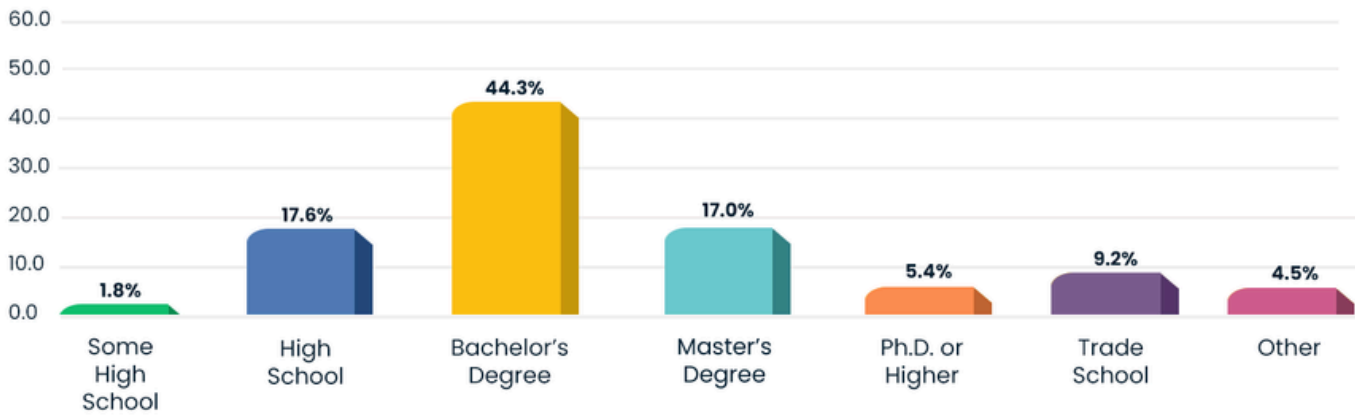


Figure 3: Highest degree of level of education completed

Over half of respondents are employed full time, while 21.4% are not working (Figure 4). As to immigration status, 74% are born in Canada and 26 are born outside of Canada; 81.3% are Canadian citizens while 15.9% are permanent residents. The majority of respondents have lived in Canada their whole lives while 25.3% have lived in this country for 10 years or more (Figure 5). This will allow us to analyze whether there is a disparity of economic well-being between newcomers and those who have settled here for a long time.

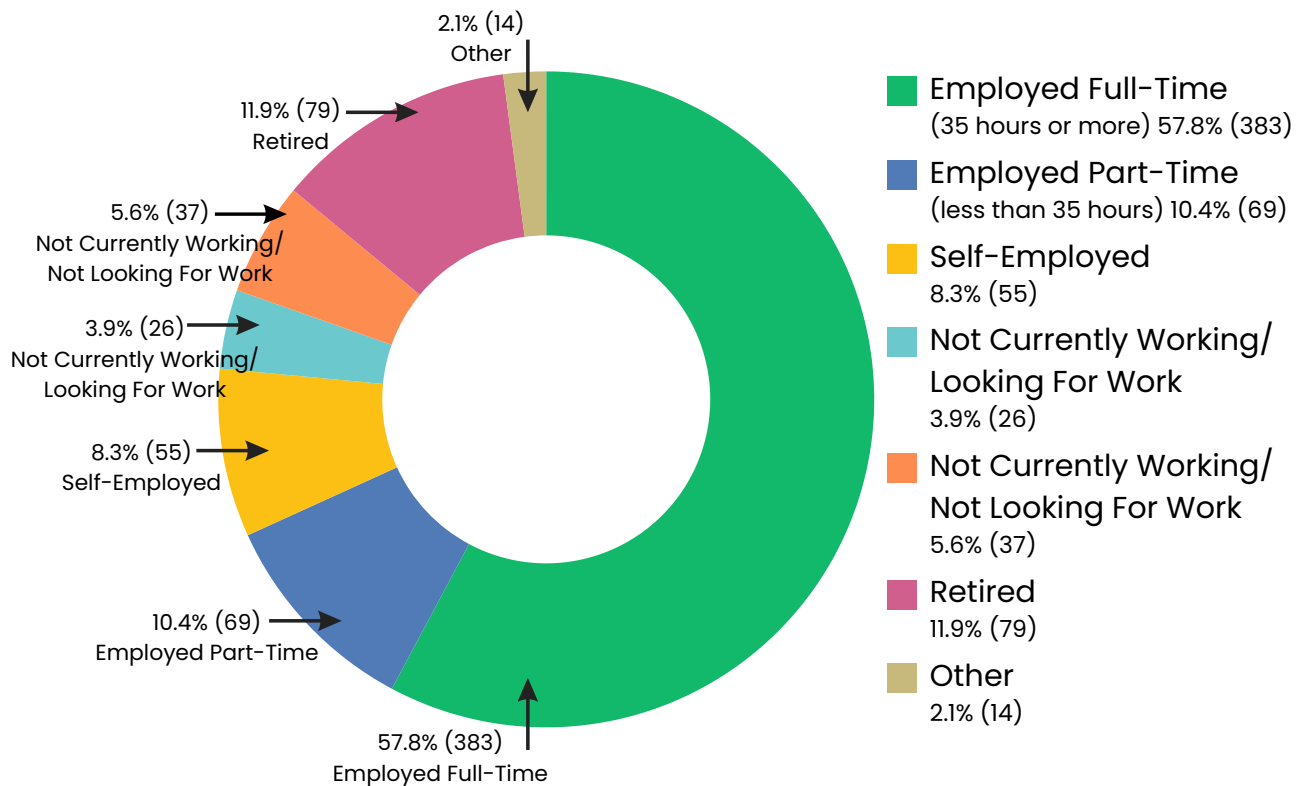


Figure 4: Current employment status

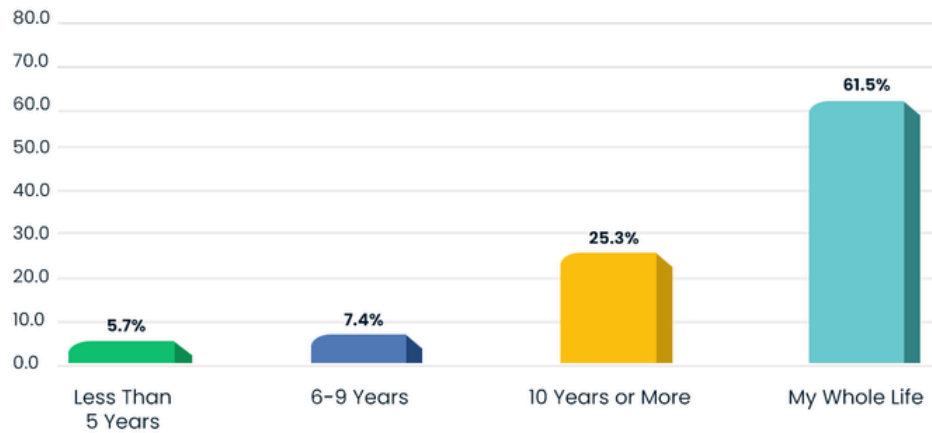


Figure 5: Time lived in Canada

Our data also showed a wide distribution of household income (Figure 6) from less than \$15,000 to above \$200,000 among which 69.7% have an annual household income of \$50,000 or more while the most fall between \$50,000 and \$99,999, providing a representative sample of the Canadian general population. Only 29.9% of respondents support one person on such income while the rest are in multi-person economic households (Figure7), again in line with our marital status data.

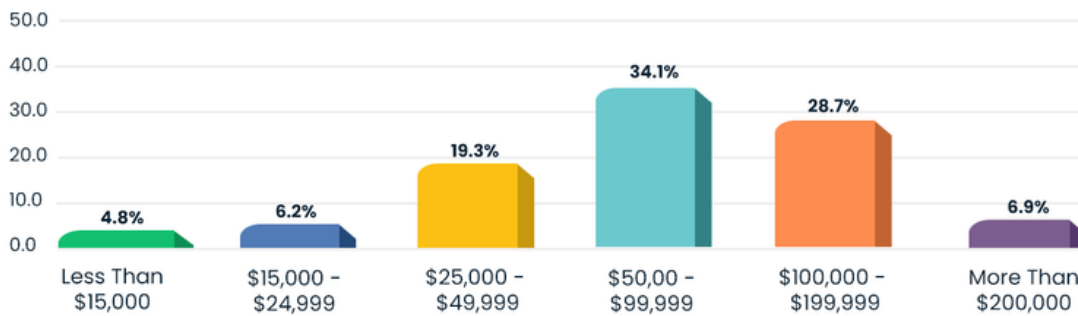


Figure 6: Annual household income

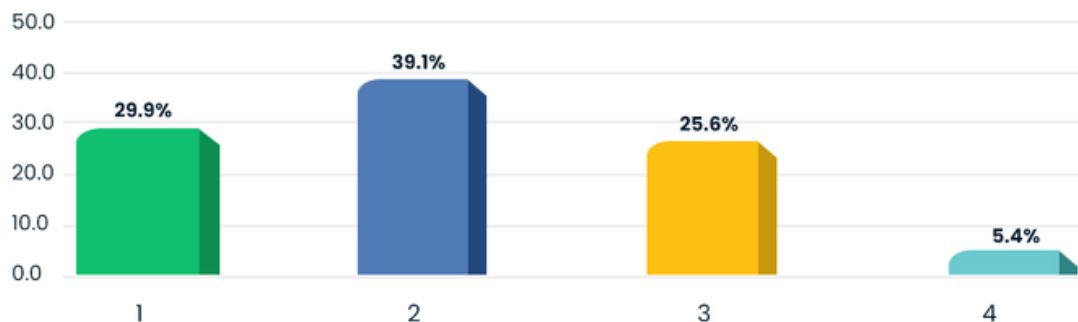


Figure 7: Number of people supported with this income

Marginalized and Minority Groups

To investigate possible disparate economic impact that various marginalized groups might have suffered, we also collected data regarding various minority status indicators. First, we define disability as any physical, mental, developmental, cognitive, learning, communication, sight, hearing or functional impairment which, in interaction with a barrier, may hinder a person’s full and equal participation in society.

A disability can be permanent, temporary or episodic, and visible or invisible. 19.5% of respondents identified as a person with a disability, out of which 41.5% indicated as being evident or visible (Figure 8). We also asked about respondents’ gender identity and sexual orientation. 96.2% identified as cisgender with 49.2% man and 47% woman, and 92.7% do not identify as either transgender, non-binary, or having had a trans history; 82.1% identified as straight or heterosexual. Overall, we have collected sufficient data to analyze and make statistically significant conclusions regarding the impact of disability, especially visible disability, race, immigration status, and time lived in Canada, but not gender and sexual minorities.

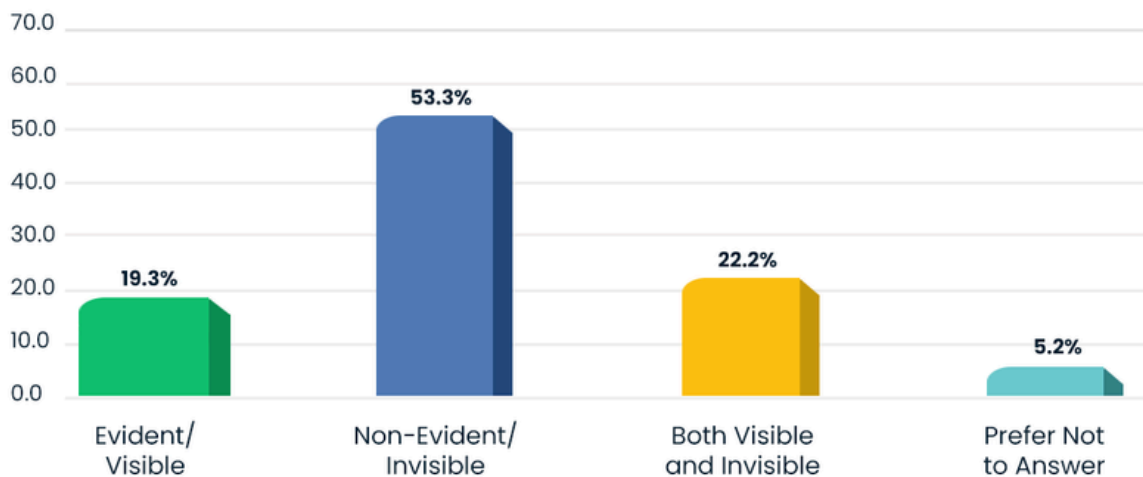


Figure 8: Disability Status

Lingering Economic and Social Impact Post-Pandemic

Table 1: Negative economic and social impact suffered in the past year, percentage

	YES/AGREE/ SATISFIED/BETTER	NO/DISAGREE/ DISSATISFIED/WORSE	NEITHER/SAME/ NOT APPLICABLE
Job loss or reduced work hours?	18.9	72.2	8.9
Job is secure?	59.9	16.4	23.7
Cut back expenses or take on additional work?	50.5	59.5	
Needed government assistance or social programs to meet basic needs?	19.3	80.7	
Rising cost of living impact on standard of living?	5.1	44.5	50.4
Rising cost of living impact on family and social life?	5.7	39.4	54.9
Ethnicity, race, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability status impacted your income?	21.4	43.3	35.3
Satisfaction of your financial stability?	36.8	23.1	40.1
Economic climate impact on your mental health?	6.5	28.2	65.3
Debt of credit card bill increased?	49.0	51.0	
Economic climate negatively affecting disparities between best-off and worse-off?	58.4	5.6	36.0

We found lingering economic impact still affecting a significant portion of people in Canada (Table 1). When asked to rate, on the scale from 0 to 100, their level of sufficiency of income to meet basic needs such as housing and food, the collective data resulted in an average score of 61. Only 36.8% of respondents are satisfied with their financial stability. 44.5% think that rising cost of living adversely impacted their standard of living, while 50.5% had to either cut back expenses or take on additional work. Nearly half of respondents had increased debt or credit card bills. It is also noticeable that 39.4% say rising cost of living has negatively impacted their family and social life, and 28.2% say it has worsened their mental health. A smaller yet not insignificant number of people consider their job insecure, and a similar proportion of people has suffered from job loss or reduced work hours. About one in five respondent needed government assistance or social programs to meet their basic needs. The majority of people believe current economic climate is negatively affecting disparities between the best-off and worse-off.

Disparate Impact on Marginalized and Minority Groups

Although the above data already show the lingering economic impact post-pandemic, a stark contrast between certain groups is revealed when we compare these responses differentiating on various marginalized and minority statuses.

First (Table 2), when asked whether their ethnicity, race, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability status has impacted their income, 21% answered positively. But when we look at the same data separately for different racial backgrounds, 37% of racialized people answered “yes” and 26% answered “no”. On the other hand, only 13% of non-racialized people answered “yes” and 54% answered “no”. The 24% difference in response is one of the greatest in all such comparisons.

Table 2: Selected differences (>10%) in negative impact based on racial background, percentage

	RACIALIZED	NON-RACIALIZED	DIFFERENCE
Suffered job loss or reduced work hours	31.3	11.8	19.5
Had to cut back on expenses or take on additional work	67.0	43.1	25.7
Needed government assistance or social programs to meet basic needs	30.0	13.0	17.0
Income impacted by ethnicity, race, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability status	37.0	12.8	24.2
Increased debt of credit card bills	63.9	40.3	23.6
Believe there are specific policy changes that would improve economic stability for marginalized and racialized groups	59.6	32.9	26.7

Similar differences also exist in suffering from job loss or reduced work hours, cutting back on expenses or taking on additional work, needing government assistance or social programs to meet basic needs, and increased debt of credit card bills, at 20%, 26%, 17%, 24% respectively. These differences demonstrate that racialized groups in Canada are disproportionately negatively affected by these economic conditions.

There is also a great difference in these two groups’ opinion on whether there are specific policy changes by the government that would improve economic stability for marginalized and racialized people. Almost 60% of racialized people think so while only 33% non-racialized people do, a difference of 27%. The drastic contrast shows lack of awareness and understanding of these issues across racial lines in our population.

Disparate Impact on Marginalized and Minority Groups

Second, we see a similar trend when comparing the data between disabled and not disabled respondents (Table 3). Sharing common disparities with racialized people, disabled people are more likely than not disabled people to had to cut back on expenses or take on additional work, need government assistance or social programs to make ends meet, say their income were impacted by their marginalized status, by 28%, 29%, 22% respectively. But we also see a greater difference in dissatisfaction with financial stability among the disabled than racialized people, at 24%. Overall, we identified more disparate negative economic impact among the disabled group.

Table 3: Selected differences (>10%) in negative impact based on disability status, percentage

	DISABLED	NOT DISABLED	DIFFERENCE
Had to cut back on expenses or take on additional work	72.9	44.9	28.0
Needed government assistance or social programs to meet basic needs	42.6	13.2	29.4
Standard of living worsened by rising cost of living	54.3	42.0	12.3
Worsened family and social life by rising cost of living	51.2	36.3	14.9
Income impacted by ethnicity, race, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability status	38.8	16.5	22.3
Dissatisfied with financial stability	42.6	18.2	24.4
Worsened mental health due to current economic climate	38.8	25.7	13.1
Think government is not doing enough to deal with economic disparities for marginalized and racialized groups	76.7	66.4	10.3

Third, we looked at data comparison between immigrants and Canadians who were born in Canada (Table 4). From analysis, all respondents born in Canada are Canadian citizens, while 97% of those who weren't born in Canada are either Canadian citizens or permanent residents. We see that compared with native-born Canadians, immigrants had more negative impact in standard of living, family and social life, both by about 11%. They also think the governments are not doing enough to help marginalized people more so by 14%. However, notably immigrants are less likely than native-born Canadians to need government assistance or social programs to meet basic needs by 16%.

This counterintuitive result could be hypothesized as being due to lack of access or awareness of such programs among immigrants. If this holds true, the effectiveness of various settlement programs aimed at new immigrants should be evaluated regarding whether they could help with better awareness Table 5 Selected differences (>10%) in negative impact based on gender, percentage and access to these social assistance programs.

Disparate Impact on Marginalized and Minority Groups

Table 4: Selected differences (>10%) in negative impact based on immigration background, percentage

	IMMIGRANTS	NATIVE-BORN	DIFFERENCE
Needed government assistance or social programs to meet basic needs	7.4	23.6	-16.2
Standard of living worsened by rising cost of living	52.8	41.5	11.3
Worsened family and social life by rising cost of living	47.2	36.6	10.6
Think government is not doing enough to deal with economic disparities for marginalized and racialized groups	78.4	64.9	13.5

Finally, we also saw some differences in these data between women and men (Table 5). Women suffered worse negative economic and social impact than men in all categories where the difference is greater than 10%, namely worsened standard of living and mental health by 11% and 10% respectively. These differences, though to a lesser degree than those among the other groups, show that more could be done to address gender inequalities that are deeply rooted in our society. Interestingly, although women are not defined per this survey as a marginalized or racialized group (they could overlap, but the two genders are of about equal numbers in the latter two groups), they tend to think the government is not doing enough to deal with these disparate impacts on the latter two groups more so than men by 15%.

Table 5: Selected differences (>10%) in negative impact based on gender, percentage

	WOMEN	MEN	DIFFERENCE
Standard of living worsened by rising cost of living	49.7	39.1	10.6
Worsened mental health due to current economic climate	32.9	22.7	10.2
Think government is not doing enough to deal with economic disparities for marginalized and racialized groups	76.8	61.5	15.3

Strategies for Economic Equity and Inclusion:

Addressing the economic disparities faced by vulnerable communities requires an integrated strategy that combines policy reforms, community initiatives, and educational programs. A central aspect of this approach is the reform of economic policies to ensure targeted financial assistance and equal employment opportunities. Survey data indicates that 59.6% of racialized respondents (refer to Table 2) believe specific policy changes could enhance economic stability. Respondents expressed the need for government intervention, with one noting, *"Government needs to step in and offer more control over rising prices on just about everything."*

In addition to policy reforms, implementing community-based financial literacy programs is essential. These programs empower individuals from vulnerable communities to manage their finances, budget effectively, reduce debt, and understand financial products. A respondent highlighted the importance of these programs by stating, *"Financial literacy programs helped me understand how to manage my expenses better during these tough economic times."*

Inclusive hiring practices and workforce development are also critical. Promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) training and creating pathways for career advancement will help vulnerable communities achieve better employment outcomes. Specialized workforce development programs focused on skill enhancement for women, racialized individuals, and people with disabilities can further these goals.

Public awareness and education initiatives are crucial for fostering a culture of acceptance and respect. Launching campaigns to educate the public about the economic disparities faced by vulnerable communities and incorporating diversity and inclusion education in schools and workplaces can promote long-term societal change.

By integrating these strategies, we can create a supportive and inclusive economic environment that addresses the root causes of disparities and ensures equitable opportunities for all members of society.

Enhanced Support for Disabled Individuals:

Disabled individuals face significant economic hardships as evidenced by the survey. The disabled group experiences significant economic disparities, with higher percentages resorting to cutting back on expenses, taking on additional work, and requiring government assistance.

Increased funding for disability support programs and improved workplace accommodations are crucial. This includes enhancing social security nets and ensuring accessibility in workplaces and public spaces.

Increased funding for disability support programs and improved workplace accommodations are crucial. In the words of some of our respondents:

“The government needs to do better for people on disability insurance. When I break down what I am getting monthly it is less than minimum wage. If I did not have family to help me I would not be able to pay my bills or buy the basics”.

The insights from the qualitative data underscore the lived experiences of individuals within these communities, highlighting the urgent need for policy reformation. One respondent shared, *“The rising costs of living and lack of adequate support have worsened my financial stability and mental health,”* reflecting the widespread sentiment among disabled individuals.

Recent research from Statistics Canada indicates that 27% of Canadians aged 15 and over reported having at least one disability in 2022, with higher rates among women and an aging population contributing to this increase. Disabled individuals face significant economic disparities, including higher poverty rates and lower employment rates, and struggle with housing instability, often living in inadequate or unaffordable housing. Additionally, there has been a notable rise in mental health-related disabilities, increasing the need for accessible healthcare services. These findings highlight the critical need for enhanced financial support, inclusive hiring practices, subsidized healthcare, and affordable housing initiatives to alleviate the economic hardships faced by disabled individuals in Canada ([StatisticsCanada](#)).

Managing chronic illnesses, which are prevalent among disabled individuals, often leads to substantial financial burdens. Many struggle to afford necessary medical treatments and healthcare services, which negatively impacts their overall well-being and financial stability (Statistics Canada, March 2023). ([StatisticsCanada](#)).

To address the economic hardships faced by disabled individuals in Canada, several recommendations are proposed:

- **Workplace Accommodations:** Promote inclusive hiring practices and provide necessary workplace accommodations to improve employment opportunities for disabled individuals.
- **Accessible Healthcare:** Subsidize healthcare costs and ensure healthcare facilities are accessible, with a focus on expanding mental health services.
- **Affordable Housing:** Strengthen affordable housing initiatives to ensure more accessible and affordable housing options, including financial assistance for housing adaptations.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Advocate for policies that address the unique economic challenges faced by disabled individuals, ensuring economic support policies consider their higher costs of living and protect their rights effectively.

These strategies aim to improve financial stability and overall quality of life for disabled individuals in Canada.

Investment in Mental Health Services:

Addressing the mental health needs vulnerable groups i.e. marginalized and racialized communities, as well as women and LGBTQ+ individuals, requires a multifaceted approach that integrates cultural competence, accessible care, and community engagement. The survey conducted by WINS revealed significant correlations between economic stressors and deteriorating mental health among these communities. Quantitative data indicated that 28.2% (refer to Table 1) of respondents reported worsened mental health due to the current economic climate, with specific groups such as women (32.9%) (refer to Table 5) noting a decline in mental health. This group is covered in the gender specific section in the recommendations.

Respondents articulated the emotional toll of economic instability through qualitative feedback. One participant shared, *"The rising cost of living and lack of adequate support have worsened my financial stability and mental health."* Another highlighted, *"The rising costs on many things that are just necessities is worrying me. (Food/groceries, clothing, rent/mortgage/housing costs, transportation)."* Additionally, the uncertainty brought by potential recession risks exacerbated mental health concerns, with a participant noting, *"The risk of a recession creates uncertainty about my financial situation. I worry about unemployment going up, wages going down, or companies going under. This makes me anxious because I'm not sure I can maintain a steady source of income"*. Another respondent captured the sentiment that many are feeling, *"As costs mount, dreams shrink. Recession might make them disappear"*.

To address these issues, the following actions are recommended:

Enhance Access to Culturally Competent Mental Health Services:

- Increase funding for mental health services that are accessible to marginalized and racialized communities. Ensure these services are affordable and culturally competent, addressing the specific needs of diverse groups. This includes providing services in multiple languages and employing mental health professionals from similar cultural backgrounds to build trust and improve care outcome ([Stanford Medicine Magazine](#)).

Integrate Mental Health Support with Economic Assistance:

- Develop programs that integrate mental health support with financial counseling and assistance. These programs should address the interconnected nature of financial instability and mental health, offering comprehensive support that includes budgeting, debt management, and access to social services ([CDC](#)).

Community-Based Mental Health Initiatives:

- Promote community-based mental health initiatives that offer peer support groups, counseling, and stress management workshops. These initiatives should be culturally sensitive and easily accessible to all community members. Engaging community leaders in these programs can help reduce stigma and encourage participation ([Stanford Medicine Magazine](#)).

Public Awareness and Education Campaigns:

- Launch public awareness campaigns to destigmatize mental health issues and promote the importance of seeking help. These campaigns should use culturally responsive communication outlets and materials to reach a broad audience effectively. Educating the public on mental health can foster a supportive environment and reduce barriers to seeking care ([CDC](#))
- By investing in mental health services and integrating these efforts with economic support initiatives, we can create a more resilient and supportive environment for vulnerable communities. Addressing the mental health impacts of economic instability is not only a moral imperative but also a necessary step towards fostering a healthier, more inclusive society

Gender-Specific Economic Policies:

To address the higher economic and mental health impacts faced by women, particularly those in marginalized communities, it is crucial to implement gender-specific economic policies. The survey revealed significant correlations between economic stressors and deteriorating mental health among women, with 32.9% of female respondents (refer Table 5) reporting worsened mental health due to the economic climate. Additionally, qualitative feedback from participants highlighted the severe impact of economic instability on their lives. One respondent stated, "*The economic climate has severely affected my mental health and financial stability. More support for women is needed.*" Another noted, "*Single mother of two, the past three years have destroyed our lives, cost of food, housing, goods/services etc. I know of not a single person that is not struggling on some level.*"

To address these issues effectively, the following actions are recommended:

Address Wage Gaps and Promote Equal Pay:

- Implement and enforce policies that address wage gaps between men and women. This includes promoting transparency in pay and ensuring that women receive equal pay for equal work. Addressing wage disparities is fundamental to improving economic security for women ([OECD](#)) .

Provide Childcare Support:

- Increase access to affordable childcare services. This can be achieved through subsidies, tax credits, and investment in public childcare facilities. Accessible childcare enables women to participate more fully in the workforce and pursue career advancement opportunities ([UNWomen](#)) .

Promote Women's Employment and Career Advancement:

- Develop programs that support women's employment and career advancement, especially in leadership roles. This includes mentorship programs, training opportunities, and initiatives that encourage women to enter traditionally male-dominated fields. Policies should also promote work-life balance and flexibility to support women in balancing their professional and personal responsibilities ([OECD](#)) .

Invest in Mental Health Services for Women:

- Enhance access to mental health services specifically tailored for women, particularly those facing economic hardships. Providing affordable and culturally competent mental health care can help mitigate the mental health impacts of economic stress. Integrating mental health support with economic assistance programs can offer comprehensive support to women in need ([UNWomen](#)).

By implementing these gender-specific economic policies, we can help alleviate the economic and mental health disparities faced by women in marginalized communities. Ensuring equitable access to economic opportunities and support services is essential for fostering a more inclusive and resilient society.

Conclusions

The comprehensive survey conducted by Winning Inclusive Solutions (WINS) reveals significant economic disparities among vulnerable communities in Canada. The rising cost of living, impending risk of recession, and precarious employment conditions disproportionately affect these communities. Quantitative data indicated that racialized groups are disproportionately impacted, with 67.0% having to cut back on expenses or take on additional work compared to 41.3% of non-racialized individuals.

The survey reveals significant economic disparities among vulnerable communities in Canada. The rising cost of living, impending risk of recession, and precarious employment conditions disproportionately affect these communities. Specific policies addressing economic stability, enhanced support for disabled individuals, improved access to government programs for vulnerable groups, gender-specific economic policies, and community-based financial literacy programs are crucial in mitigating these impacts.

As we move forward, it is imperative for policymakers, organizations, and society to work collaboratively to create an inclusive economic environment. By addressing these disparities head-on, we can ensure that every member of Canadian society has equitable access to economic opportunities and support. The insights gained from this survey underscore the urgency for concerted efforts to promote economic equity and inclusion, ultimately fostering a more just and resilient society.

Acknowledgements

The Team behind WINS Survey:

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- Dr. Hitu Sood – Founder & Executive Director
- Veronica Seeto – Board Member
- Mark Lovewell – Former Board Chair

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- Colin Durham – Pride at work and WINS Board Advisor

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Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/@WINSWinningInclusiveSolutions>

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