



Child and Family Poverty in Halifax

2017 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Nova Scotia *Addendum*

By Katherine Ryan and Christine Saulnier

ON NOVEMBER 24, 1989, the House of Commons unanimously passed an all-party resolution to end child poverty by the year 2000. Our annual provincial report card is published in partnership with Campaign 2000, which began its work in 1991 to track government progress (or lack of progress) to address child poverty.¹

This addendum is meant to provide another layer of data analysis provided in 2017 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Nova Scotia. This report card does not provide a full analysis of trends, but rather highlights that many similar trends exist within the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) as in the rest of the province. It also further highlights the importance of considering how solutions interact at the community/neighbourhood level within HRM. This is especially important given that HRM covers a geographic area larger than PEI and includes over 200 distinct communities, including fishing villages, farming communities, suburban areas, and multiple urban centres.² This addendum also underlines the importance of considering the inequities among children who are visible minority, immigrant and indigenous children.

This addendum draws on the Statistics Canada 2016 Census (2015 data) and Statistics Canada's T1 Family File (T1FF) 2015 data to describe the level, distribution and depth of poverty among children, youth and their families living in the Halifax Regional Municipality. The After-Tax Low Income Measure (AT-LIM) for children under the age of 18 is used to calculate the percentage and number of children living in poverty.³

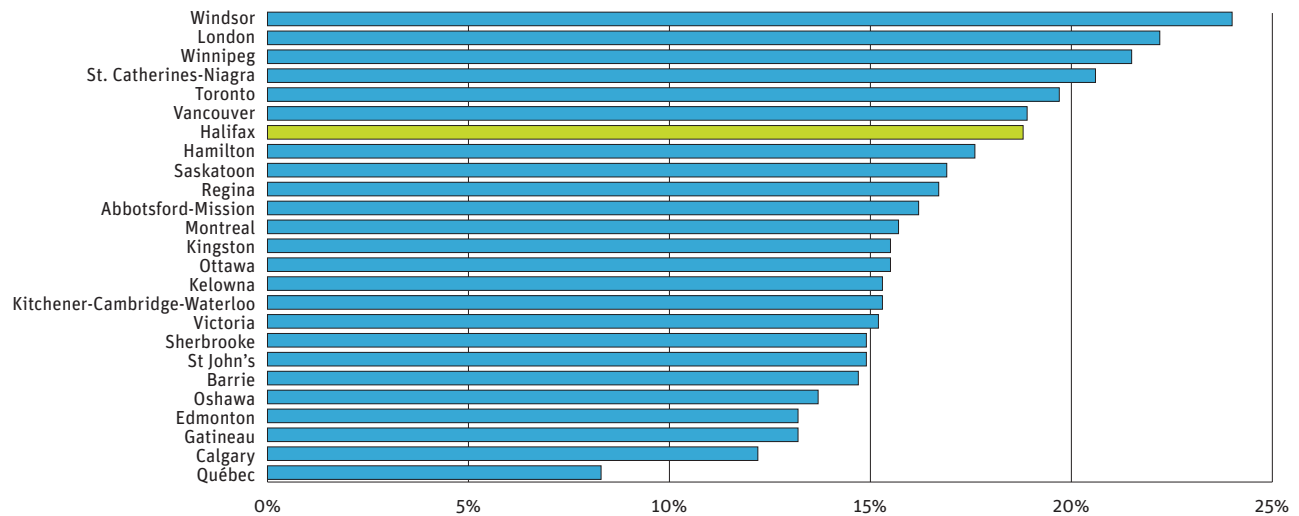
The main findings of this addendum are as follows:

- Halifax has the 7th highest poverty rate among large Canadian cities.
- With almost one in five children living in poverty in HRM, community level poverty rates vary quite significantly from a low of 3.9% in Fall River to a high of 40% in North Preston.
- Five communities have poverty rates between 35 and 40%.
- Poverty rates for visible minority children are nearly three times the rate for non-visible minorities.
- Immigrant children face a poverty rate of 43.3% in Halifax, with recent arrivals faring the worst with a poverty rate over fifty percent.
- Indigenous children off-reserve in HRM experience poverty at a rate of 22.1%.
- Lone-parent families have significantly higher rates of poverty compared to two-parent families, with single mothers facing the highest poverty rate of 43%.

Halifax in the Canadian Context

- As of 2015, 18.8% of children in Halifax (Census Metropolitan Area)⁴ are living in low-income households, using the AT-LIM threshold.
- Of Canada's 25 largest metropolitan areas, Halifax has the 7th highest child poverty rate, only slightly lower than the rates in Toronto and Vancouver.
- Compared to other cities in Atlantic Canada (not shown in *Figure 1*), Halifax's child poverty rate is higher than St John's, NL (14.9%) but lower than Fredericton, NB (20.6%), Moncton, NB (20.3%), Saint John, NB (23.1%) and Charlottetown, PE (21.7%).

FIGURE 1 Child Poverty Rate, Canadian Cities, 2015

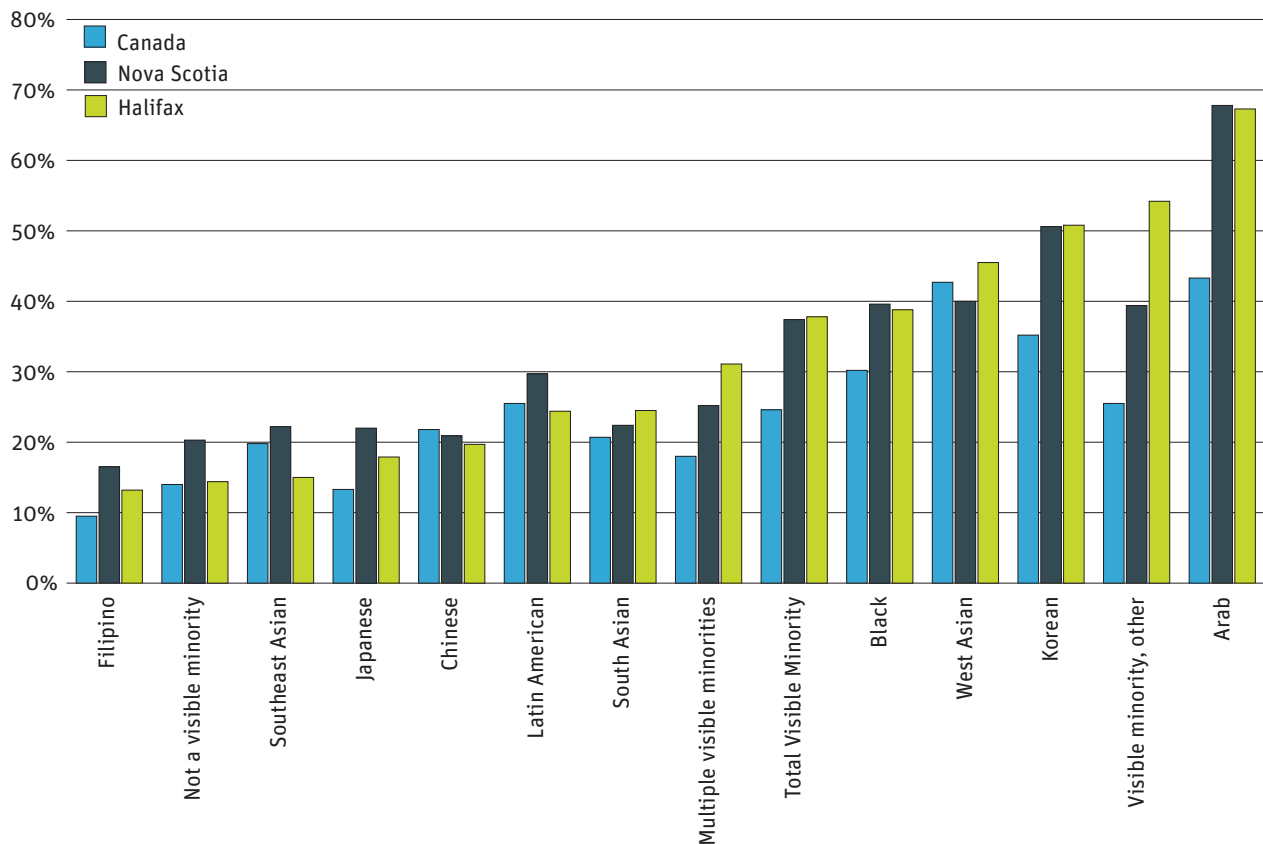


Note Prepared using Statistics Canada – 2016 Census. Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016124.

Visible Minority Children

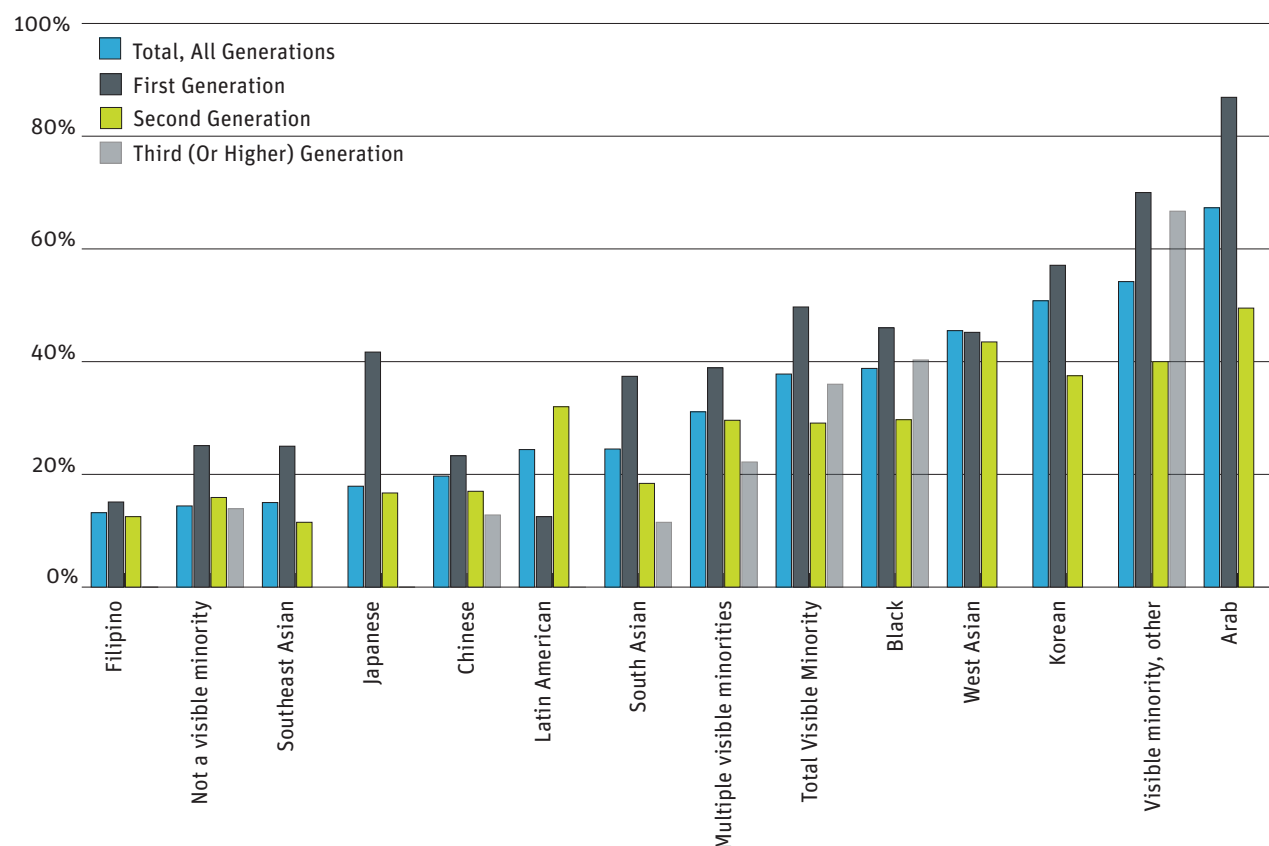
- The child poverty rate for children of visible minority status is 37.8% in Halifax compared to 14.4% for non-visible minorities.
- The child poverty rate in visible minority groups was higher in Halifax than the Canadian rate (24.6%). In Halifax the rate of child poverty is comparable to that of Nova Scotia as a whole (37.4%).
- Several groups experience lower rates of child poverty in Halifax compared to the rest of the province.
- Groups that have higher rates in Halifax include South and West Asian, and those who identify as multiple visible minorities. The highest rates of child poverty are experienced by Arab children, with two-thirds at or below the AT-LIM threshold (this category does include the Syrian refugees that arrived in the province up to May 2016, which may partially account for the high rate of poverty).

FIGURE 2 Child Poverty Rate by Visible Minority Status, Canada, Nova Scotia and Halifax, 2015



Note Prepared using Statistics Canada - 2016 Census. Catalogue Number 98-400-X2016211.

FIGURE 3 Child Poverty Rate, by Visible Minority and Generation Status, Halifax, 2015



Note Prepared using Statistics Canada - 2016 Census. Catalogue Number 98-400-X2016211.

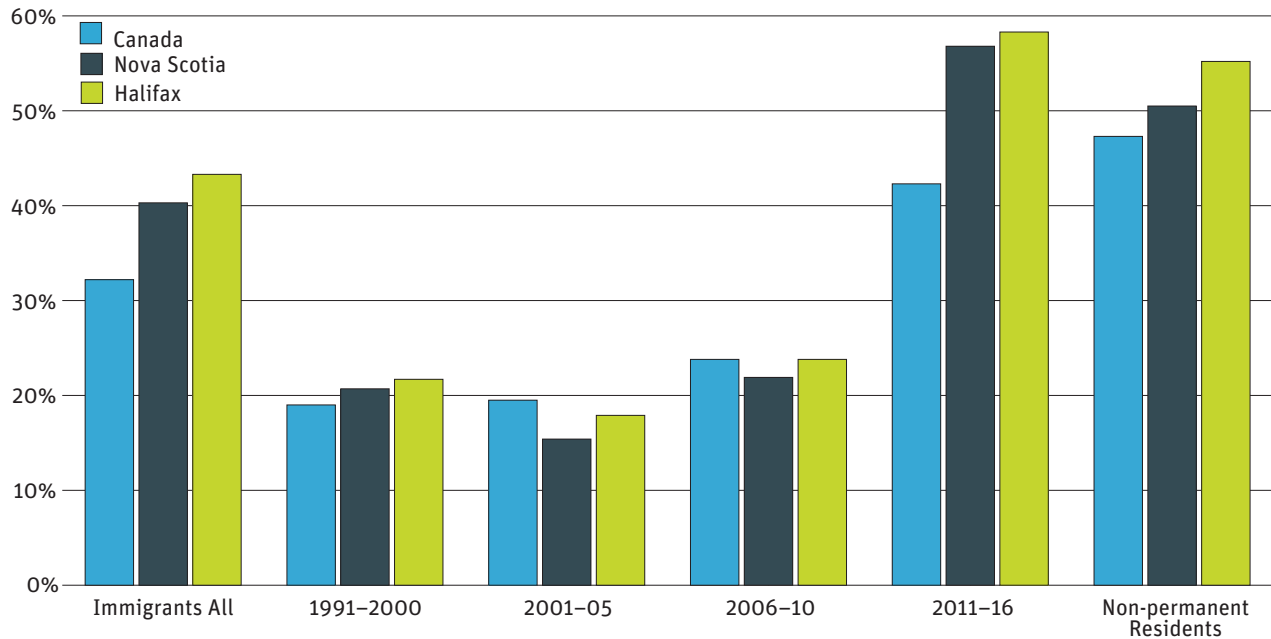
Note There is no data available for the following third generation visible minorities: Filipino, Southeast Asian, Japanese, Latin American, West Asian, Korean, Arab.

Note: Visible minority is the term used by Statistics Canada in the Census, and as defined in the federal Employment Equity Act to refer to “who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour”. The visible minority population consists mainly of the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese. Note that Statistics Canada excludes individuals who identify as a member of an Indigenous group from this category, who are included in the non-visible minority status (though because of their small percentage this has little impact on the poverty rate, and it is important to examine aboriginal poverty rates separately).⁵

- The child poverty rate for first generation visible minorities is 49.7% — meaning that half of first generation children in Halifax are living at or below the AT-LIM threshold.

- Second generation children face the lowest rate of poverty among visible minorities (29.1%), whereas third generation face a higher rate of 36%.
- The highest rate remains for first generation Arab children (86.9%).
- It is also notable that one would expect poverty rates to drop from one generation to the next, however, Black Haligonians do not see the decline, perhaps given that this population is made up predominantly of non-immigrants.

FIGURE 4 Child Poverty Rate by Immigration Status, Canada, Nova Scotia and Halifax, 2015

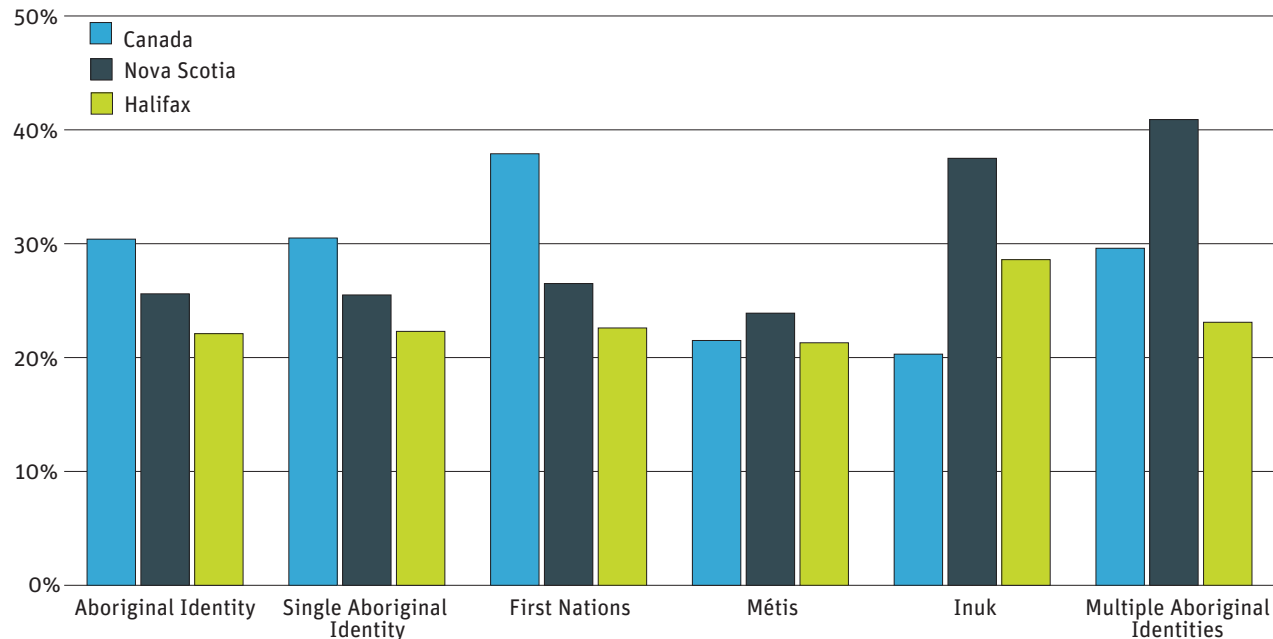


Note Prepared using Statistics Canada - 2016 Census. Catalogue Number 98-400-X2016206.

Immigrant Children

- The child poverty rate for immigrant children in Halifax was 43.3% in 2015, meaning that more than two in five children experience child poverty. This is compared to the child poverty rate of non-immigrants of 16.5%.
- Child poverty among immigrants is higher in Halifax than the rest of the province (40.3%) and Canada (32.2%).
- Although immigrants arriving in Nova Scotia between 2001 and 2010 experience lower rates of child poverty than the rest of Canada, they tend to experience higher rates of poverty in Halifax.
- More than half (58.3%) of the immigrants arriving in Halifax between 2011 and 2016 experience poverty compared to 42.3% in the rest of Canada.

FIGURE 5 Child Poverty Rate by Aboriginal Status (Off-Reserve), Canada, Nova Scotia and Halifax, 2015



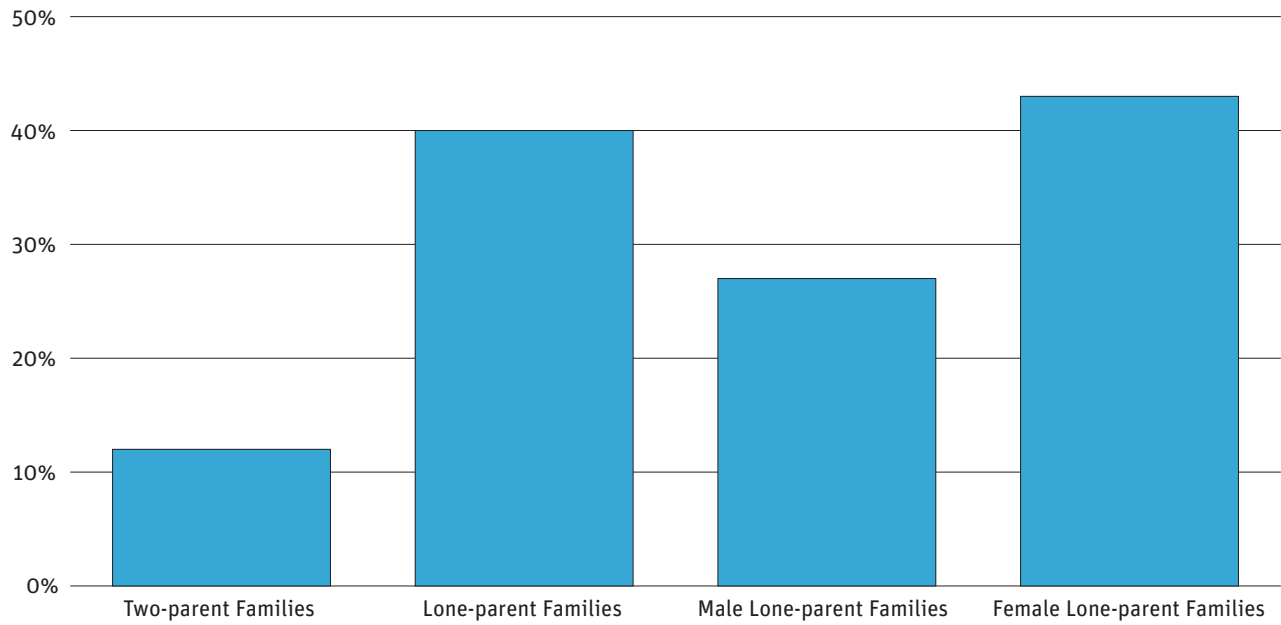
Note Prepared using Statistics Canada - 2016 Census. Catalogue Number 98-400-X2016173.

Aboriginal Children

- More than one-in-five children who identify as aboriginal experience child poverty in Halifax.
- Aboriginal groups (off-reserve) experience lower rates of child poverty in Halifax (22.1%) compared to Nova Scotia (25.6%) and Canada (30.4%)
- Child poverty among Inuk is higher in Halifax (28.6%) than the Canadian rate (20.3%), but lower compared to the province of Nova Scotia (37.5%).

Note: Statistics Canada uses the term ‘Aboriginal Identity’ to refer to those identifying as indigenous people in Canada, including First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit) and/or those who are Registered or Treaty Indians (that is, registered under the Indian Act of Canada), and/or those who have membership in a First Nation or Indian band. This data only reflects child poverty for children living off-reserve due to the incomplete enumeration of reserves and settlements.⁶

FIGURE 6 Child Poverty Rate by Family Type, Halifax, 2015



Note Prepared using Statistics Canada - 2016 Census. Catalogue Number 98-400-X2016124.

Family Type

- Lone-parent families experience child poverty rates nearly four times higher than two-parent families.
- Female lone-parent families (43%) have higher rates of child poverty compared to male lone-parents (27%).

TABLE 1 Child Poverty Rates in Halifax Regional Municipality by Postal Area, 2015

Postal Area	Child Poverty Rate	Postal Area	Child Poverty Rate
Beaverbank*	11.2%	Lake Echo*	12.7%
Bedford*	14.0%	Lake Loon*	13.3%
Beechville*	14.9%	Lakeside*	20.0%
Dartmouth*	21.6%	Lawrencetown*	6.7%
East Lawrencetown*	13.3%	Lower Sackville*	19.0%
East Preston*	38.9%	Middle Musquodobit**	18.2%
Eastern Passage*	14.0%	Middle Sackville*	9.9%
Elmsdale*	10.3%	Milford**	11.9%
Enfield*	9.5%	Musquodobit Harbour**	15.0%
Fall River*	3.9%	North Preston*	40.0%
Halifax*	28.2%	Porters Lake*	7.4%
Hammonds Plains*	4.7%	Sheet Harbour**	26.1%
Hatchet Lake*	6.3%	Tangier**	20.0%
Head of Chezzetcook**	12.8%	Timberlea**	9.3%
Head of Jeddore**	11.1%	Upper Hammonds Plains*	25.0%
Herring Cove*	8.0%	Upper Sackville*	13.0%
Hubbards**	12.7%	Waverly*	7.9%
Hubley*	4.4%	Westphal*	11.8%
Lake Charlotte*	14.3%	Whites Lake*	7.7%

Note Prepared using Statistics Canada, Table F-18 (T1 Family Files, 2015)

Note Table 1 includes postal areas (postal cities defined by the Canada Post Corporation) with population numbers large enough to avoid suppression of data. Postal cities are linked to older city boundaries or neighborhoods, and do not necessarily correspond to official municipal limits.

* postal city,
** rural route

Child Poverty by Neighborhood

- There is wide variation in the child poverty rate across HRM communities. As shown in *Table 1*, the lowest rate is in Fall River (3.9%) and the highest is in North Preston (40.0%).
- When we look closer at neighbourhoods within the urban core of the Halifax Regional Municipality (*Table 2*), the highest rate of child poverty is in the Spryfield* area at 40%. North Dartmouth/.../Crichton Park area of Dartmouth had the second highest rate (37.3%) followed closely by North End Peninsula (35.0%). The lowest rates are in the South End Peninsula (14.4%) and Bedford (14.8%).

TABLE 2 Child Poverty Rates by Postal Area (FSA), Halifax Regional Municipality Urban Core, 2015

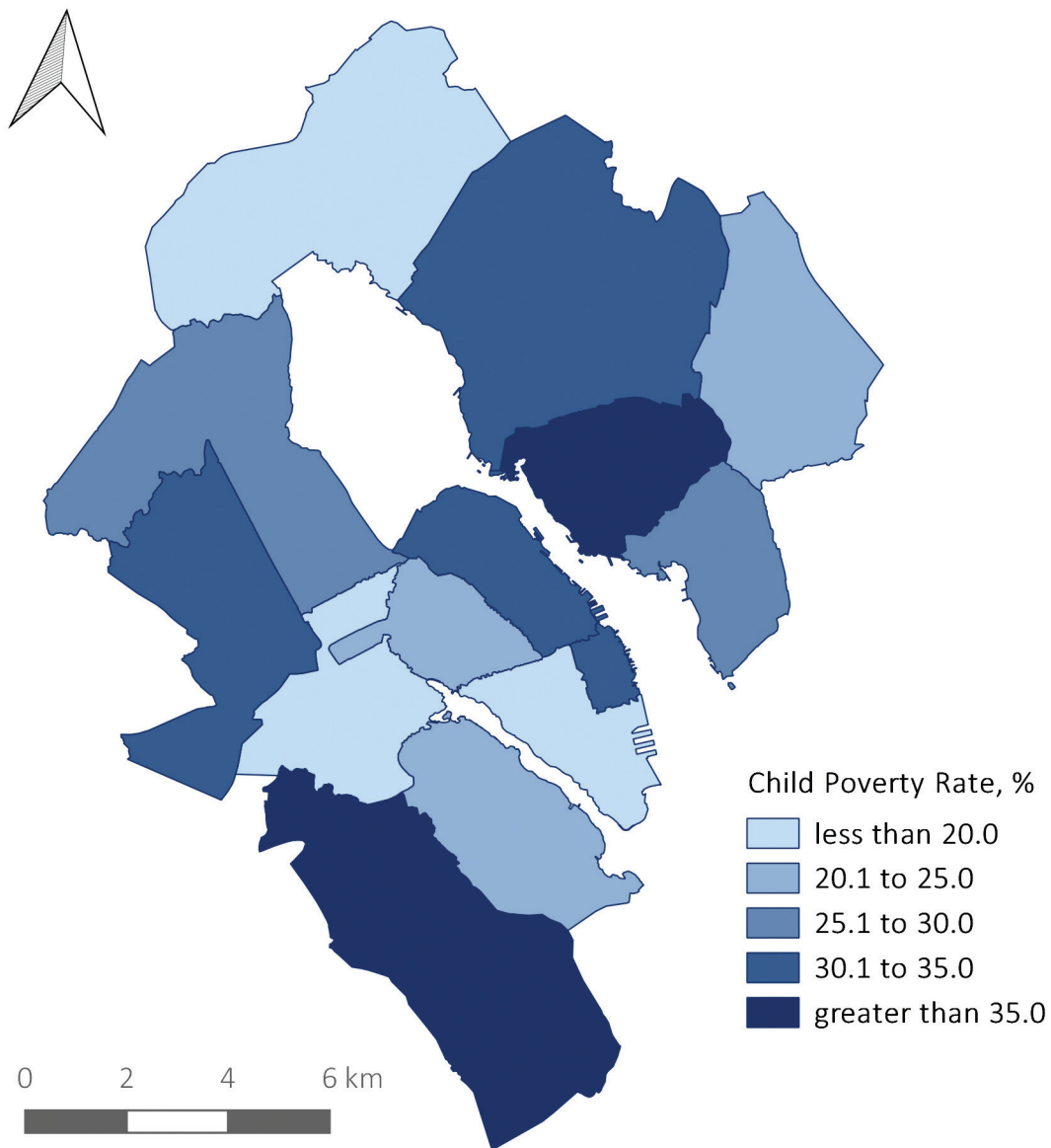
Postal Area (FSA)	Neighborhood Description	Child Poverty Rate
B2X	Bounded by Lake Charles/Micmac/Topsail	21.30%
B2Y	Downtown Dartmouth south to Woodside	29.90%
B3A	North Dartmouth/Harbourview/Highfield Park/Albro Lake/Crichton Park	37.30%
B3B	Burnside	31.30%
B3H	South End Peninsula	14.40%
B3J	Downtown Halifax	31.80%
B3K	North End Peninsula	35.00%
B3L	West End Peninsula	24.50%
B3M	Bedford Basin	30.00%
B3N	Fairview & south to Rotary	19.60%
B3P	Armdale/Purcells Cove	22.20%
B3R	Spryfield	40.00%
B3S	Bayers Lake	31.50%
B4A	Bedford	14.80%

Note Prepared using Statistics Canada, Table F-18 (T1 Family Files, 2015)

Note Forward Sortation Area (FSA) is defined by the first three digits of a postal code. Table 2 includes child poverty rates in the Halifax Regional Municipality Urban core where FSAs have a single place name associated with them and B3R[^]. Neighborhood place names are assigned to postal codes using prior research⁷ or Google Maps data.

[^] It is not possible to report on all postal areas within the HRM because of suppression of data. We have decided to report on what we have called Spryfield, which is only one data point of the B3R postal area, the other data point covers part of Herring Cove. The Herring Cove rate is either it is zero poverty or it is suppressed because of confidentiality. The Herring Cove rate covers only 160 families with children, whereas the Spryfield rate covers 1400 families with children.

MAP 1 Child Poverty Rates in Halifax and Dartmouth, 2015



Note Prepared using Statistics Canada, Table F-18 (T1 Family Files, 2015) and Census Forward Sortation Area Boundary File, 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 92-179-X.
Note Map 1 includes child poverty rates in the Halifax core where FSAs have a single place name associated with them. Arrow points north. Map 1 includes child poverty rates presented in Table 2

- This map shows the geographic distribution of child poverty in the Halifax Regional Municipality's urban core.
- As shown in *Table 2*, the highest rates of child poverty are found in the Spryfield area, and in North Dartmouth/.../Crichton Park area (B3A) of Dartmouth.

Next Steps: Ending Child and Family Poverty in Halifax

Ending child and family poverty requires all levels of government working together, as was concluded in the 2017 report card.

The findings from this backgrounder on poverty among children, youth and their families living in Halifax, show just how imperative it is to carefully consider how solutions impact people differently depending on where they live and their social locations (i.e. gender, 'race', ethnicity, class, sexuality and age), and the systems of inequality (i.e. racism, colonialism, classism, heterosexism). How these inequities manifest themselves become especially visible when considering wage gaps. In Halifax, women earn 72% of what men earn,⁸ totaling nearly \$12,000 less per year. This disparity can make it especially difficult for single mothers to provide for their children. One must also consider how different inequities intersect and often mean facing multiple barriers, and layers of disadvantage. Visible minorities earn only 57% of what non-visible minorities earn in Halifax, and first generation visible minorities fare the worst, earning almost half of the median income.⁹ Immigrants in Halifax earn 85% of what non-immigrants earn and the gap tends to be larger for recent arrivals.¹⁰ Finally, indigenous people earn an estimated 84% of the median in Halifax.¹¹

We acknowledge and congratulate the United Way Halifax and the Halifax Regional Municipality for engaging community to identify the solutions, and look forward to the release of HRM's poverty solutions strategy.¹² The careful design, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of any Poverty Solutions Strategy, however, must ensure that it does not result in any unintended negative consequences for individuals and families living in poverty; moreover it must advance clear goals and objectives to end poverty as well as work towards achieving racial justice and gender equity. This lens must be applied to all city decisions including its budgetary ones.

Eliminating poverty for all will also require collaboration at all levels of government, including Indigenous governments and organizations, as well as with other non-governmental organizations, including people living in poverty. Poverty is first and foremost about a lack of income. People living in the deepest poverty require more income support, whether funded and delivered by the provincial government through its Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) program, or by means of federally funded programs as a means to top up low incomes. Recent immigrants, those who have disabilities, those who are sick, those engaging in caregiving (elder or child care) also need additional supports and assistance tailored to their needs. The gap between income and actual living costs could of course also include additional income from private sources, whether higher wages for those able to work, or better pensions for retired persons. Public services also play an important role, whether through the provision of services such as child care, education, health care,

or language training, or by insulating certain services and goods from the vagaries of the market such as prescription drugs and affordable housing.

In addition to government income support, these solutions should:

- Address systemic barriers including in city policies, programs and services
- Redress the legacies of colonialism, racism and slavery
- Invest in more services and supports for newcomer immigrant families
- Ensure fair income for work, including HRM becoming a leader as a Living Wage employer¹³

All children, youth and their families also deserve equitable access to basic supports and services including decent public transit, education, as well as quality housing, social and recreational opportunities, child care and early learning programs.

Finally, the city must collect and report disaggregated demographic data including by gender, ethno-racial background, (dis)ability, and sexuality, for all city programs and services, including the city's own human resources, and follow through by allocating sufficient resources to address inequities. To end poverty requires addressing the root causes of inequities; it also means ensuring that everyone is included, both socially and economically, and able to participate to the fullest extent of their abilities.

Notes

- 1** For more information, see <https://campaign2000.ca/about-us/our-story/>
- 2** For an in-depth and historical analysis of neighbourhoods for capturing meaningful, on-the ground conditions that need to be taken into account, see Victoria Prouse, Jill L Grant, Martha Radice, Howard Ramos, Paul Shakotko, Neighbourhood Change in Halifax Regional Municipality, 1970 to 2010: Applying the “Three Cities” Model (Dalhousie University and The Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership, January 2014). <http://neighbourhoodchange.ca/documents/2014/03/neighbourhood-change-in-halifax-regional-municipality-1970-to-2010-applying-the-three-cities-model.pdf>
- 3** See Appendix A of the 2017 Report Card for further discussion of this data and the poverty measure. <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/2017-report-card-child-and-family-poverty-nova-scotia>
- 4** Statistics Canada. 2017. *Halifax [Census metropolitan area], Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia [Province]* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed December 3, 2017).
- 5** Statistics Canada. 2017. Dictionary, Census of Population, 2016. Catalogue no. 98-301-X. Ottawa. Modified November 16, 2017.
- 6** Statistics Canada. 2017. Dictionary, Census of Population, 2016. Catalogue no. 98-301-X. Ottawa. Modified November 16, 2017.
- 7** Victoria Prouse, Jill L Grant, Martha Radice, Howard Ramos, Paul Shakotko, Neighbourhood Change in Halifax Regional Municipality, 1970 to 2010: Applying the “Three Cities” Model (Dalhousie University and The Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership, January 2014).
- 8** Source: Statistics Canada – 2016 Census. Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001.
- 9** Source: Statistics Canada – 2016 Census. Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016210.
- 10** Source: Statistics Canada – 2016 Census. Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016205.
- 11** Source: Statistics Canada – 2016 Census. Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016170.
- 12** Mike Savage and Sara Napier, Building a better Halifax for all includes a poverty-free community, December 2, 2017, Chronicle Herald. <http://thechronicleherald.ca/opinion/1525756-opinion-building-a-better-halifax-for-all-includes-a-poverty-free-community>
- 13** Christine Saulnier, Halifax can be a living wage leader, June 20, 2017 <http://behindthenumbers.ca/2017/06/20/halifax-can-living-wage-leader/>

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The authors would also like to acknowledge the work of Campaign 2000, which works to increase public awareness of the levels and consequences of child/family poverty by publishing research on the indicators of child poverty and developing public education resources.

About the Authors

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