AFROCENTRIC SYMPOSIUM

Day 2
6th Feb 2025

Plenary Session:

Saskatchewan Scorecard on poverty reduction:
A focus on Black and other minority communities.

With Colleen Christopherson-Cote,

Coordinator Of The Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership

sprp Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership

Acknowledgement

The SPRP is a collaborative group of community partners from across sectors, demographics and experiences that works in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. This is a city with rich histories, located on the South Saskatchewan River on Treaty 6 Territory and the traditional Homeland of the Métis. I would like to acknowledge the people, our ancestors, who played a key role in establishing what we now call Saskatoon.

Turtle Island has been home since time immemorial to the ancestors of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples. We must recognize that, in this territory, Indigenous rights holders have endured historical oppression and continue to endure inequities that have largely resulted from the widespread failure of non-Indigenous treaty people to hold up their responsibilities.

I would also like to acknowledge … those who came here as settlers – as migrants either in this generation or in generations past – and those who came here involuntarily, particularly those brought to these lands as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery. I pay tribute to those ancestors stolen from their homelands. Many of whom today are faced with inequity created by white-centred policies and practices.

About me

- Adopted into a family as a 7th generation settler
- I grew up the only child of a law enforcement family
- I have multiple university experiences
- I worked in law enforcement (crime scene analysis) and research (forensic entomology)
- I have a systems brain – I am not good with front line service
- I have lived in Treaty 4 and/or Treaty 6 since 1997
- I am learning and unlearning and relearning anti-racist practice

What we will cover in this plenary

- **Poverty in this Province**
  - Data and the lack of data
  - Racialization of Poverty
  - Bias and Cautionary Tales
  - Misinformation and Power
- **Policy and Practice – responding to poverty in this Province (and Canada)**
  - Systems, responses and vantage points
  - Anti-racism in Poverty policy
  - Economic reconciliation and outcomes

Please hold questions to the end.

Poverty Rates - Canada

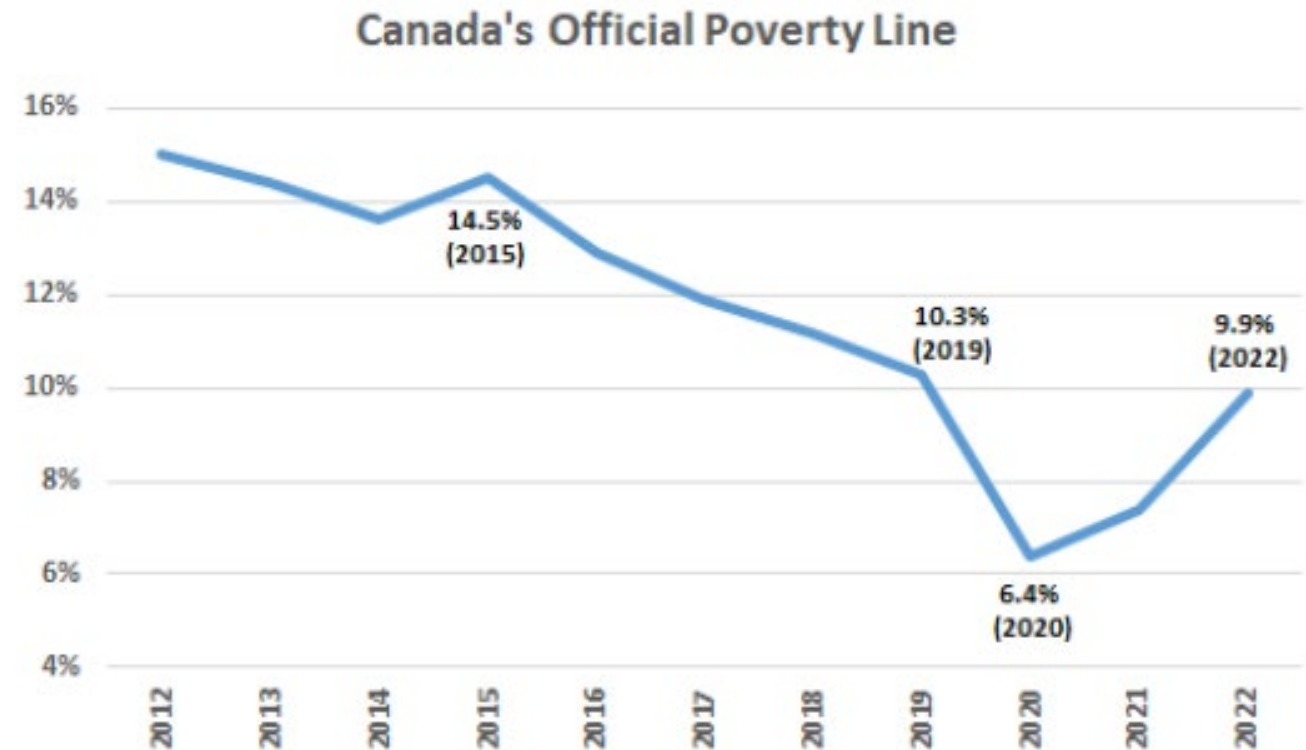5.0% of Canadians were living in deep income poverty

10.1% of Canadian households experienced core housing needs

9.2% of persons aged 15 years and over reported experiencing unmet health care needs

16.9% of Canadians lived in households that had experienced moderate or severe food insecurity

The poverty rate for one-parent families headed by a woman with a child aged 0 to 5 was 31.3%, the highest among all family types, and more than five times the rate of couple-families with a child of the same age (6.0%).

Canada's Official Poverty Line

Canada's Official Poverty Line

- 14.5% (2015)
- 10.3% (2019)
- 9.9% (2022)
- 6.4% (2020)

Poverty in Saskatoon – Market Basket Measure

MARKET BASKET MEASURE - MBM

Shelter $18,327 ($1500/month)

Transportation $4823/yr ($90/week)

Clothing $2262/yr ($188/month)

Other (tech, health, childcare included) $12,644/yr ($1050/month)

Food $13,219/yr ($250/week)

$51,275.00/yr

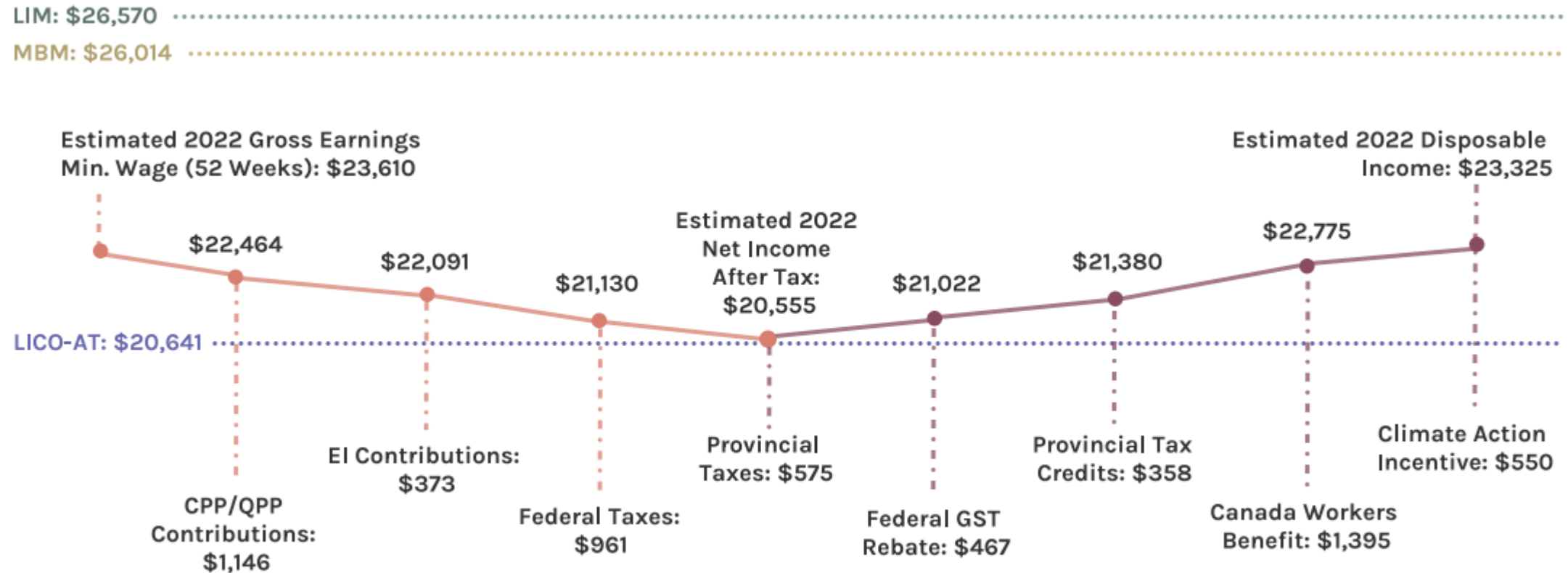2 earners making about $4200/month total

Income & Wages

Oftentimes folks living in poverty are accused of not working hard or enough.

Minimum wage in SK is the lowest in Canada.

AND... going to work costs money, so the balance for income and expenses just to go to work is different for low-income wage earners.

Income source	Hourly rate	comments
SIS - single	$8.50/hour $6.16/hour	*includes the earned exemption *excludes the earned exemption
SIS - single with 1-2 kids	$12.00/hour $8.86/hour	*includes the earned exemption/shelter benefit for families *excludes the earned exemption
SAID single	$15.39/hour	* includes earned exemption *does not include additional benefits that individuals may qualify for including utilities, laundry, child care *used average across the 4 Tiers
SAID single with 1-2 kids	$17.13/hour	
Minimum wage (2024)	$15.00/hour	*this was the target from 2022 - no indication if it set to increase again
Living Wage (2023 with $10/day child care)	$18.50/hour	Saskatoon CCPA Oct 2024
Living Wage (2023 without $10/day child care)	$20.25/hour	Saskatoon CCPA Oct 2024
Average Provincial Hourly wage	$29.54/hour	40hr/wk estimated from avg weekly Stats can
Average Canadian Hourly wage	$30.81/hour	40hr/wk estimated from avg weekly Stats can
Median Provincial Hourly wage	$26.11/hour	40hr/wk estimated from avg weekly Stats can
Median Canadian Hourly wage	$29.54/hour	40hr/wk estimated from avg weekly Stats can

Full Time Minimum Wage Jobs

LIM: $26,570

MBM: $26,014

Estimated 2022 Gross Earnings
Min. Wage (52 Weeks): $23,610

Estimated 2022 Disposable
Income: $23,325

$22,464

$22,091

Estimated 2022
Net Income
After Tax:
$20,555

$22,775

$21,380

$21,130

$21,022

LICO-AT: $20,641

CPP/QPP
Contributions:
$1,146

EI Contributions:
$373

Provincial
Taxes: $575

Provincial Tax
Credits: $358

Climate Action
Incentive: $550

Federal Taxes:
$961

Federal GST
Rebate: $467

Canada Workers
Benefit: $1,395

Note: Adapted from the Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership, 2022

General info – Poverty in Saskatoon

POVERTY RATE

16%
of people in Saskatoon
live in poverty

18.4%
of people in SK
live in poverty

15.6%
of people in Canada
live in poverty

CHILDHOOD POVERTY

19.5%
of children in Saskatoon
live in poverty

24.2%
of children in SK
live in poverty

15.6%
of children in Canada
live in poverty

Racialization in Poverty (and systems)

Racialization refers to "the process by which societies construct races as real, different and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life."
Racial categories are not based on science or biology but on differences that society has chosen to emphasize, with significant consequences for people's lives.
People can be racialized not only based on skin colour but also other perceived characteristics such as their culture, language, customs, ancestry, country or place of origin, or in close association with faithist bias as in Islamophobia and anti-Sikh faithism.

Aa

Racialized communities experience ongoing, disproportionate levels of poverty. In other words, people of colour and Indigenous Peoples are more likely to fall below the LICO/LIM and to have related problems like poor health, lower education, and fewer job opportunities, than non-racialized people.

While it is possible for anyone to experience low income and reduced opportunities, individual and systemic racism plays a significant role in creating disadvantaged conditions and barriers for people of colour and Indigenous Peoples.

Discrimination means that they are less likely to get jobs when equally qualified and are likely to make less income than their non-racialized peers. They are more likely to live and work in poor conditions, have less access to healthcare, and be victims of police violence.

Looking for Race-Based Data...

Using the StatsCan site to find the story to tell you all.

- My Questions were answered with reports.

- With anecdotal commentary.

- With external reports that reinforced bias.

- Often the data is based on "self-declaration"

- With reports that I wish I had never read.

GO ON A WILD GOOSE CHASE

Here's what I found...

Digging deeper into the StatsCan site:

10.8% of South Asian, 15.3% of Chinese and 12.4% of Black Canadians lived in poverty in 2020.

The prevalence of poverty varied markedly between racialized groups and regions. For example, the poverty rate among Black Canadians was 15.8% in Winnipeg and 9.7% in Montréal

Generational Racialized Poverty

Table 1

Poverty rates by population group and generation status, 2020

	Observed rates				Adjusted rates			
Population group	All	First generation	Second generation	Third generation or more	All	First generation	Second generation	Third generation or more
				percent				
South Asian	7.2	7.6	6.2	6.0	7.2	9.2	5.9	5.4
Chinese	12.2	14.1	8.3	5.1	8.9	11.4	6.9	5.1
Black	10.4	10.9	9.1	12.1	7.8	9.6	6.3	7.6
Filipino	3.9	3.9	4.0	5.7	4.8	6.3	4.6	5.4
Latin American	9.4	9.4	9.2	14.1	7.5	9.6	7.1	8.1
Arab	13.9	15.4	10.5	9.2	11.1	12.6	8.5	7.3
Southeast Asian	9.3	10.1	7.9	8.1	7.4	10.5	6.7	6.7
West Asian	13.4	13.8	11.6	16.9	10.1	11.8	7.9	10.0
Korean	13.4	14.2	11.0	7.4	10.5	12.4	9.1	7.0
Japanese	7.3	9.4	6.7	5.5	6.1	7.6	6.0	5.2
Other racialized groups	8.3	9.4	7.3	7.5	6.9	9.5	6.0	5.8
White	6.1	7.0	5.9	6.0	6.1	7.0	5.9	6.0

Assumptions with data

Notes: The poverty rates reported are smaller than in previous census releases because this table excludes temporary residents.

The adjusted rates are estimated based on a regression model for all three generations combined and for each generation.

The adjusted rates assume that each racialized group had the same characteristics as the White group in terms of sex, age, education, language, generational co-residence, household type, number of earners in the economic family, population size of the economic family and geographic distribution.

For the total population, the model includes generation status. For immigrants, the model also includes years since landing.

Patching together data to tell a story – A Cautionary tale

You can also dig deeper and create some opportunities to infer and analyse the data

The Cautionary tale is that analysis and inference are rooted in the **same bias, same discrimination and same ideological processes** that prevent us from having evidence based racialized data in the first place.

What comes to mind when we consider who fall into these categories:
1. Single parent
2. Minimum wage earner
3. Low-income family
4. Urban vs Rural family
5. Core neighbourhood vs suburban family

What we need is the actual race-based data.

Myths and Misinformation

There is a myth or misconception that people who live in poverty need to "work harder" or "pull themselves up by their boot-straps".

In reality, escaping the cycle of poverty isn't about how hard you work; it's about the policies, choices, and opportunities available to you, which are largely determined by the amount of income you have to work with.

Which is largely determined by policies and opportunities that allow you access to the economy.

DISINFORMATION is planned lies or fabrications that are deliberately misleading.

MISINFORMATION is inaccurate information unintentionally held and/or shared.

Spreading disinformation thrives on dividing people. It's designed to exploit areas where people are polarized, and fuels mistrust and prejudices.
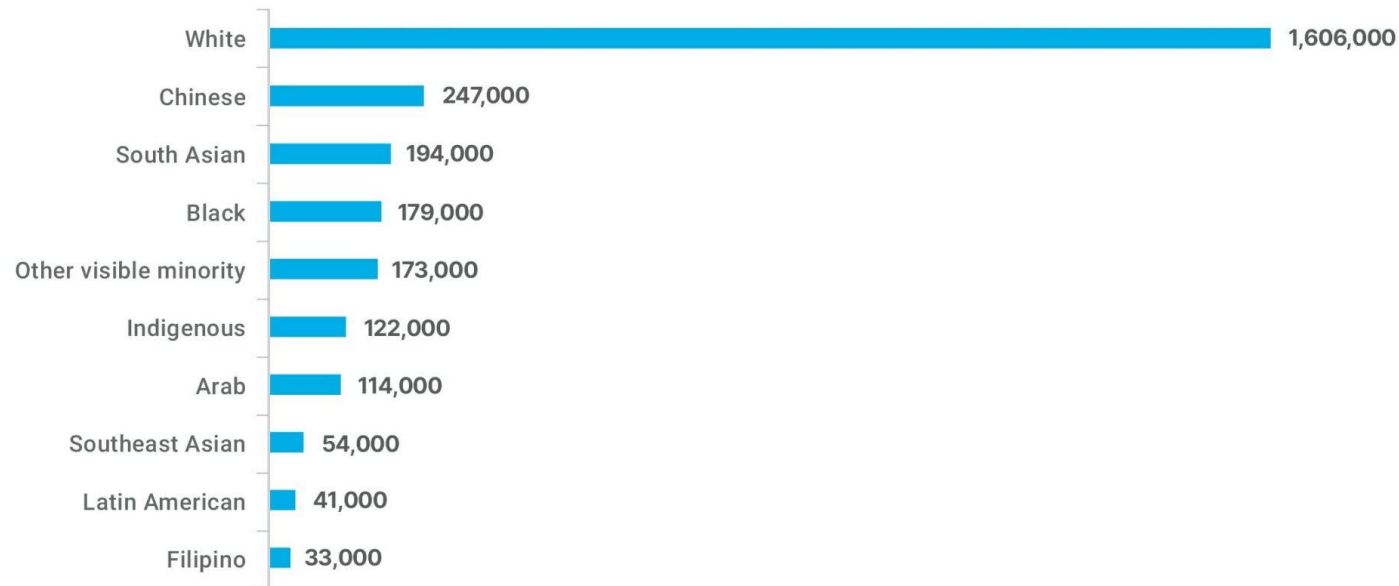
In order to Eliminate Poverty – we must work together, across all sectors, and with all levels of government.

Mis/Dis Information – Data tells a story

Figure 3

Number of people in Canada living in relative poverty, based on the cost of living

2021

White	1,606,000
Chinese	247,000
South Asian	194,000
Black	179,000
Other visible minority	173,000
Indigenous	122,000
Arab	114,000
Southeast Asian	54,000
Latin American	41,000
Filipino	33,000

Source: Authors' calculations based on Statistics Canada Table 11-10-0093-01.

Here is an example.

It's the SAME DATA that I reminded you to remember.

Presented in a way that changes the narrative.

Presented in a way that attempts to manage power.

Anti-Racist Approach to Policy Design

1 THE COST FRAMING

This framing argues that poverty should be reduced because inaction costs more. While well intentioned, the framing puts a price on poverty reduction and therefore provides a logical loophole for justifying scenarios when poverty reduction should not be pursued (i.e., when it is not cost-effective to reduce poverty)

2 THE SHAME FRAMING

This framing focuses on shaming those with power and authority into pursuing poverty reduction. It ignores the suffering of those in poverty and focuses on the honour of the privileged

Anti-Racist Approach to Policy Design
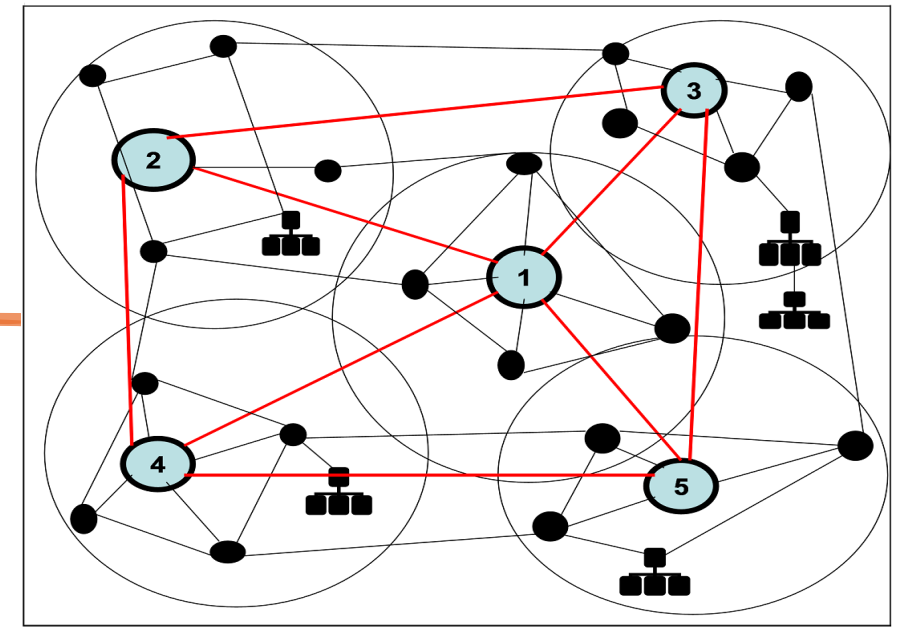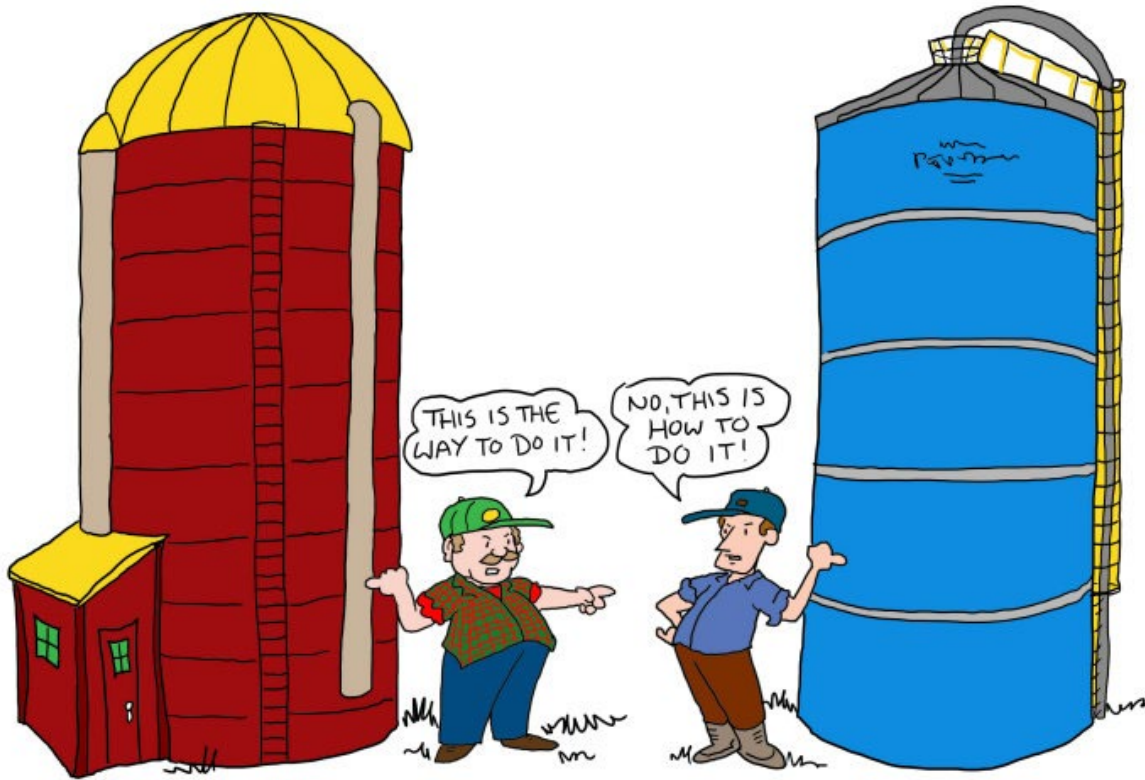
3

THE ROOT-CAUSE FRAMING

This framing describes the root-causes of poverty. It rejects an individualized explanation of poverty and focuses on structural factors that create and sustain poverty

4

THE HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMING

In this framing, as long as people experience poverty, we are violating their human rights. Here, poverty should be reduced not because it is embarrassing that some are poor or that it would cost less in the long run but because people have a right not to live in poverty

The System Designs

- Vantage points
- Chaotic and simple
- Siloed and interconnected
- The system's broken phenomenon

The Response(s)

- Vantage points
- Reactive vs proactive
- Points of conflict
- The magic bullet syndrome

Rod deSarro

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

Poverty and your vantage point

The partisan rhetoric regarding where income comes from, who is or isn't deserving, what supports should or shouldn't be, and how they are accessed **have deep roots in our colonial, patriarchal, neoliberal and capitalist foundations.**

With all that said, regardless of which side of the political continuum your ideology falls on....

Creating public policy and practical processes that support all citizens to actively engage in a thriving family, community life actually **increases wealth for all, increases health and well-being, and drives the economy in a positive way.**

Values based, charitable models of helping

Public Policy is often developed by people who have **NO LIVED EXPERIENCE** of the circumstances the policy is designed to address

Across sectors, we will hear about times where there is a divide – **folks that are "deserving of supports" and folks "who should make better decisions"**

Charitable response is rooted in making us feel better about helping people but **doesn't address the root issues of systemic inequity.**

There is a fundamental difference between **CHOICE and OPTIONS**

- This changes with privilege and affluence, stability, and other demographics, and social determinants of health
- There are life circumstances that impact the interconnectedness of choice and option

The same policy makers without lived experience of the circumstances are designing things based on the choices they are privy to – which are not the same as the folks who are impacted by the policy.

We have a legacy of Economic Exclusion

- **Colonization and the public policies** that created the legacies for Indigenous people and other minority demographics play/played a critical role in **purposefully excluding them from participation in the economy.**

- The building of **assets and the intergenerational wealth transfer** that comes from asset building has been absent for generations of Indigenous families.

- **Purposeful exclusion** from education pathways, employment pathways and generations of trauma have a direct impact on the **disproportionate numbers of people living in poverty.**

- Policy makers, community advocates, likely all of us, are **quick to share the data about over-representation** of folks (in poverty, in justice, in poor health outcomes) but we lack the capacity (or willingness) to **flip the conversation to the under-representation of the same folks in education outcomes, high paying employment options, positions of power or policy making.**

We have an obligation to commit to **Economic Reconciliation**

- **Disrupting belief systems** that perpetuate the idea that some people (particularly Indigenous folks, but also other equity seeking demographics) are not deserving of equity

- **Advocating and demanding Equity based distribution of wealth** – at the very least through a **livable minimum wages** in Saskatchewan

- Advocating for **Equity based frameworks** to distribute the change in wealth

- Building in **race-based data collection** to openly and transparently identify gaps and celebrations.

- A national, interjurisdictional, approach to a **Canadian Basic Income Guarantee.**

We can continuously try to create programs to eliminate poverty – but without systemic policy changes we will be in a perpetual cycle of responding.

Racialization of Poverty – Scorecard ?

Canada – the provinces, territories and communities need tools to openly collect race-based data.

Without this data, we are left to infer but also we burden equity seeking demographics with proving their inequity.

We KNOW that there are inequities that show up as under or over representation.

We know that many of these are due to legacy colonial public policies designed specifically to achieve those outcomes.

It's hard to score Saskatchewan (or Canada) positively without willingness to entertain this data collection.

But from the data we currently have, SK is often the worst of the best outcomes and the best at the worst outcomes.

But it's not all doom and gloom!

There is a growing commitment to advocacy around race-based data and how it can be used to inform public policy.

Agencies like TAYFFI – who are committed to bridging collective action and collaborative approaches to disrupting the current models.

Local context data from agencies like food banks, employment services, housing, are considering local race-based data that can be used to supplement government narratives.

Research focused on amplifying the inequities facing racialized poverty.

Community based advocates holding positions of power in government structures.

City of Saskatoon willing to consider community benefit frameworks for large capital infrastructure projects like the DEED.

BE BOLD

To connect with the Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership and get involved the 12 Bold Ideas to Eliminate Poverty please email Colleen at:

SPRPCoordinator@gmail.com

sprp Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership

EXTRA STUFF JUST IN CASE

Let's talk about CHOICE

You are invited to THE BEST EVER PIZZA PARTY

It's my promise to you that you won't be disappointed and that you will have your favourite pizza at the party.

QUESTION 1: ARE YOU GOING?
If you are please stand up

BEST PIZZA EVER

WHEN YOU ARRIVE
this is the only pizza at the party

ARE YOU LEAVING?
ARE YOU EATING?
ARE YOU HAPPY?

What are all the different
choices and options that play
out in this scenario
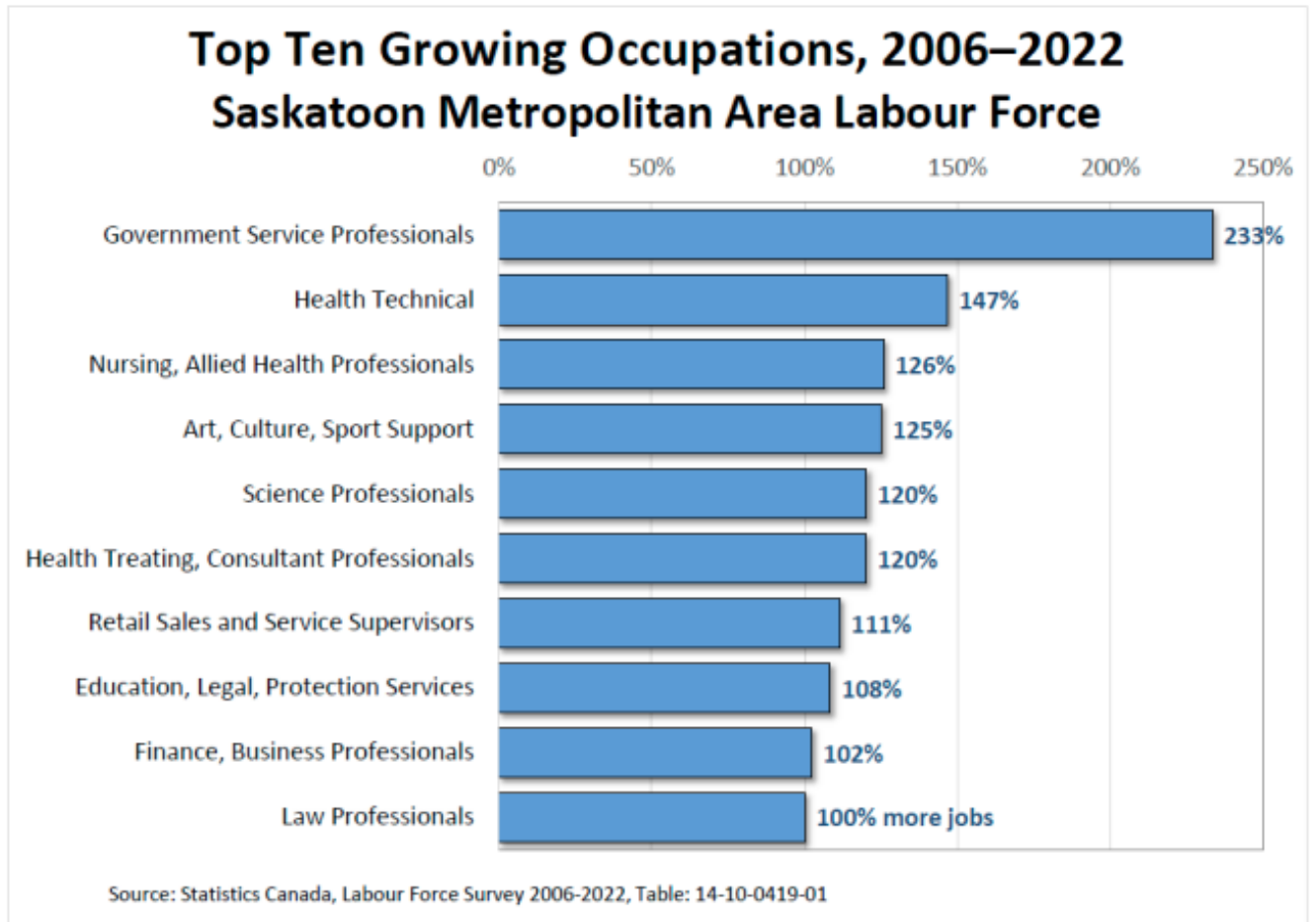
SIT DOWN WHEN YOUR
SITUATION IS EXPOSED

The relationship between poverty and income

In Saskatoon, we are seeing a big-city urban phenomenon emerging.

There is a growing divide **driven by the changing employment sectors**

Top Ten Growing Occupations, 2006–2022
Saskatoon Metropolitan Area Labour Force

Occupation	Growth
Government Service Professionals	233%
Health Technical	147%
Nursing, Allied Health Professionals	126%
Art, Culture, Sport Support	125%
Science Professionals	120%
Health Treating, Consultant Professionals	120%
Retail Sales and Service Supervisors	111%
Education, Legal, Protection Services	108%
Finance, Business Professionals	102%
Law Professionals	100% more jobs

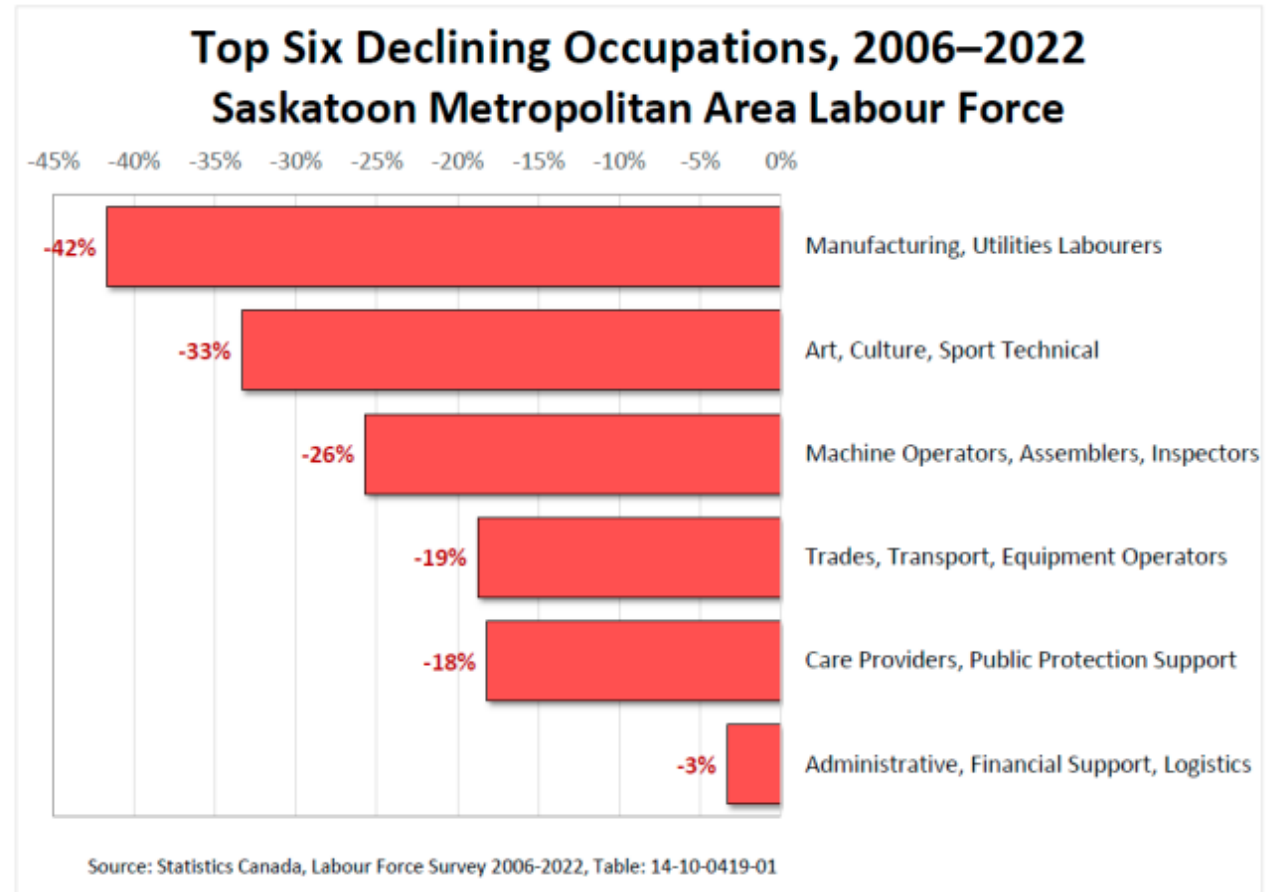Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey 2006-2022, Table: 14-10-0419-01
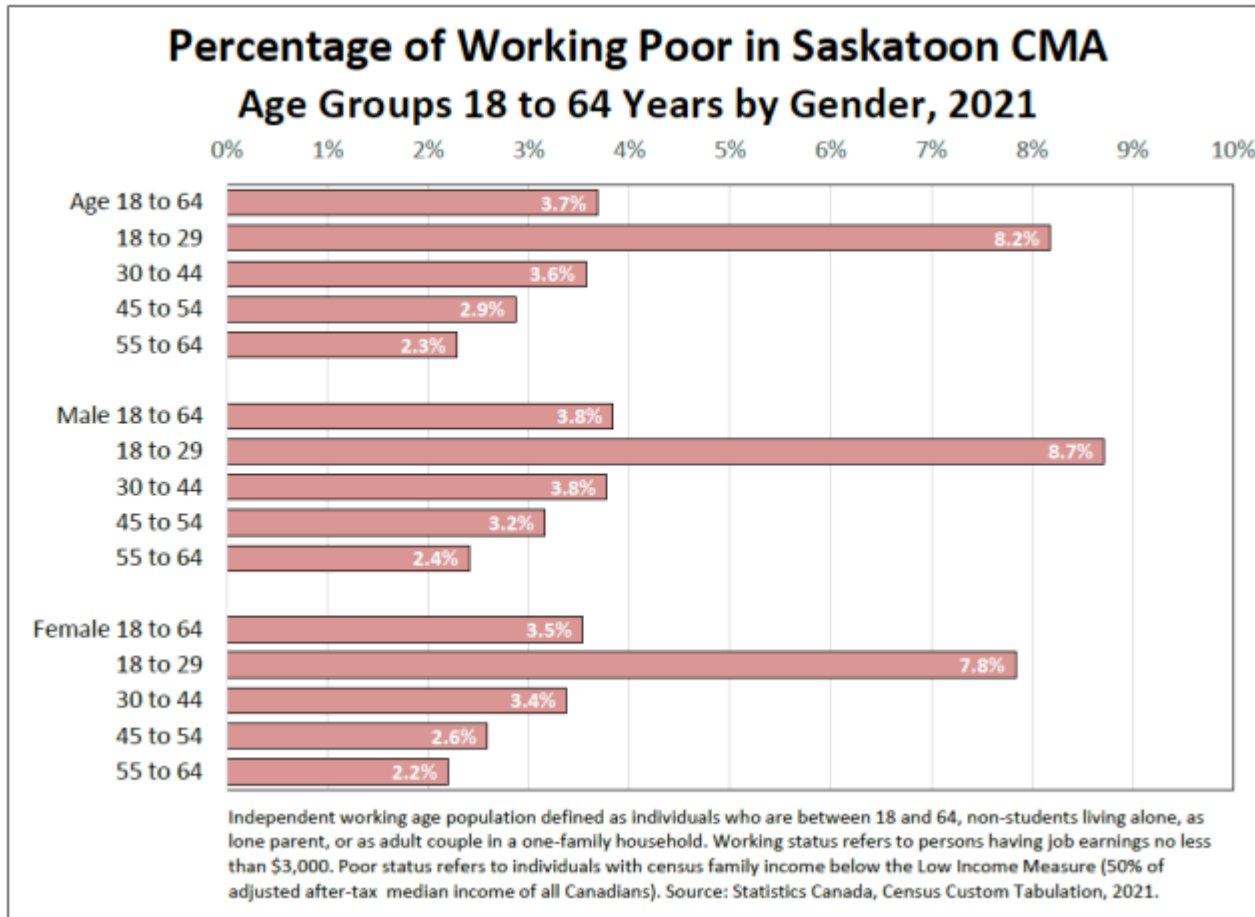
The relationship between poverty and income

Employment in the SK urban centres is changing from industry/manufacturing to professional service sector

WHAT HAPPENS with this change?

You get what Toronto explains as "both the richest and the poorest" community at the same time.

Top Six Declining Occupations, 2006–2022 Saskatoon Metropolitan Area Labour Force

- -42% Manufacturing, Utilities Labourers
- -33% Art, Culture, Sport Technical
- -26% Machine Operators, Assemblers, Inspectors
- -19% Trades, Transport, Equipment Operators
- -18% Care Providers, Public Protection Support
- -3% Administrative, Financial Support, Logistics

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey 2006-2022, Table: 14-10-0419-01

The data reinforces the expected outcomes

Percentage of Working Poor in Saskatoon CMA
Age Groups 18 to 64 Years by Gender, 2021

Age Group	Percentage
Age 18 to 64	3.7%
18 to 29	8.2%
30 to 44	3.6%
45 to 54	2.9%
55 to 64	2.3%
Male 18 to 64	3.8%
18 to 29	8.7%
30 to 44	3.8%
45 to 54	3.2%
55 to 64	2.4%
Female 18 to 64	3.5%
18 to 29	7.8%
30 to 44	3.4%
45 to 54	2.6%
55 to 64	2.2%

Independent working age population defined as individuals who are between 18 and 64, non-students living alone, as lone parent, or as adult couple in a one-family household. Working status refers to persons having job earnings no less than $3,000. Poor status refers to individuals with census family income below the Low Income Measure (50% of adjusted after-tax median income of all Canadians). Source: Statistics Canada, Census Custom Tabulation, 2021.

AND which demographic is most impacted?

YOUNG PEOPE

And if we had good race-based data from Stats Can we would also see **Black, Indigenous and other people of colour** impacted
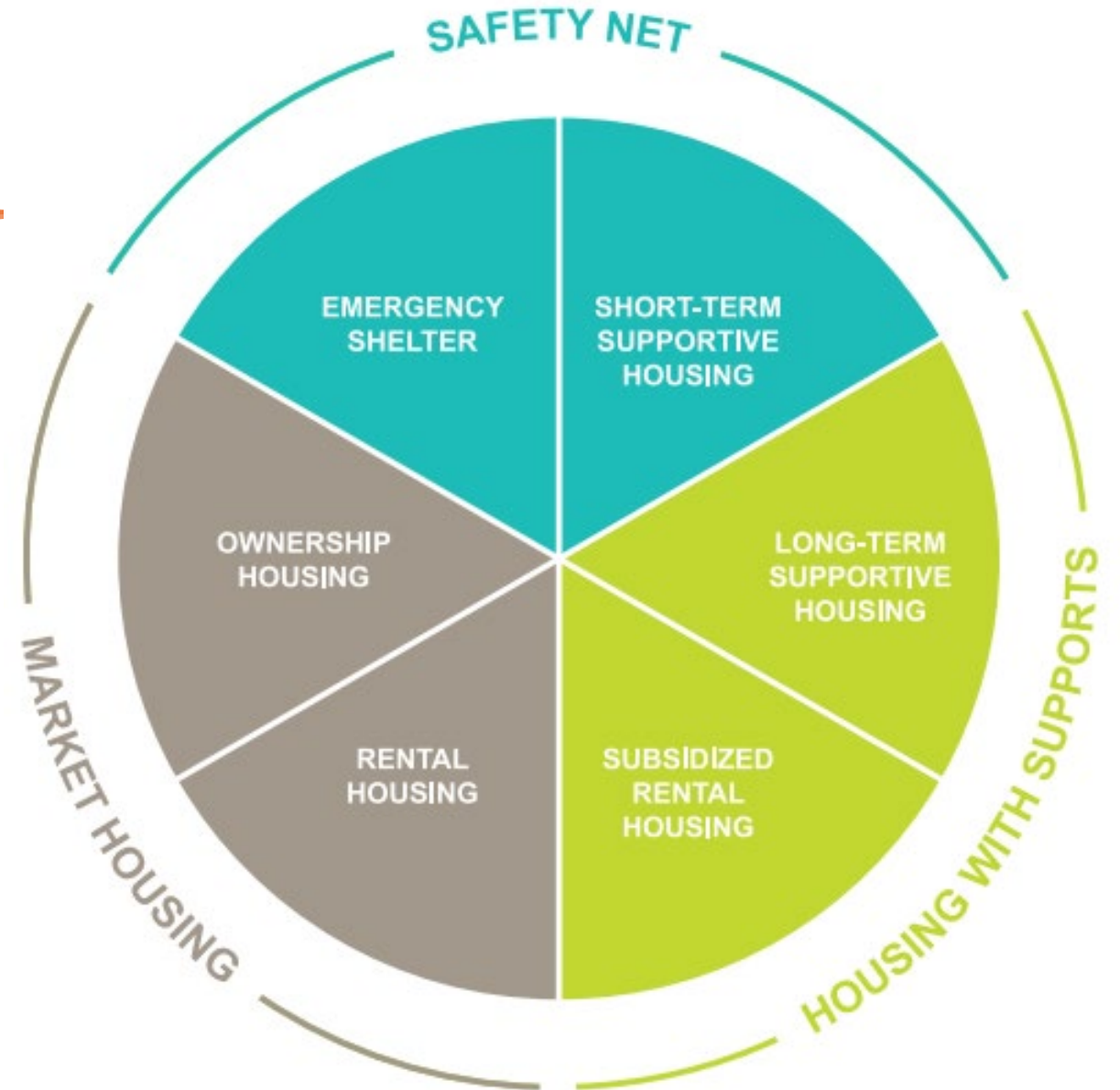
So what about housing?

The amount of **income** you have dramatically impacts **WHERE on the continuum** you might fall

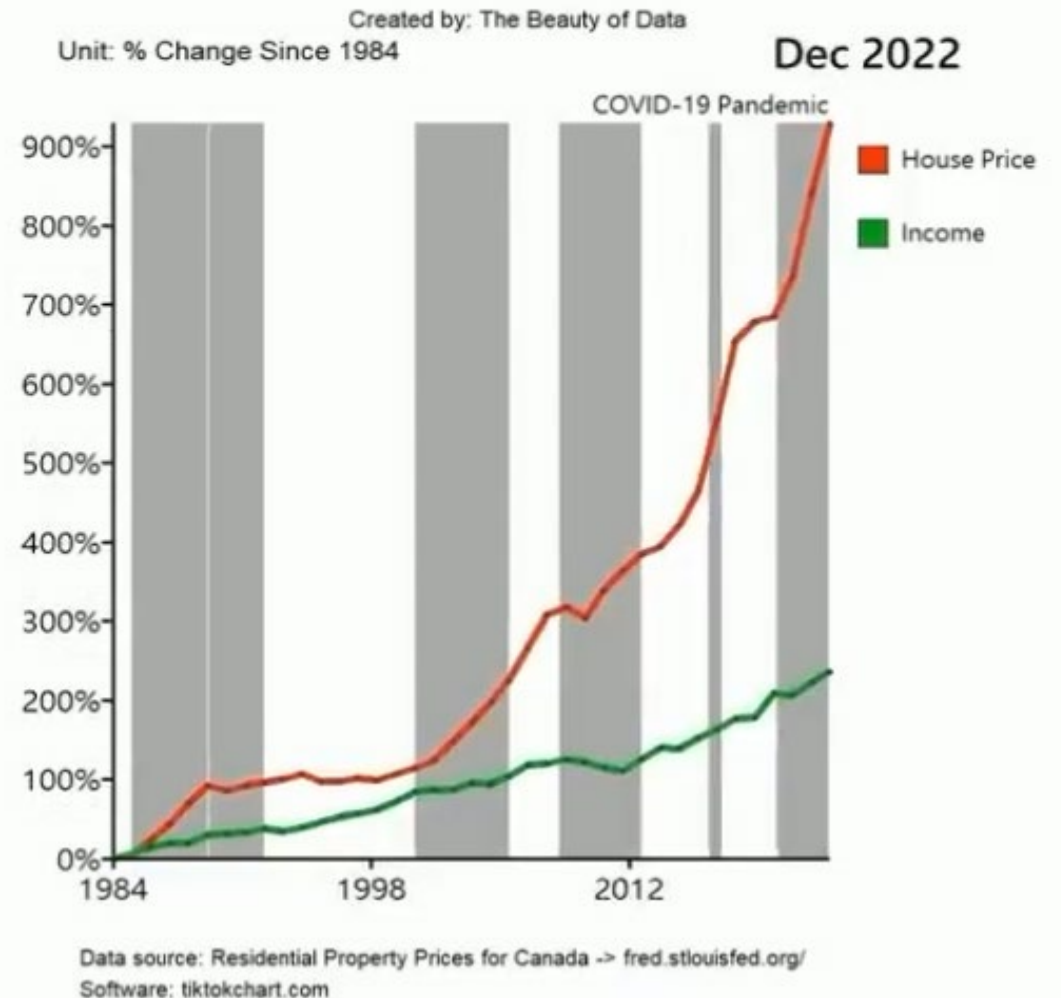It's NOT the only driver – because income also dramatically **impacts ALL the SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH**

And to further complicate the relationship **– the HOUSING CONTINUUM is incomplete**

Income and Housing

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/crisnitz_affordable-housing-housingmarket-activity-7155302988327096320-86o_?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_ios
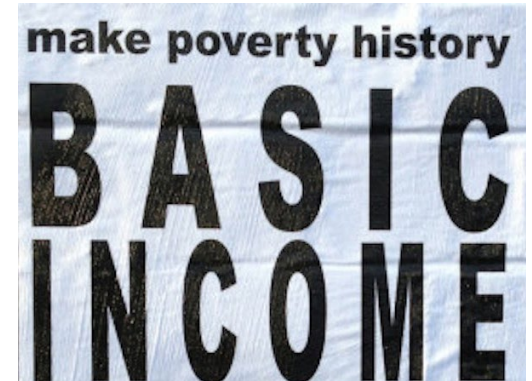

House price vs Income since 1984 in Canada

Basic income represents a **fundamental shift** in how we think about **income security** in Canada

make poverty history BASIC INCOME

In General - What is basic income?

A basic income is **an unconditional cash transfer** from government to individuals to enable everyone to meet their basic needs, participate in society, and live with dignity - **regardless of work status**.

The six principles of BIG are:

1. *Universally accessible*
2. *Unconditional*
3. *Sufficient*
4. *Respects autonomy*
5. *Complements social services*
6. *Reliable*

- provided only to those *aged 18-64*
- *Sets an income floor*
- *income tested and adjusted for family size*
- your income is very low, you would get the greatest amount
- equity frameworks