

2014 Progress Report on the Prince Edward Island Social Action Plan

July 2014

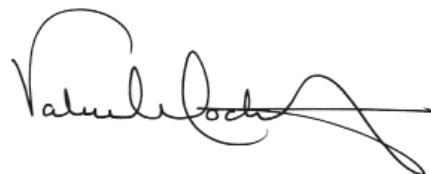
I am pleased to present the second annual Progress Report on the Prince Edward Island Social Action Plan. Through the Social Action Plan, government and community partners are working together to explore ways and implement actions to help to reduce poverty in our province.

We know that Islanders who move out of poverty will generally enjoy better health and well-being, have a better education experience and contribute more to the Island's economy and vitality. With this in mind, we have compiled this Progress Report to provide Islanders with an update on what has been achieved in year two and what is planned for the future. The report also includes some reporting on baseline data related to well being in our province.

I encourage you to take some time to read through this document. It outlines not only the plans, but also the activities, of many government departments including Innovation and Advanced Learning, Education and Early Childhood Development, Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs, Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development, Environment,

Labour and Justice, Health and Wellness/Health PEI and the Department of Community Services and Seniors.

Together, and with our community partners, we will continue working to strengthen supports to vulnerable Islanders in areas such as housing, financial supports, health services, court processes, early childhood development, training, skills development and job readiness.



Hon. Valerie E. Docherty, Minister
Community Services and Seniors



Introduction

The second Progress Report of the Social Action Plan shows achievement by many government departments and community organizations on actions which will support vulnerable people across the province. The Social Action Plan Working Group, with representatives from across government, continues to monitor the Plan, act as the liaison to their department, and advise government on future direction of the Plan.

The Working Group has recently welcomed the Department of Agriculture and Forestry to join its mandate.

New in this report is the inclusion of measures and indicators of the well-being of the people of Prince Edward Island.

Goals:

The Social Action Plan continues to be focused on the same goals that were identified in the first Social Action Plan Progress Report:

- Support people to move out of poverty by strengthening their educational and economic opportunities and their participation in the labour force.
- Protect and enhance the standard of living and quality of life for those unable to participate in the labour force for whatever reason.
- Provide fair and equitable opportunities for Islanders to participate in and contribute to the cultural, economic and social environment of Prince Edward Island.

Achievements in Year Two – 2013/14

Housing

- Twenty new rent supplements were created for families and individuals.
- The PEI Home Renovation Program was implemented, investing a total of \$1.3M in forgivable loans provided to 71 eligible Island homeowners, whose homes needed major repairs. These included:
 - Home Renovation Program (maximum loan of \$12,000 per household)
 - Persons with Disabilities Home Renovation (maximum loan of \$16,000 per household)
 - Emergency Home Repair (maximum loan of \$6,000 per household)
- Through the Canada-PEI Affordable Housing Agreement, construction was completed on a 5-unit building in Charlottetown and a 5-unit building in Cornwall to provide affordable, accessible housing for people with disabilities.
- A contribution of \$50,000 was made to Habitat for Humanity to support affordable home ownership to families.
- \$121,200 was provided to the Salvation Army Emergency Home Heating Program.

- Funding was approved to create 21 residential units for adults living with intellectual disabilities. These units will be established over a three year period in collaboration with community organizations that provide these residential services. In 2013/14, seven residential units were created.
- A new compensation model, based on the care needs of adults with disabilities, was approved. This model provides a range of funding to families who have been assessed to meet the requirements as an "Associate Family" based on the skill, experience and complexity of services required to provide the care.

Income support

- Shelter rates were increased by 3% for all Social Assistance clients in November, 2013.
- Food rates were increased by 5% for single persons in receipt of Social Assistance in January, 2014.
- A plan was approved to increase and index food rates over a five year period for all persons in receipt of Social Assistance.
- PEI joined Ontario's Technical Advisory Group on Retirement Security, along



with Manitoba, to help develop a viable, responsible plan to improve retirement income security.

Early learning and education

- Wages increased for early childhood educators.
- 75 early childhood educators carried out their training for their one-year certification and graduated in May 2014.

Employment supports and services

- A Rural Diversification Plan is in place through a partnership between Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development (FARD). In the fall of 2013, the Consultant Advisory Services Program was introduced by ACOA/FARD as a pilot for PEI. It provides non-repayable investment in businesses to focus on business & succession planning, access to capital and human resource planning.
- 254 Social Assistance clients were successful in obtaining employment as a result of the Department of Community Services and Seniors Employment Support Services (ESS) assessment/referral program. The ESS Program works with clients to help them access the most

appropriate employment program to suit their needs. Referrals are made to employment programs in the departments of Innovation and Advanced Learning and Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development as well as in employment programs with various community partner groups.

- The Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning began a partnership with Holland College to launch “eForcePEI”, which is designed to give Prince Edward Island businesses the ability to provide skills training to their employees at no cost.
- Self-Employ PEI was initiated by the Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning. This is a 52 week employment benefit program that is designed to help people start and succeed with owning and operating their own businesses. Participants receive financial assistance as well as business counseling and ongoing support from SkillsPEI.

Health

- A Catastrophic Drug Program was implemented to protect any individual or family whose drug costs are consuming an unreasonable share of their income.
- A Mental Health and Addictions Review

report was released and work was begun to develop a plan to address the findings.

- The monitoring of prescription drugs was strengthened by the establishment of the *Narcotics Safety and Awareness Act*.
- Consultations on a Wellness Strategy were completed.
- Ambulance fees for inter-hospital transfers were removed.
- A partnership with the PEI Pharmacists Association was implemented for a year long campaign promoting seniors safe use, storage and disposal of medications.

Family supports

- Clothing, room & board rates for children in care were increased by 5% in October, 2013.
- A plan was developed to implement Triple P Positive Parenting Program.
- Elder abuse awareness grants were provided to seven communities to increase seniors abilities to recognize and prevent elder abuse.
- The Department of Environment, Labour and Justice commissioned research regarding therapeutic courts and their feasibility in PEI. Such courts are designed

to more effectively respond to persons who interact with the justice system due to underlying mental health or addiction issues and who would benefit with support from health and social services programs.

Social inclusion and participation

- Across Prince Edward Island over 70 communities received funding to provide accessible infrastructure allowing more Islanders the opportunity to participate in and contribute to Island life.
- Ten communities were provided with Age Friendly Community grants to support Age Friendly Community activities.
- A new *Disability Supports Act* that establishes a strong foundation for the Disability Support Program was approved by the Legislature.
- The Interministerial Womens Secretariat approved funding for grants to community organizations which supported initiatives related to cybersafety, cyberbullying public awareness, promotion of economic equality for PEI women in business, leadership toolkit for migrant women and promoting gender equality in Island youth.

Plans for Year Three -2014/15

Housing

- Create 20 additional rent supplements for families and individuals.
- Increase the Seniors Home Repair grant to a maximum of \$2,000 per household.
- Implement a new seniors home care modification program to provide a maximum grant of \$5,000.
- Continue to work with community partners to identify solutions to homelessness.
- Contribute \$50,000 to Habitat for Humanity.
- Provide a grant of \$121,200 to the Salvation Army Emergency Home Heating Program.

Income support

- Review eligibility criteria of asset levels for the Social Assistance program.
- Begin implementation of a five year plan for regular Social Assistance food rate increases that will incorporate the Consumer Price Index into its yearly adjustment.
- Continue to advocate for a modest, fully

funded, phased-in enhancement to the Canada Pension Plan to improve coverage and adequacy of retirement benefits.

Early learning and education

- Further increase wages for Early Childhood Educators (September 2014).
- Continue to develop Literacy Action Plans with Early Years Centres.
- Implement an Integrated Service Delivery pilot project in an Island school.
- Promote successful Youth Transition to employment and the labour market.
- 60 early childhood educators are expected to enroll in a second year of training to receive their early childhood diploma. As well, training will be provided to early childhood centre directors.

Employment supports and services

- Continue the Employment Services and Supports Program, a partnership between Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development, Innovation and Advanced Learning and Community Services and Seniors.
- The minimum wage in Prince Edward Island increased to \$10.20 an hour as of June 1, 2014 and will increase to \$10.35 an hour as of October 1, 2014.

Health

- Develop a long-term strategy to transform the way mental health services are delivered in the Province.
- Implement a program to help cover the cost of insulin pumps and related supplies for children with Type 1 diabetes.
- Continue to assess the scientific evidence and where appropriate, add new drugs to the Provincial Pharmacare formulary to assist Islanders to receive necessary medications.
- To ensure children get the best start in their education, a new 'Eye See, Eye Learn' program will be jointly launched by the Department of Health and Wellness and the Prince Edward Island Association of Optometrists.
- Implement a partnership with Maritime Bus, whereby Islanders in need, receive support for their off-Island transportation costs.
- To help Islanders return home from hospital earlier, partner with the Red Cross to offer a Health Equipment Loan Program. This Program will allow Islanders to recover independently, in the comfort of their own home.
- Develop a province-wide Wellness Strategy that will support Islanders in their efforts to make healthy decisions and lead active, healthy lives.

Family supports

- Increase clothing, room and board rates for children in care by 2%, effective June 1, 2014.
- Implement the Triple P Positive Parenting Program.
- The Department of Environment, Labour and Justice (ELJ) is working with the health and social services systems to explore how a therapeutic court may be constituted in our Island community.
- Establish a working group of community and government representatives to begin working on issues that impact food insecurity in PEI households.

Social inclusion and participation

- Develop an Age-friendly Community recognition process to include supportive tools to assist communities to assess, develop and implement age-friendly community plans.



Measures and indicators of social well being in Prince Edward Island

Part of working toward greater social well being for Islanders is to monitor measures of societal well being. By watching some of these indicators over time, we can become more aware of the experience of people in Prince Edward Island. It may help us to see trends which need attention.

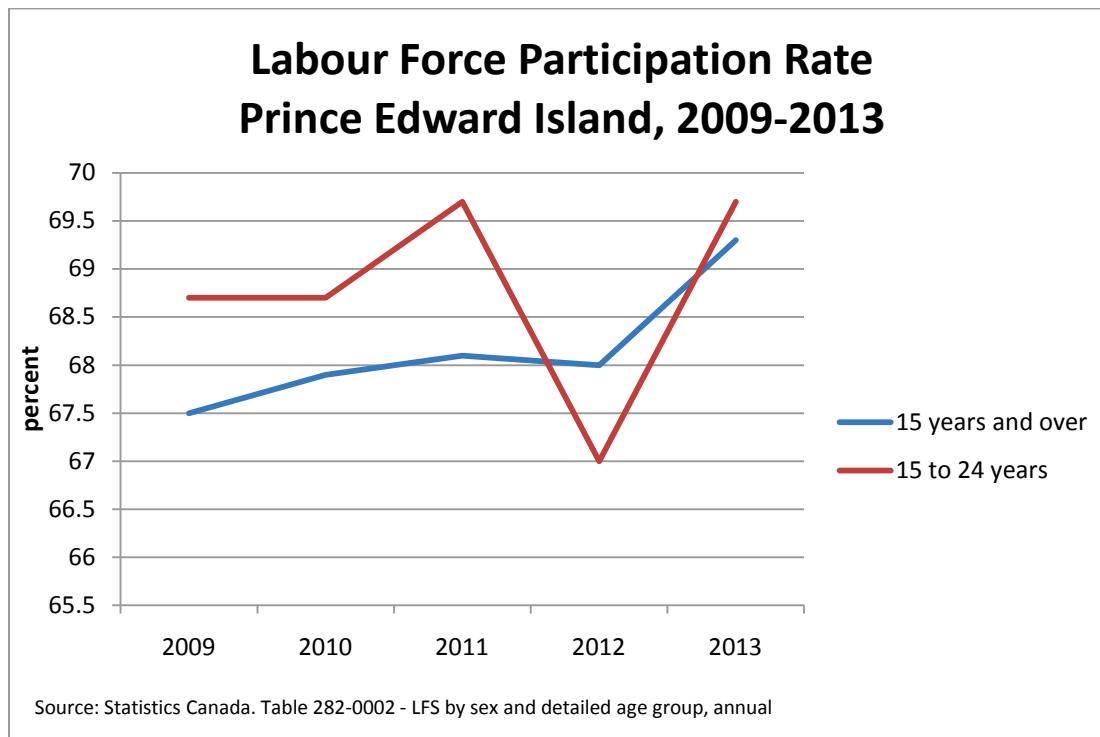
The Social Action Plan Working Group has selected a group of measures and indicators related to social well being. There are many more measures and indicators which could be reported on, but the indicators selected for this report will give a snapshot of how things are going in a number of areas of peoples' lives. If you would like to see further information related to Prince Edward Island, the Annual Statistical Review may be found at:

http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/fema_asr2012.pdf and the Chief Public Health Officer's Annual Report is available at http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/CPHO_Trends_14.pdf

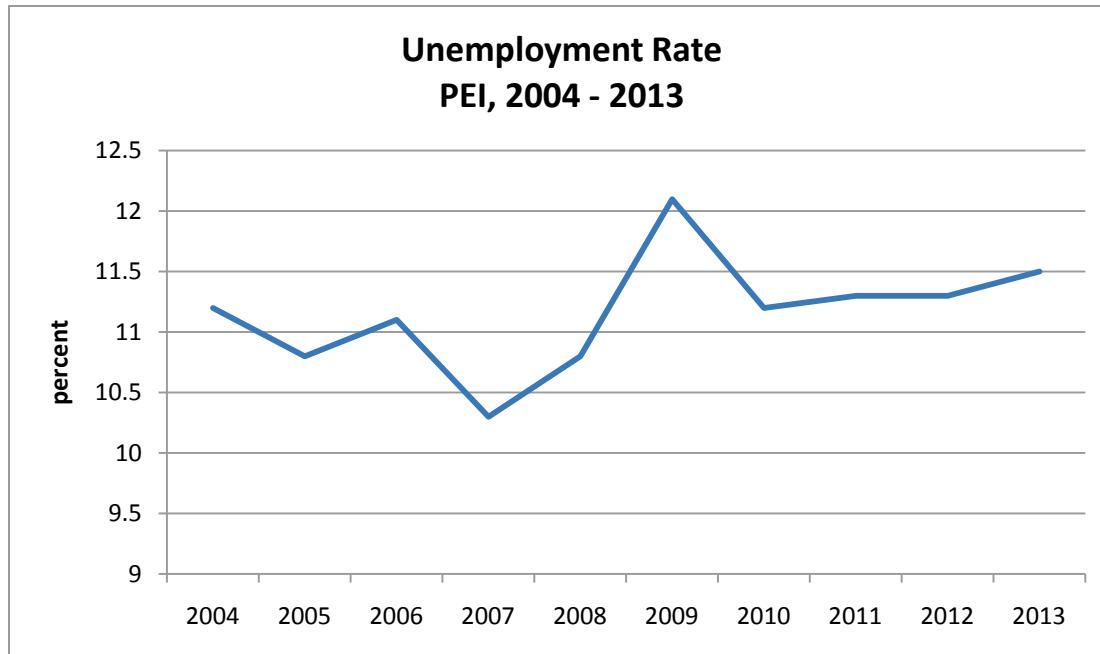
The information presented here is specific to Prince Edward Island, but it is derived from a variety of sources. The years for which information is available are not consistent between all measures. In each case, a few years' information is presented for the sake of making comparisons and seeing trends.

Measures and indicators of well being in Prince Edward Island

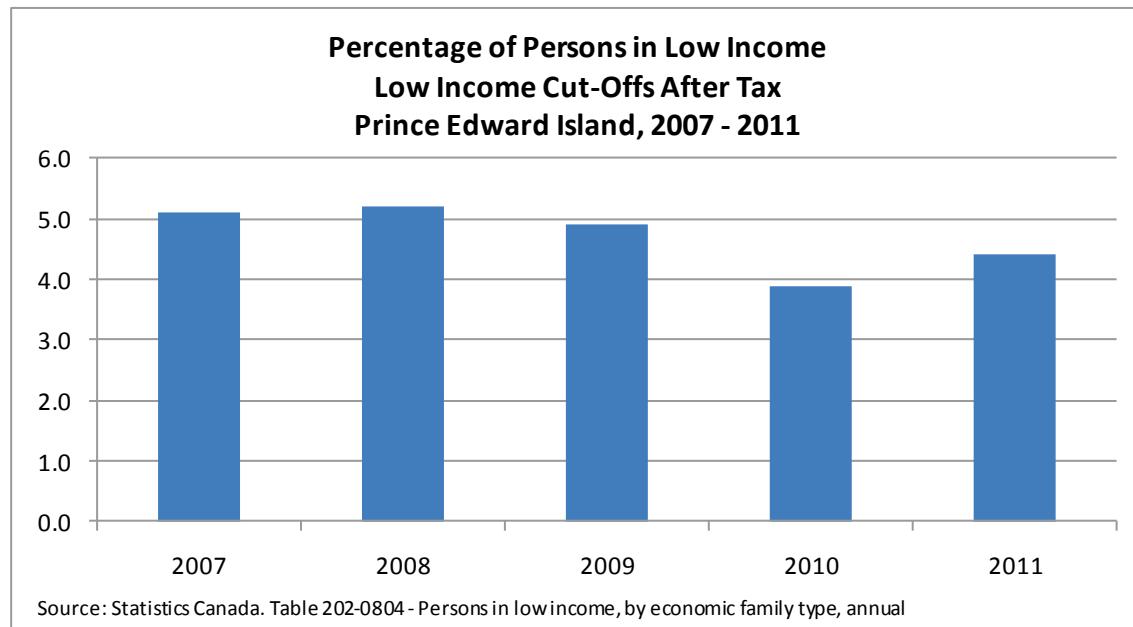
Labour Force Participation



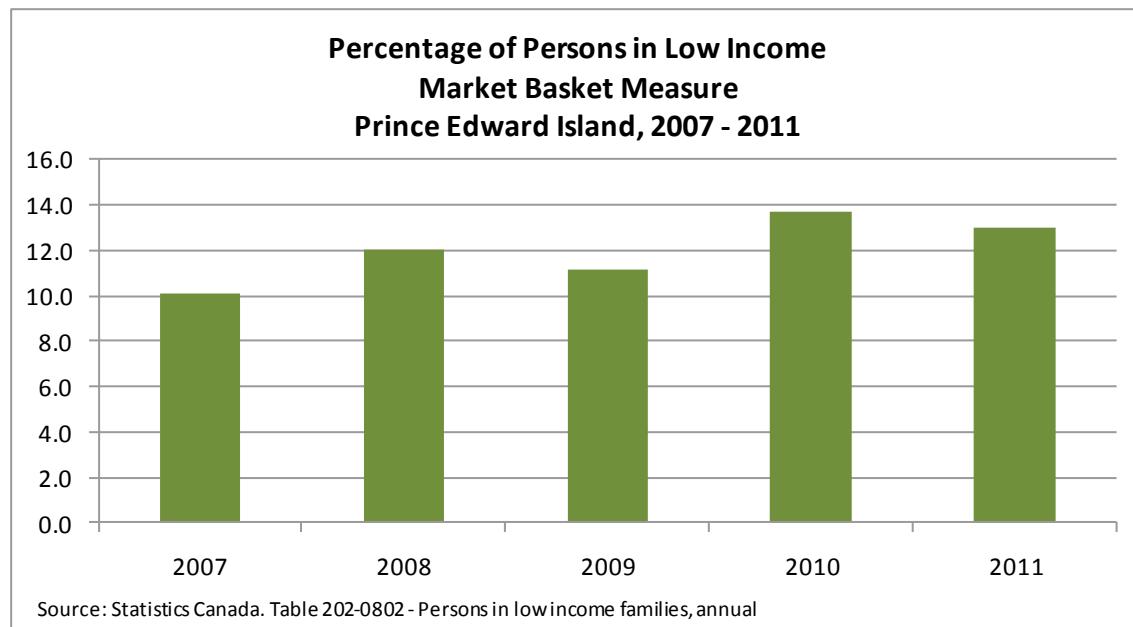
Unemployment Rate



Low Income Measures



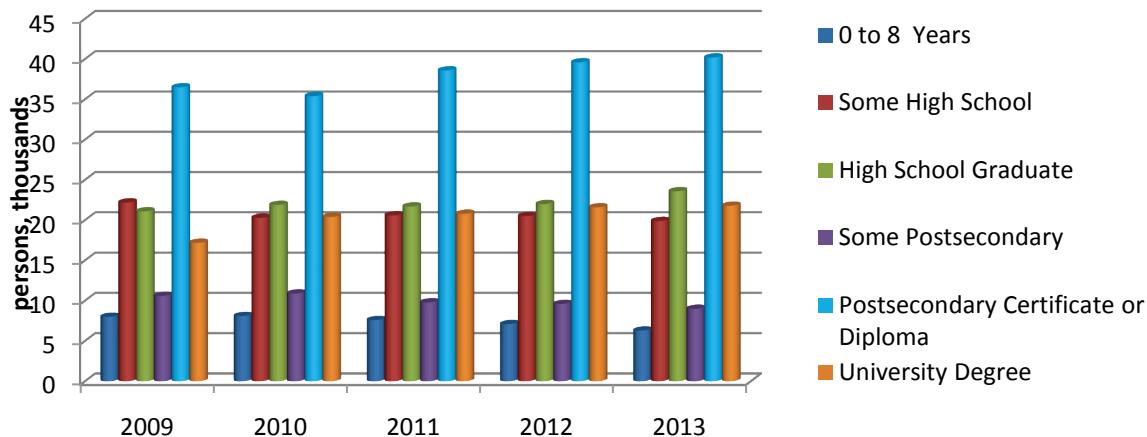
Low Income Cut-Off Measure (LICO): Income threshold below which a family is expected to spend 20 percentage points more than the average family on the necessities of food, shelter and clothing.



Market Basket Measure (MBM): Income needed by a family for necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, transportation and basic needs.

Education

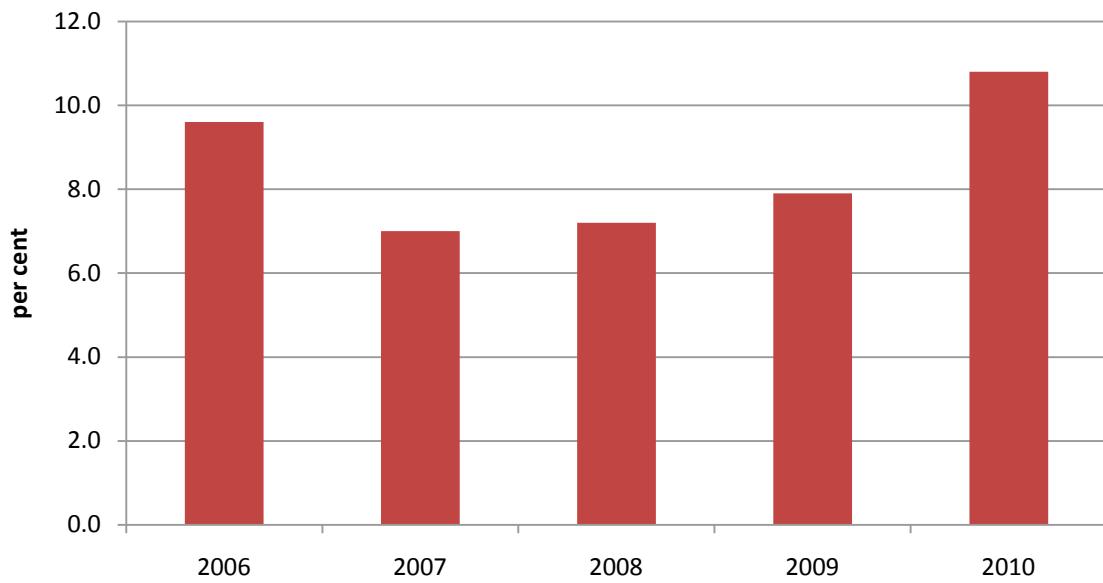
Population 15 and Over, By Educational Attainment
PEI, 2009 - 2013



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 282-0004 - Labour force survey estimates (LFS), by educational attainment

Population in Core Housing Need

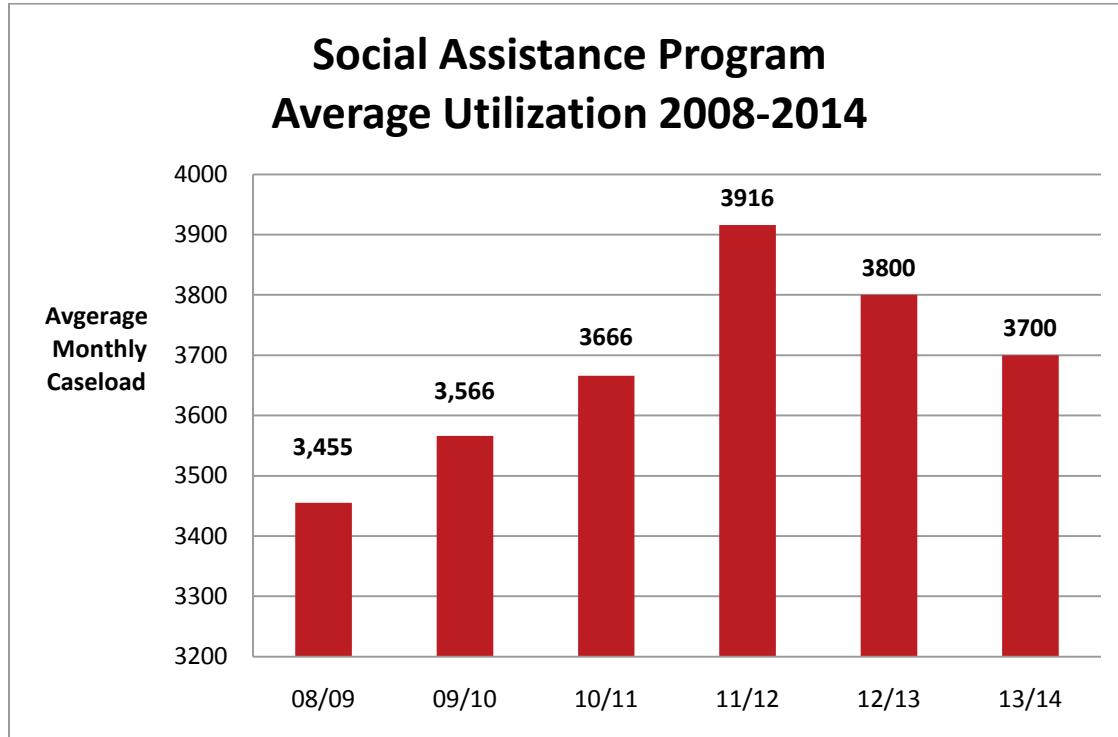
Percentage of Urban Households in Core Housing Need
Prince Edward Island, 2006 - 2010



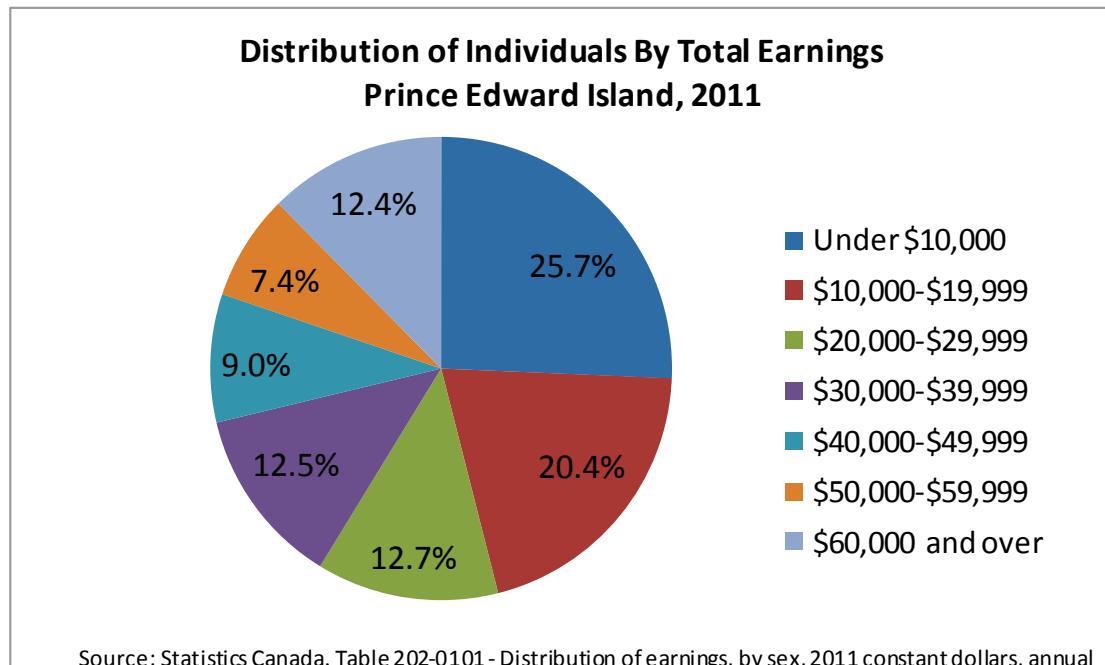
Source: CMHC (SLID-based housing indicators and data)

A household is said to be in core housing need if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, affordability or suitability, standards and it would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable.

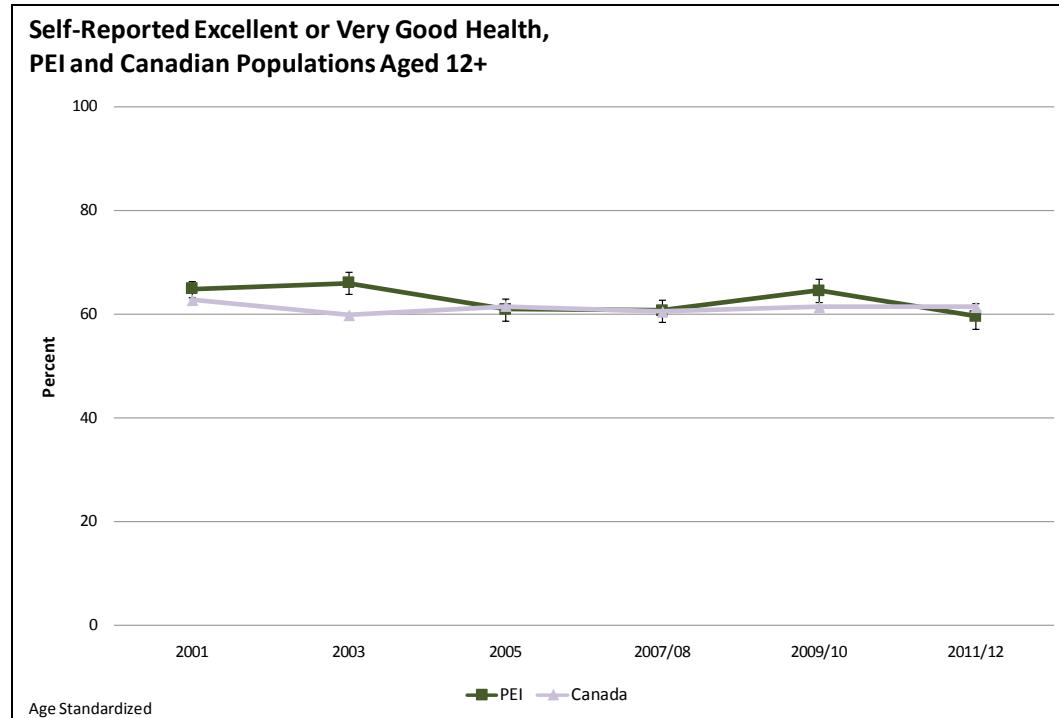
Social Assistance Caseload



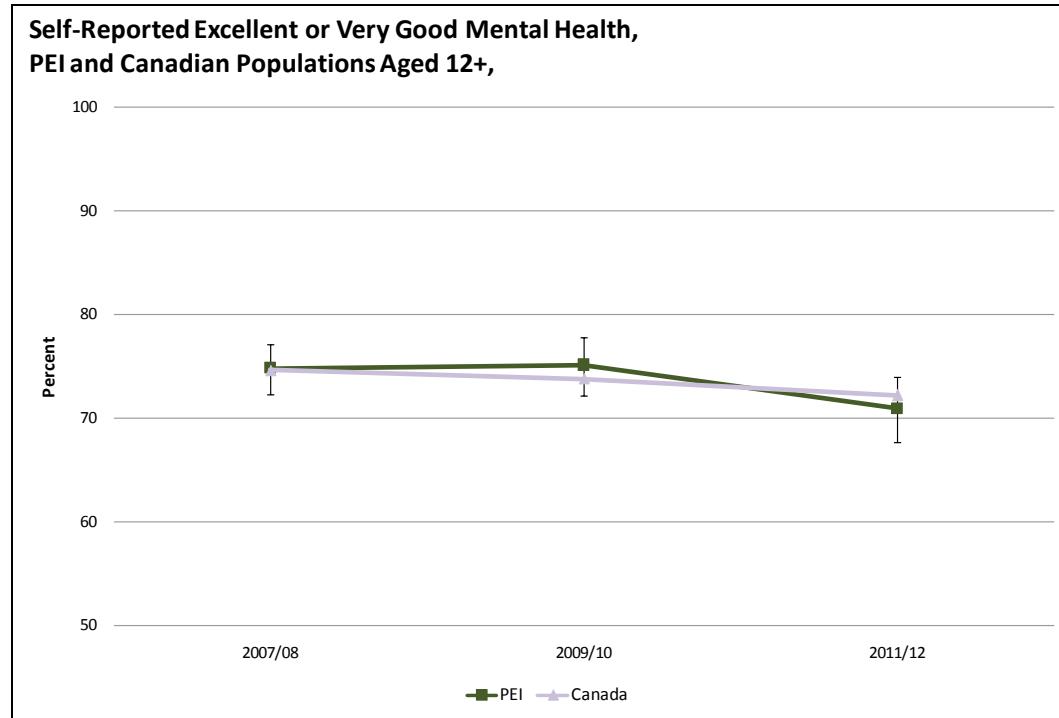
Percentage distribution of individuals by total earnings



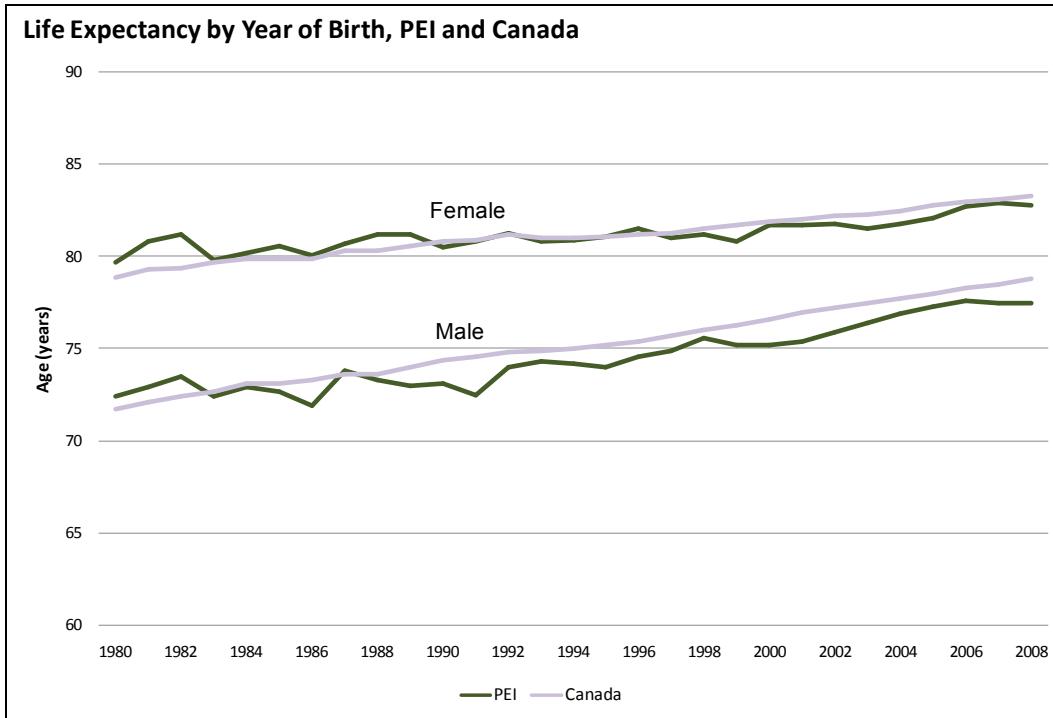
Self-reported Health Status



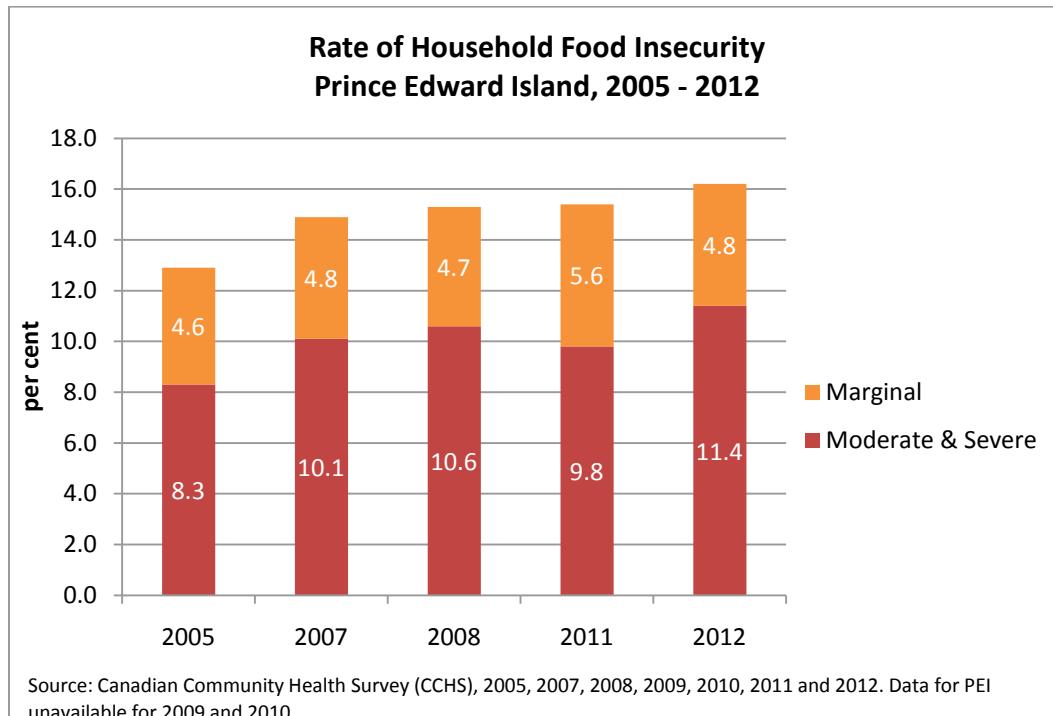
Self-reported Mental Health



Life Expectancy



Food Insecurity



The measurement and monitoring of food security in Canada focuses on a household's experience of food insecurity or the inadequate or insecure access to adequate food due to financial constraints. **Marginal food insecurity** is worrying about running out of food and/ or limiting food selection because of lack of money for food. **Moderate food insecurity** is compromising quality and/ or quantity of food due to a lack of money for food. **Severe food insecurity** means missing meals, reducing food intake and at the most extreme, going day(s) without food.