Single Parents and Food Insecurity

Single mothers have some of the highest food insecurity rates in Canada

- 81.6% of single parent families are headed by women, and more than one third of these families cannot afford the food they need.

- Single mothers are far more likely to experience severe food insecurity—running out of food, skipping meals, or going days without eating.

- Poverty is the root cause of food insecurity. In Canada 30.4% of single mothers and their children live in poverty.

There are many reasons why single mothers are more likely to live in poverty

- Lack of affordable child care makes finding and keeping a full-time job almost impossible. As a result, single mothers often end up working in low-wage or part-time jobs, with no security or health benefits.

- Women make up the majority of minimum-wage and part-time workers in Canada.

- Violence against women is also a major factor. According to recent Canadian research, at least 70% of single mothers who receive social assistance have survived intimate partner violence. Fear of living in poverty often traps women and their children in abusive and unsafe living situations.

The COVID-19 crisis is increasing rates of poverty and violence against women across Canada

- According to Statistics Canada, 63% of jobs lost due to COVID-19 were held by women. Most of these jobs were low-wage or part-time. In addition, 1.2 million women in Canada report having at least half of their work hours cut.

- Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, violence against women has increased 20-30%. About 1 in 10 Canadian women worry they will experience violence at home during COVID-19.

"We all have a stake in food insecurity because we all have a stake in the future of our province and the children who are growing up here. So we need collaboration across our government but also across us as a community."
— Ellie Jones, Director of Programming at THRIVE