

Recovery? Not for Vancouver families.

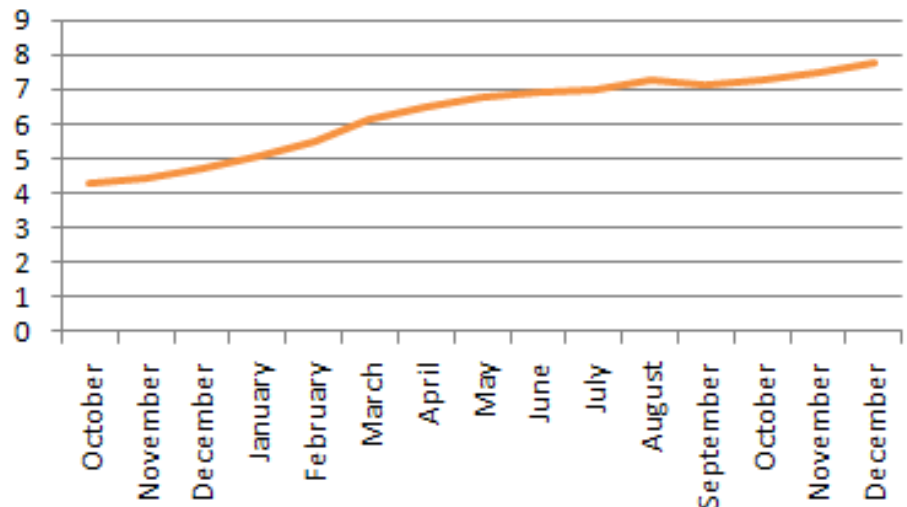
The 2008-2009 recession hit Vancouver very hard.

Unemployment rose substantially, while Employment Insurance coverage remained low. As a result, social assistance caseloads increased significantly. Average rent grew by significantly more than inflation, requiring low income Vancouverites to stretch their incomes further to pay for shelter costs. As a result of the growing economic insecurity, food bank use and bankruptcies rose considerably in Vancouver.

While we need to wait until 2011 for most published measures of poverty to show the recession's impact, these key economic indicators already reveal the trends of increased poverty and economic insecurity for Vancouver's families. Even before the recession, Vancouver had fairly high poverty rates, suggesting that

the benefits of Vancouver's strong economy were not being equitably distributed. In 2007, the poverty rate for Vancouver was 13.1%. The child poverty rate was 17.6%. Based on our trend analysis, the recession has increased Vancouver's poverty and child poverty rates even further.

Unemployment Rate Vancouver, October 2008-December 2009



Unemployment and Employment Insurance

- Unemployment rose in Vancouver from 4.3% in October 2008 to 7.8% in December 2009.
- The number of EI recipients in Vancouver increased 124.8% between October 2008 and October 2009, from 13,790 to 31,000.
- Vancouver had a very low rate of EI coverage. In August 2009, only 36.9% of the unemployed received benefits: just over 1 in 3 unemployed workers.



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For more information: *Bearing the Brunt: How the 2008-2009 Recession Created Poverty for Canadian Families* available at www.cpj.ca/bearingthebrunt.

Social assistance

- Because of rising unemployment and low EI coverage, the number of families receiving BC Employment and Assistance increased.
- Between October 2008 and December 2009, the number of cases rose 15.3% to 58,850.
- 2% of Vancouver's population under 19 was receiving social assistance in December.

Housing

- Average rent in Vancouver rose 2.9% between October 2008 and October 2009, compared to core inflation of 0.1% over the same period.
- Rental affordability in Vancouver decreased, as median rent for a two-bedroom apartment is more than 30% of the median income earner's income.

Employment

- The number of unemployed workers increased by 48,500 during the recession.



Effects of the recession

- The recession has led to an increase in bankruptcy and food bank use.
- Between the end of September 2008 and the end of September 2009, the number of bankruptcies in Vancouver rose a whopping 51.8%.
- Line-ups at Vancouver area food banks increased 10% between October 2008 and October 2009.