

4,000 full-time working women making less than poverty wages

Update to women's poverty report highlights gender gaps in Hamilton

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Women's poverty is multi-faceted says a new report by the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton.

"Women in Hamilton still earn less income than men. Even when we just compare full time workers, women make just 73% of men's total income," Sara Mayo, the Women and Poverty in Hamilton report's author. The report says the main reason is that women's typical jobs are not well paid. "Another important factor is that mothers continue to shoulder the main childcare responsibilities, leaving less time for paid work," adds Ms. Mayo, a Social Planner at the Social Planning and Research Council.

"Among women who work full time all year long in Hamilton, 7% were earning wages so low they were still poor," says Ms. Mayo. "And in the downtown area, this rate goes as high as 19%. Recent increases to the minimum wage are the among the types of policies that can help the more than 4,000 working poor women in Hamilton," explains Ms. Mayo.

The report also shows that some women are doing better than others. "Women's poverty is not equally distributed in our community, and newcomer women, visible minority women, Aboriginal women and single women have especially high rates of poverty," explains Ms. Mayo.

The report gives insight into the depth of poverty in Hamilton showing that more than half of both male and female recent immigrants and visible minorities who are living in poverty make less than \$10,000 per year. "The gender gap is narrowest among our city's poorest," says Ms. Mayo.

The Women and Poverty in Hamilton report is an update to the SPRC's previous report on the topic and is based on 2006 census data. The report was produced with financial support from the United Way of Burlington and Greater Hamilton. The report is being distributed throughout Hamilton in the latest edition of the Women's Press, a newspaper published by the Immigrant Women's Centre.

To download a copy please visit <http://www.sprc.hamilton.on.ca>.

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