

POVERTY REPORT CARD SNAPSHOT FOR ACTION



Food Banks
Canada

Banques
alimentaires
Canada



JOIN US AND HELP
ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE

BRITISH COLUMBIA

D

OVERALL GRADE

REPORT CARD HIGHLIGHTS

30% or more of household
income on housing:

F

Poverty rate:

F

Legislative progress:

D



PROVINCIAL
OVERVIEW



CONTEXT

BC's government holds ambitious poverty-reduction targets — including a 60% reduction in overall poverty by 2034 — yet its 2026 budget introduced no significant new investments, abandoned a promised \$3-billion commitment to social assistance, and dropped a campaign pledge for a grocery rebate. The province carries the highest poverty rate (13%) of any Canadian province.

KEY FINDINGS

Highest poverty rate among the provinces: Approximately 1 in 8 residents experience poverty (13%). 2026 marked the fourth year of climbing poverty rates.

Social assistance is not enough to live on: Social-assistance rates have not increased since 2023 and are not indexed to inflation, meaning benefits are eroding in real terms. 68% of recipients say supports are insufficient.

Not keeping commitments to improving affordability: Budget 2026 allocated just \$121 million over three years for income, disability, and supplementary assistance — a fraction of the \$3 billion previously committed — representing a significant broken promise to the province's most vulnerable residents.

SELECT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Restore the full \$3-billion commitment to improve social assistance:** Keep promises and index all provincial social benefits to inflation. The allocated \$121 million is negligible relative to need, and eroding benefits undermine the government's own poverty-reduction targets.
- **Fulfill the commitment to introduce a grocery rebate:** Rising food costs are driving food bank use up across BC. An immediate payment for low- and middle-income households would provide direct, targeted relief.
- **Maintain BC Housing's capital budget at a minimum of \$1.2 billion per year through 2030:** With housing construction lagging behind population growth and BC recording the worst housing affordability in the country, now is not the time to reduce capital investment in new builds.