**INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT**

The Income and Employment theme refers to people’s income and expenses as well as access to employment and the labour market. You can choose to answer one or more of the questions. You can answer directly in the questionnaire and use as many pages as you need.

Once the questionnaire is completed, please send it in Word format to the following address: [plp4@mtess.gouv.qc.ca](mailto:plp4@mtess.gouv.qc.ca).

We also invite you to consider some elements during your reflection:

* The goals and orientations of the [Act to combat poverty and social exclusion](https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/document/cs/L-7#:~:text=La%20pr%C3%A9sente%20loi%20vise%20%C3%A0,vers%20un%20Qu%C3%A9bec%20sans%20pauvret%C3%A9.).
* The realities experienced by women and men or by overrepresented groups in the population living in poverty and social exclusion, namely [ADS+](https://www.quebec.ca/en/gouvernement/portrait-quebec/droits-liberte/gender-equality/gender-based-analysis).
* The egalitarian, sustainable and health-promoting nature of the proposals.
* The different levels of intervention: local, regional and national.
* Knowledge development (research, statistics and evaluation).
* The cross-sectoral approach in defining problems and finding solutions.

We thank you for your cooperation.

Your opinion matters.

Identify the organization or municipality you represent.\*

\* Identification of citizens who wish to complete the questionnaires is not required.

**Income and expenses**

People in low-income situations generally include recipients of social assistance programs, but also the working poor, workers with instable work and families, and people who are ill with unrecognized disabilities or whose medical expenses exceed their income. Various assistance is available to them, such as the Shelter Allowance program, Solidarity Tax Credit, Family Allowance, work premium, etc. However, some of these people do not always benefit from this assistance because they are not aware of them or do not know how to obtain them.

According to the Auditor General of Canada, the federal government is having difficulty reaching some vulnerable people, including people with disabilities. They have difficulty claiming the federal benefits to which they are entitled, particularly because of the need to file their income tax returns.[[1]](#endnote-2) These findings have been reported in the Québec media.[[2]](#endnote-3) It refers to the phenomenon of *non-use*, which is defined as [translation] “the reality of those who do not access services, rights, programs to which, however, they qualify.”[[3]](#endnote-4)

In addition, the working poor represent 40% of those living in poverty in most parts of the country. It should also be noted that 52% of food-insecure households report that their main source of income comes from employment. This large number of workers in difficulty is due, overall, to the increase in instable employment.[[4]](#endnote-5)

**Some statistics**

* In 2020, the low-income rate for all persons in Québec according to the Market Basket Measure (MBM, 2018 base) was 6.4 percent, down 3.9 percentage points from 2019 (10.3 percent).[[5]](#endnote-6) This decrease can be explained by the federal assistance measures granted during the first months of the pandemic.
* The number of recipients[[6]](#endnote-7) in welfare programs increased from 248,217 in January 2022 to 270,011 in January 2023, an 8.8% increase.
  + This increase is due to the increase in the number of asylum seekers over the past year. Between January 2022 and January 2023, the number of asylum seekers increased from 9,123 to 35,278, an increase of 26,155 asylum seekers.
  + Excluding asylum seekers, the number of adult recipients fell from 239,094 in January 2022 to 234,733 in January 2023, a 1.8 percent decline.[[7]](#endnote-8)
* Between the months of January 2013 and January 2023... the welfare rate dropped from 6.9% to 4.8%.[[8]](#endnote-9) This trend confirms the historic decline in social assistance rates since the late 1990s.
* The profile of social assistance recipients also changed during the same period. As an example, the proportion of recipients with severe job constraints increased from 36.8% to 41.1%... between January 2013 and January 2023.

**QUESTIONS RELATING TO INCOME AND EXPENSES**

Question 1

What barriers do you think people living in poverty and social exclusion face in covering basic expenses with their income?

Question 2

What are the courses of action or solutions that could improve the disposable income and living conditions of people living in poverty and social exclusion?

Question 3

What other findings could you make related to the income and expenses of people living in poverty?

Question 4

Have you found or do you think that certain groups of the population living in poverty and social exclusion are more affected than other groups living in the same situation and face greater barriers to income?

**Employment and access to the labour market**

Access to employment income is one of the main ways out of poverty. For many, work provides economic autonomy, status, and regular social connections while fostering self‑esteem. It is often an important vector of social and economic integration, a way to develop and be useful.

However, certain personal and social characteristics hinder integration into the workforce, particularly because of mental health problems, dependency or physical or intellectual limitations,[[9]](#endnote-10) but also because of the internalization of certain prejudices by the individuals themselves.[[10]](#endnote-11) Thus, discrimination, the persistence of prejudices towards certain segments of the population, and low levels of education,[[11]](#endnote-12) can also affect integration into employment on a permanent basis.

Moreover, in 2022, the number of job vacancies has reached a record high and employment participation rate is on the rise in Québec.[[12]](#endnote-13) However, employment conditions (e.g., non-standard or temporary jobs, part-time jobs, self-employment) can sometimes keep some workers in poverty.[[13]](#endnote-14) The portrait of workers in poverty is also changing, with a greater proportion of visible minorities, immigrants, women and older people being affected.[[14]](#endnote-15)

**Some statistics**

* In 2022, the number of jobs in Québec increased by 129,700 (+3.0%) compared to 2021. The increase is more concentrated among women (+67,600; +3.3%) than men (+62,100; +2.8%).[[15]](#endnote-16)
* On average for the year 2022, the unemployment rate was set at 4.3 percent (-1.8 points from the average rate in 2021).[[16]](#endnote-17) In addition, 13.2% of the unemployed population is experiencing long-term unemployment (27 weeks or more, i.e., more than 6 months).[[17]](#endnote-18)
* In 2018, 10% of workers (who worked more than 910 hours during the year, including the self-employed) lived on low income.[[18]](#endnote-19)

**QUESTIONS RELATING TO EMPLOYMENT AND ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET**

Question 1

What difficulties do you think people living in poverty and social exclusion face in terms of employment and the labour market?

Question 2

What are the courses of action or solutions related to the labour market, access to employment and job retention that could improve the living conditions of people living in poverty and social exclusion?

Question 3

What other points could you make about employment and the labour market as it relates to supporting people living in poverty and social exclusion?

Question 4

Have you found or do you think that certain groups in the population living in poverty and social exclusion are more affected than other groups in the same situation and face greater barriers to employment and the labour market?

Appendices

**Examples of government strategies and action plans related to the income and employment theme**

* [Stratégie nationale sur la main-d’œuvre](https://www.quebec.ca/gouvernement/ministere/emploi-solidarite-sociale/publications/strategie-nationale-main-oeuvre-2018-2023)
* [Plan d’action pour la main-d’œuvre](https://www.mtess.gouv.qc.ca/grands-dossiers/action_maindoeuvre/plan_detail/index.asp)
* [Stratégie nationale pour l’intégration et le maintien en emploi des personnes handicapées 2019-2024 : Pour un Québec riche de tous ses talents](https://www.mtess.gouv.qc.ca/publications/pdf/SNPH_Strategie-emploi-pers-hand_2019-24.pdf)
* [Plan d’action des services publics d’emplois 2022-2023](https://cdn-contenu.quebec.ca/cdn-contenu/adm/min/emploi-solidarite-sociale/publications-adm/plan-strategique/PL_serv-pub-emploi_MTESS.pdf)
* [Stratégie nationale sur la main-d’œuvre 2018-2023](https://www.quebec.ca/gouvernement/ministere/emploi-solidarite-sociale/publications/strategie-nationale-main-oeuvre-2018-2023)

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