

Analysis of UI Coverage for Women

The most recent data from Statistics Canada show that UI coverage for unemployed women is still close to 30%. Ten years ago in 1989, coverage for women was 70%. Over the same period, coverage for men fell from 77% to 42%.

Compared to ten years ago, close to 300,000 women who lose their job will not get the insurance protection. The average individual loss at current benefit levels is over \$6,000.

The gap in UI coverage between men and women has widened even more because of the 1997 Employment Insurance Act changes. The portion of women now getting UI is ten percentage points lower than men.

UI coverage for all of the unemployed is stuck below 40%. A decade ago, 74 percent of the unemployed received insurance.

By every measure, women under age forty-five have lost most heavily.

Only 28% of women under age forty-five are covered.

None of the UI changes in the '90s reflect labour market changes that particularly affect women such as the growth in part-time work, part-year employment contracts. The reforms completely ignored issues related to child bearing and family responsibilities (i.e. interruption or absence from the workplace).

The entrant and re-entrant rules affect women much more than men. Regardless of the reason for temporary withdrawal or leave, a worker's employment history is erased and the individual must start over as a new entrant to the labour force if the absence is longer than 12 months.

Instead of dropping this new entrant and re-entrant rule in 1996, the EI Act increased the minimum hours from 300 hours to 910 aggravating what already is a discriminatory rule — which particularly affects women.

Thirty percent of all women are entrants or re-entrants compared to 22% for men. And a quarter of women were "*housekeeping*" before joining or rejoining the labour force.

Another huge hurdle for many women is the huge increase in the minimum hours from 200 hour range to over 500 hours in most parts of Canada. Only a fifth of all women have enough hours to qualify as full year hours.

For the 32 percent of unemployed women who receive their insurance — but who have weeks with no work or weeks with below their normal earnings — the benefit cheque is less than 55% of their usual weekly earnings. Even weeks not worked are counted in calculating the weekly earnings for benefit payment purposes. This rule is called the "*divisor*".

Maternity and Parental Benefits

Compared to pre-1997 rules, about 10,000 fewer women are now able to access UI maternity benefits because of the increase in the minimum hours from 300 to 700 hours.

Most of the women failing to qualify work part-time and part-year. The growth in self-employment contracts is also excluding an increasing number of women from UI maternity coverage.

Maternity and parental rules favour full time workers. This is reflected in the earnings and qualifying time of maternity claimants (see Tables 4 to 10).

Almost eighty percent of women between the ages of 25 and 44 are in paid workforce. Yet, only 49% of women who gave birth in 1998, received maternity benefits. Parental claims by women were even lower at 46% and even lower for younger women and claimant with lower earnings.

Dollar Loss for Women

Approximately, half of last year's \$ 7 billion plus UI surplus is a measure of the amount lost by Canada's unemployed women. Over the last six years, the accumulated surplus has grown to \$30 billion.

TABLE 1

Percent of Unemployed Receiving UI*
Pourcentage de sans-emploi touchant des prestations d'a.-c.*
Canada

Year	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Men	77%	77%	72%	63%	59%	52%	47%	44%	39%	41%	42%
Women	70%	69%	63%	58%	52%	47%	40%	37%	31%	30%	32%
Both	74%	73%	68%	61%	56%	50%	44%	41%	36%	36%	37%

Source: Calculated from Statistics Canada Data
Canadian Labour Congress
www.clc-ctc.ca

TABLE 2

Percent of Unemployed Receiving UI*
Pourcentage de sans-emploi touchant des prestations d'a.-c.*
Canada

AGE/ ÂGE	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Men / Hommes											
15-24	58%	56%	50%	42%	36%	30%	27%	24%	18%	19%	19%
25-34	92%	89%	83%	72%	69%	61%	57%	53%	47%	51%	52%
35-44	81%	85%	81%	70%	67%	61%	54%	49%	47%	51%	53%
45-54	85%	82%	83%	74%	68%	59%	53%	51%	49%	49%	52%
55 -65	75%	86%	77%	67%	63%	55%	52%	52%	48%	54%	55%
Total	77%	77%	72%	63%	59%	52%	47%	44%	39%	41%	42%
Women / Femmes											
15-24	50%	43%	39%	32%	28%	23%	18%	16%	11%	10%	10%
25-34	76%	80%	71%	68%	59%	54%	45%	42%	36%	34%	36%
35-44	72%	73%	70%	65%	59%	52%	48%	43%	38%	38%	39%
45-54	85%	82%	75%	71%	63%	62%	54%	49%	46%	41%	45%
55 - 65	87%	96%	77%	71%	65%	60%	52%	51%	44%	46%	53%
Total	70%	69%	63%	58%	52%	47%	40%	37%	31%	30%	32%
Total											
15-24	55%	51%	46%	38%	33%	27%	23%	21%	15%	15%	15%
25-34	85%	85%	78%	70%	65%	58%	52%	48%	42%	44%	45%
35-44	76%	79%	76%	68%	63%	57%	51%	47%	43%	45%	46%
45-54	85%	82%	79%	73%	65%	60%	53%	50%	47%	45%	49%
55 -64	79%	90%	77%	68%	63%	57%	52%	51%	46%	51%	55%
Total	74%	73%	68%	61%	56%	50%	44%	41%	36%	36%	37%
Ratios exclude claimants with earnings while on claim Calculated from Statistics Canada UI data Canadian Labour Congress www.clc-ctc.ca											

TABLE 3

Weekly Insurable Earnings of Percent of Women Receiving “Regular” Benefits (i.e. for layoff)			
	Weekly Insurable Earnings		
	Under \$400	Over \$400	Total
1989	78%	22%	100%
1993	61%	39%	100%
1995	58%	42%	100%
1998	54%	46%	100%

Calculated from Statistics Canada UI data
Canadian Labour Congress (www.clc-ctc.ca)

TABLE 4

A Comparison of Weekly Earnings of Women Receiving “Regular” and “Maternity” Benefits Percent of Claimants for Each Benefit			
	Weekly Earnings of Women in 1998		
	Under \$400 a Week	Over \$400	Total
Regular Benefits	54%	46%	100%
Maternity Benefits	36%	64%	100%

Calculated from Statistics Canada UI data
Canadian Labour Congress (www.clc-ctc.ca)

TABLE 5

Maternity Claimants By Weekly Earnings and Qualifying Hours 1998					
Weekly Earnings of Women by Qualifying Hours Worked					
Hours / Heures	\$0 - \$199	\$200 - \$399	\$400 - \$599	\$600 - \$845	Total
700 - 1049	25%	44%	19%	12%	100%
1050 - 1469	12%	39%	22%	26%	100%
1470 - 1818	3%	32%	30%	36%	100%
1819+	0%	17%	33%	50%	100%
Total	7%	29%	28%	36%	100%

Calculated from Statistics Canada UI data
Canadian Labour Congress (www.clc-ctc.ca)

TABLE 6

Maternity Claimants By Age and Weekly Earnings 1998					
Age / Age	\$0 - \$199	\$200 - \$399	\$400 - \$599	\$600 - \$845	Total
15-24	22%	56%	18%	5%	100%
25-34	5%	26%	31%	38%	100%
35+	3%	18%	24%	55%	100%
Total	7%	29%	28%	36%	100%

Calculated from Statistics Canada UI data
Canadian Labour Congress (www.clc-ctc.ca)

TABLE 7

Maternity Claimants by Hours Worked 1998	
Hours / Heures	Percent of Claimants
700 - 1049	15%
1050 - 1469	21%
1470 - 1818	23%
1819+	41%
Total	100%

Calculated from Statistics Canada UI data
Canadian Labour Congress (www.clc-ctc.ca)

TABLE 8

UI Maternity and Parental Claims as a Percent of Total Births					
Year	Total Births	Maternity Beneficiaries	Parental Beneficiaries*	Maternity Claims / Births	Parental Claims/ Births
1988	376,795	176,150		47%	
1989	392,661	192,730		49%	
1990	405,486	210,231		52%	
1991	402,528	195,207	131,928	49%	33%
1992	398,642	210,586	178,410	53%	45%
1993	388,394	200,589	174,674	52%	45%
1994	385,110	184,487	171,904	48%	45%
1995	378,011	172,682	171,720	46%	45%
1996	366,200	176,734	170,734	48%	47%
1997	348,555	178,234	165,178	51%	47%
1998	345,695	168,325	158,338	49%	46%

Source: Statistics Canada
 * Assumes maximum claim of 10 weeks
 Canadian Labour Congress (www.clc-ctc.ca)

TABLE 9

Maternity Benefits by Age Monthly Average							
Year / Ans	< 20 yrs	20-24 yrs	25-34 yrs	35-44 yrs	45-54 yrs	55 yrs +	Total
	< 20 ans	20-24 ans	25-34 ans	35-44 ans	45-54 ans	55ans +	
1989	1,067	9,912	37,229	4,342	29	.....	52,583
1990	1,082	9,805	39,931	4,903	37	.....	55,758
1991	1,038	9,413	39,881	5,175	19	.....	55,521
1992	976	9,432	41,774	5,719	18	..	57,918
1993	823	8,580	40,268	5,983	20	.....	55,673
1994	768	7,914	39,250	6,308	21	.....	54,263
1995	768	7,592	38,414	6,676	23	.....	53,468
1996	688	7,158	36,640	7,048	29	.....	51,560
1998							

Source: Statistics Canada
 Canadian Labour Congress (www.clc-ctc.ca)

TABLE 10

Women Receiving Parental / Adoption Benefits by Age Monthly Average							
Year / Ans	< 20 yrs	20-24 yrs	25-34 yrs	35-44 yrs	45-54 yrs	55 yrs +	Total
	< 20 ans	20-24 ans	25-34 ans	35-44 ans	45-54 ans	55 ans +	
1991	417	4485	20,024	2599	450	250	28,225
1992	424	4963	24,106	3296	380	250	33,419
1993	356	4580	23,563	3520	450	270	32,739
1994	337	4265	23,309	3819	500	370	32,600
1995	353	4071	22,969	4056	510	360	32,319
1996	347	3950	22,439	4365	580	370	32,051

Source: Statistics Canada
Canadian Labour Congress (www.clc-ctc.ca)

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March 7, 2000