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# Tracking the Trends

## Future Directions for Human Services in Edmonton

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COUNCIL

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Edmonton Community and Family Services  
Edmonton Public Schools  
Edmonton Catholic Schools  
Edmonton Social Planning Council  
United Way of Edmonton and Area  
May, 1993

Other Editions:

**Tracking the Trends**

Future Directions for Human Services in Edmonton  
Special Feature on Youth and Seniors - September 1989

**Tracking the Trends**

Future Directions for Human Services in Edmonton  
Special Feature on Families with Children - June 1990

**Tracking the Trends**

Future Directions for Human Services in Edmonton  
Special Feature on Immigrants - September 1991

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# Preface

Tracking the Trends: Future Directions for Human Services in Edmonton is the product of the hard work and shared concern of some major funders and providers of human services in the Edmonton area. The impetus for this study is the conviction that it is crucial for government departments and community agencies to monitor the significant trends likely to influence the need for human services in the coming decade so that we can better serve the community.

This is the fourth edition of Tracking the Trends, which we hope will be as widely distributed and as useful as the first three editions. We are particularly pleased that this collective community effort has proven to be so beneficial. While Tracking the Trends cannot be expected to provide immediate answers, it is a useful aid in the ongoing planning and development of programs and policy initiatives.

Once again community members have played a valuable role in providing their insight and experience through a series of focus group meetings arranged by our Working Group. We are grateful to the people whose expertise is reflected in the special section on trends and service implications for Aboriginal people. We look forward to maintaining this excellent example of community participation as we continue to gain a better understanding of the important trends that will influence the development of human services in Edmonton and its surrounding communities.

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# Introduction

## Why Track the Trends?

To those who provide funds for human service programming and to those who provide these services, it is important to have timely information on major social and economic trends in Edmonton. This information not only helps us gain a better understanding of present social conditions and how they may have changed over time, but also helps us to anticipate future changes. While there is no lack of relevant information, the challenge has been to select that which is most germane and then integrate it in a meaningful way.

*Tracking the Trends* looks at the major social and economic trends likely to influence human services in the Edmonton area—now and in the near future. This edition has a special focus on the trends and service implications affecting Edmonton's Aboriginal population.

## How was it Done?

The Community Trends Working Group which prepared this fourth edition of *Tracking the Trends* included representatives from Alberta Family and Social Services, Alberta Health - Mental Health Division - Edmonton, Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development, Alberta Department of Justice, Edmonton Board of Health, Edmonton Community and Family Services, Edmonton Public Schools, Edmonton Catholic Schools, Edmonton Social Planning Council, and United Way of Edmonton and Area. The Working Group:

- reviewed statistical material in the previous editions
- added current information to relevant sections or graphs where possible
- included additional information in response to suggestions made subsequent to the publications of the previous editions.

This section is presented as Part One.

Part Two, "Trends and Service Implications for Aboriginal People," provides statistical information relevant to Aboriginal people and trends identified through community consultations and implications for the community services upon which they depend.

In order to understand more about the human service needs of Aboriginal people, about 90 'key informants' participated in one or both parts of a two-phased process. First, they were invited to complete a questionnaire which asked them to identify the major trends and the likely service implications for Aboriginal people living in the Edmonton community. Second, many of these 'informants' took the opportunity to participate in a focus group where the various trends were discussed and ranked, along with the corresponding service implications. The names of those who participated in this important process are listed at the conclusion of the report.

In addition, a series of eight focus groups were held with Aboriginal adults and youth from different parts of the city and from differing social and economic backgrounds. Participants included university students, inner city youth, adults attending upgrading classes and others. Discussion was guided by several questions about the participants' experiences and aspirations.

*Community Trends Working Group*





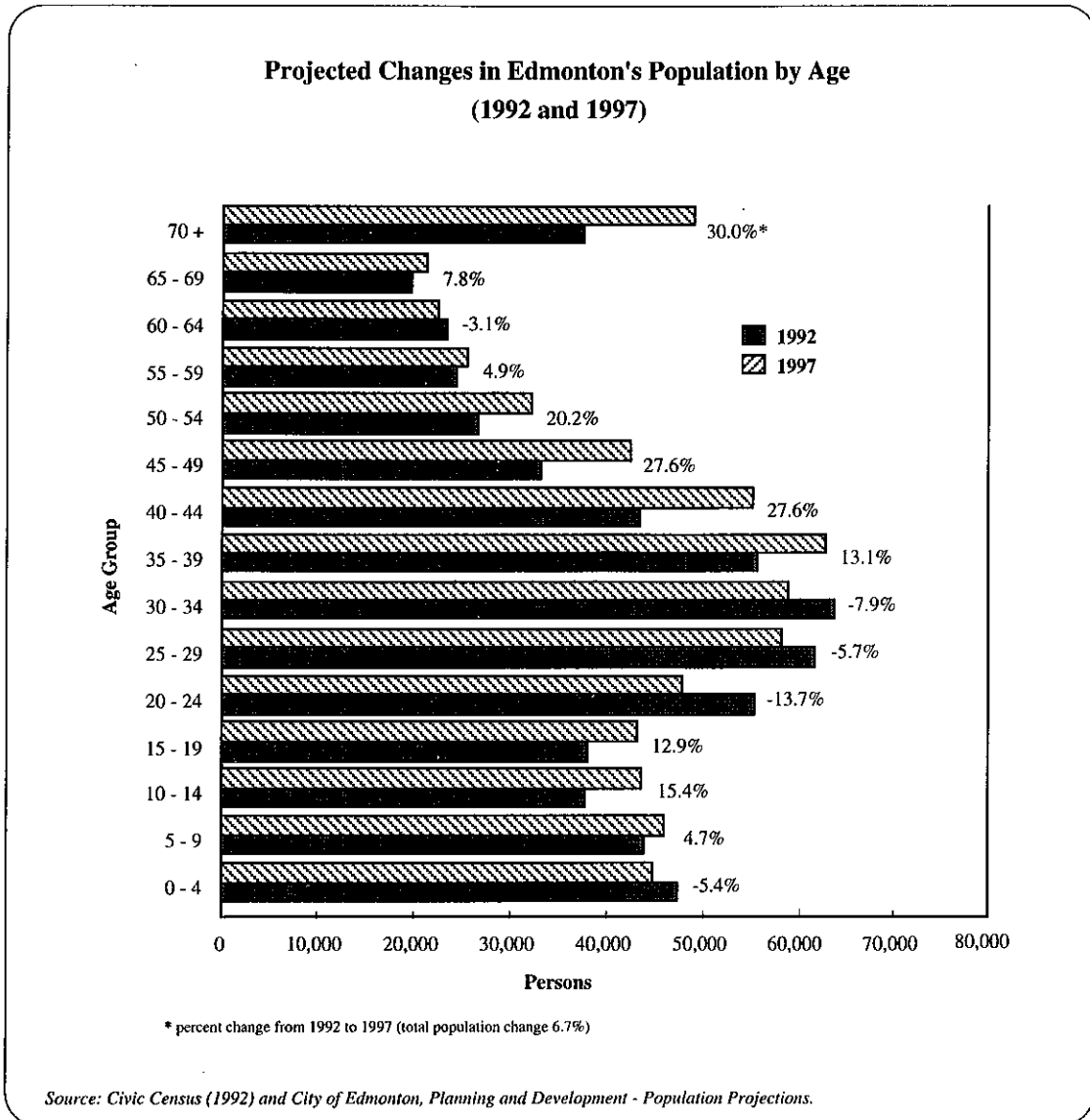
# **Part 1**

## **Major Social and Economic Trends**



# Population

In 1992, the Edmonton population was 617,712. This represents an increase of 0.5 percent over 1991. The population is projected to grow by seven percent to nearly 660,000 by 1997. Over this period, the highest rates of population growth are anticipated in older children and youth (persons 10 to 19 years of age), middle age and older adults (35 to 54 years of age), and older seniors (70 years of age and older). The increase in older children and youth will be the result of the minor 'baby boom' of

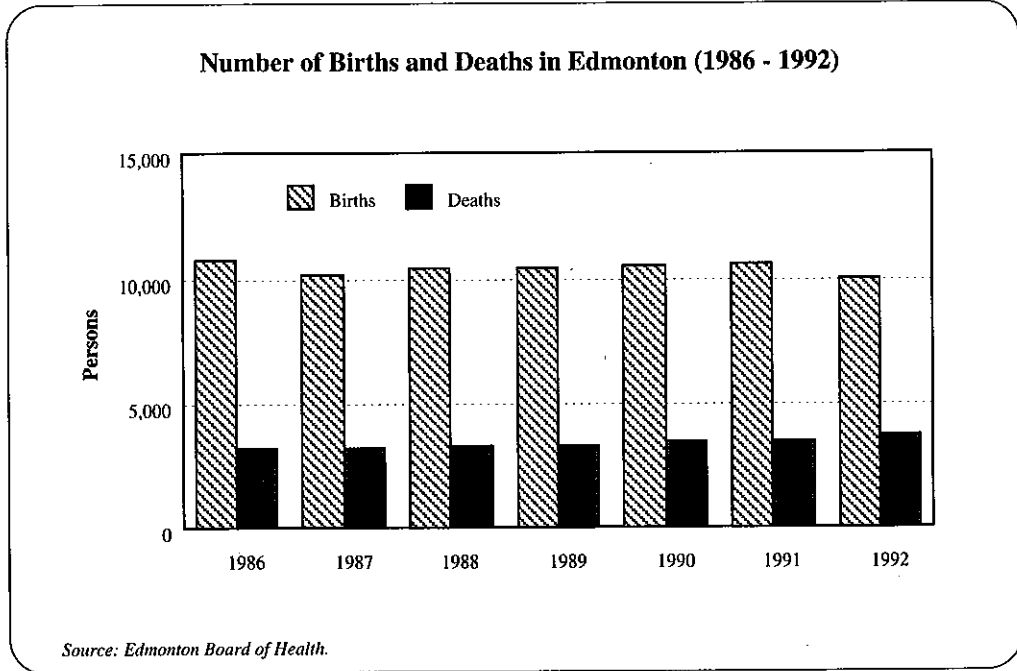
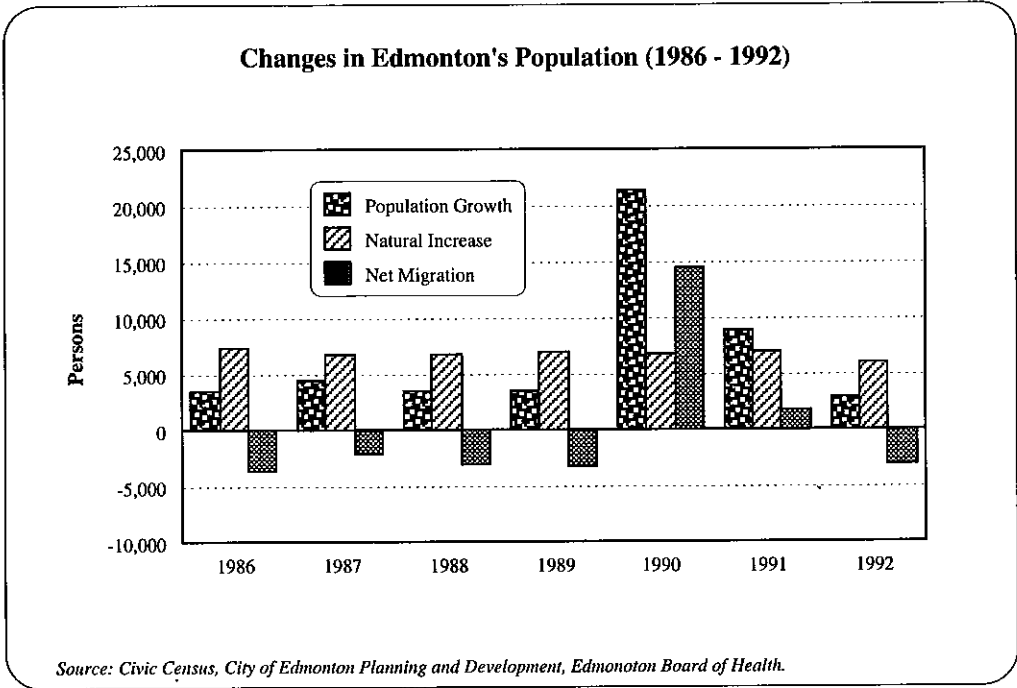


the late 1970's and early and mid 1980's. The above average increases in the middle age and older adult portions of the population will be due to the aging of persons who migrated to Edmonton during times of high economic activity in the 1970's and early 1980's.

The average age of Edmonton's population will continue to increase. By 1997, over 71,000 persons or slightly more than one in 10 persons in Edmonton will be seniors.

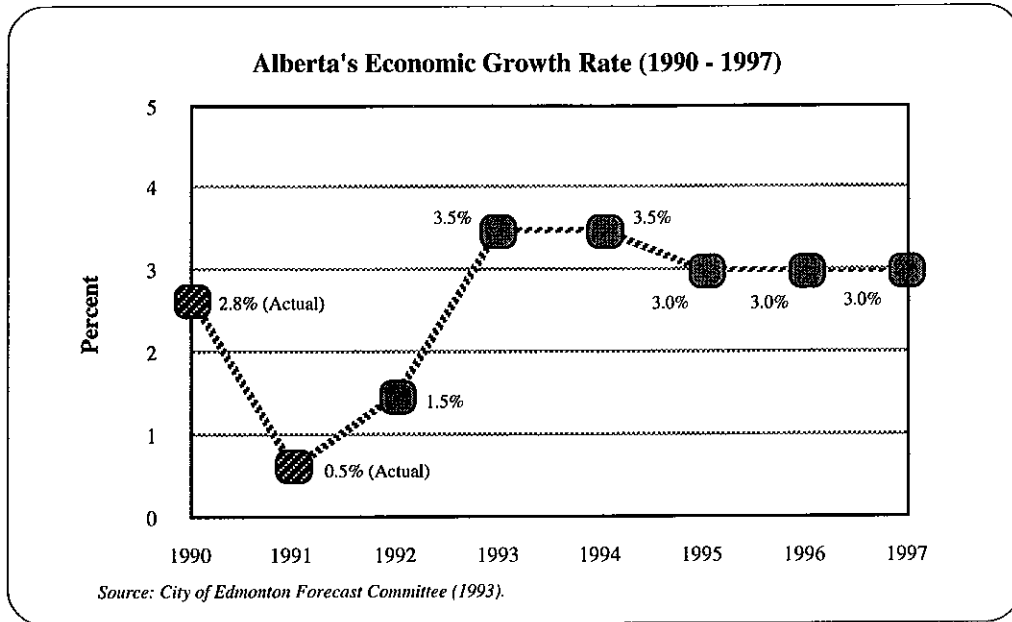
# Population

Throughout the mid and late 1980s, Edmonton's population growth was largely the result of natural increase (births minus deaths), as more people left the city than came to it during this period. In 1990, economic optimism resulted in a minor influx of migrants. However, by 1992 people leaving the city outnumbered those moving to the city by more than 3,000. This trend is expected to reverse in 1993 and continue through to 1997 based on a projected slow but stable growth of the local economy. Estimates suggest that net migration will contribute about a third of Edmonton's population growth over this period and that the remaining two-thirds will be the result of natural increase.

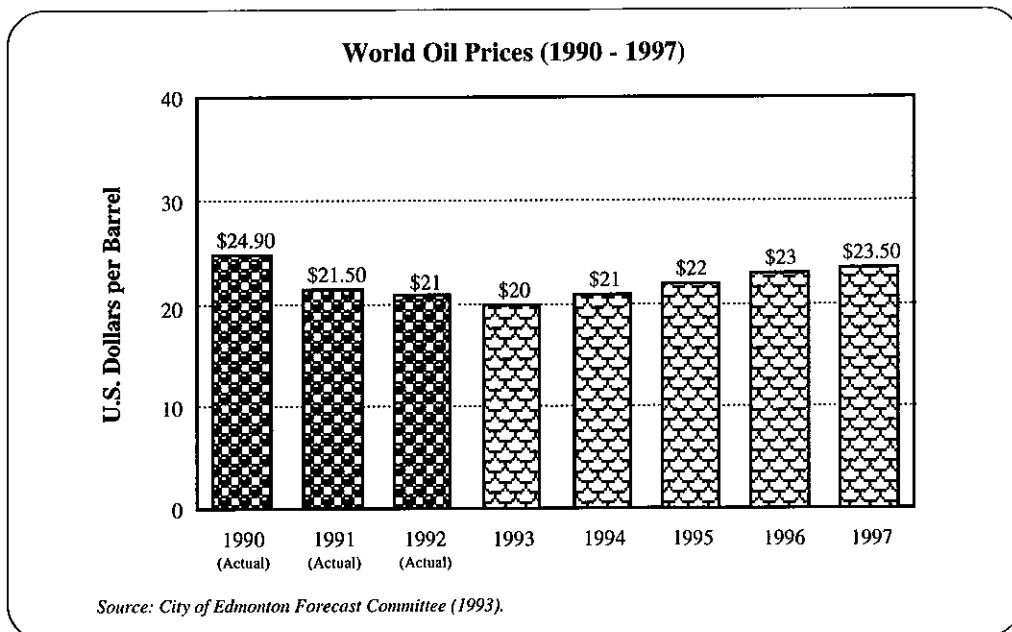


# The Economy

According to the City's Forecast Committee, Alberta's, and therefore Edmonton's economy continues to be highly dependent on the oil and gas industry. This sector continues to down scale and this is one factor in the slow economic growth in the early 1990s. Structural changes to the national economy such as Free Trade, the Goods and Services Tax (GST), Globalization and the environmental movement have all had a negative impact on the local economy.

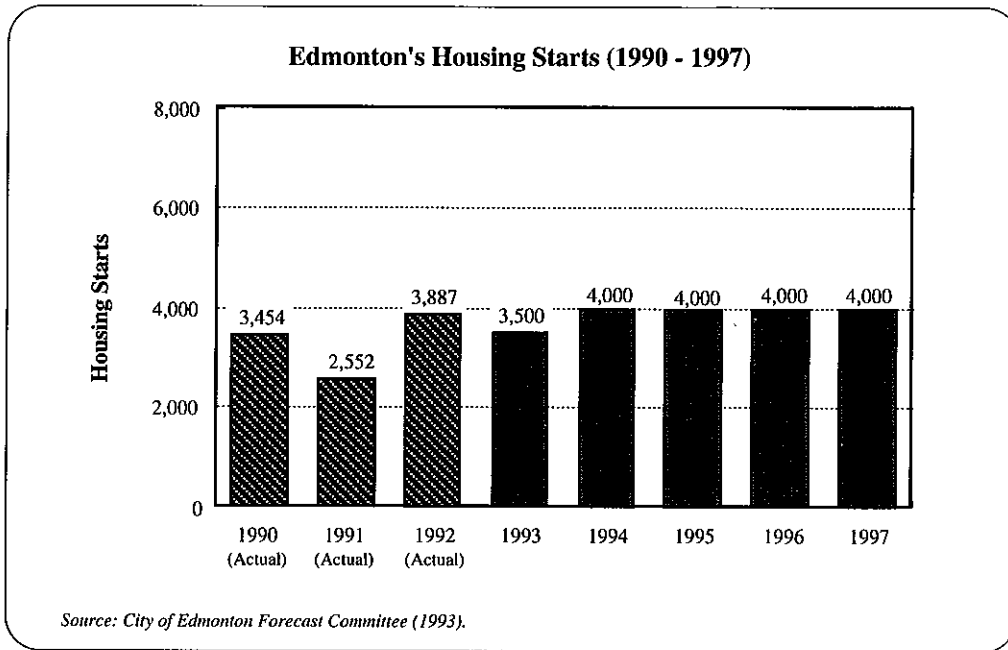


World oil prices after declining 13 percent in 1991, stabilized to about \$21 a barrel. According to the City's Forecast Committee, the price of oil is expected to range between \$20 and \$25 a barrel over the next several years. This slight fluctuation is anticipated to be the result of continuing poor economic performances in industrial countries and the assumption that OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) will only maintain a limited control over the world oil market.

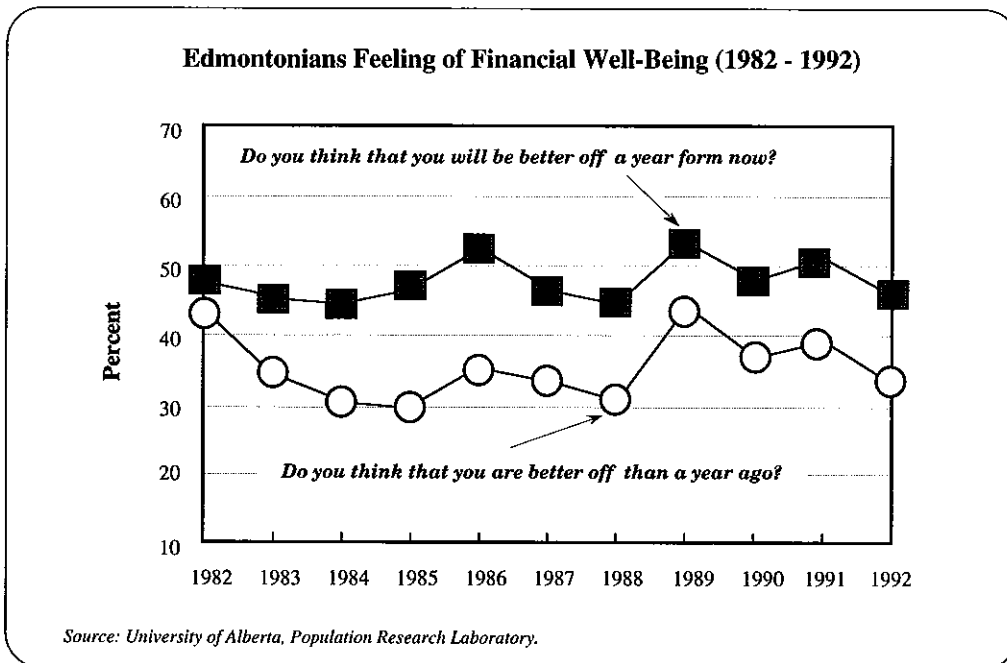


# The Economy

Housing starts is another important economic indicator of the Edmonton economy. Total housing starts in 1992 increased 52 percent to nearly 3,900 units. However, according to the City's Forecast Committee, continued low apartment vacancy rates, lower interest rates, reduction of minimum down payment requirement and use of RRSP money for first-time home buyers will combine to maintain housing starts to between 3,500 and 4,000 units through to 1997.



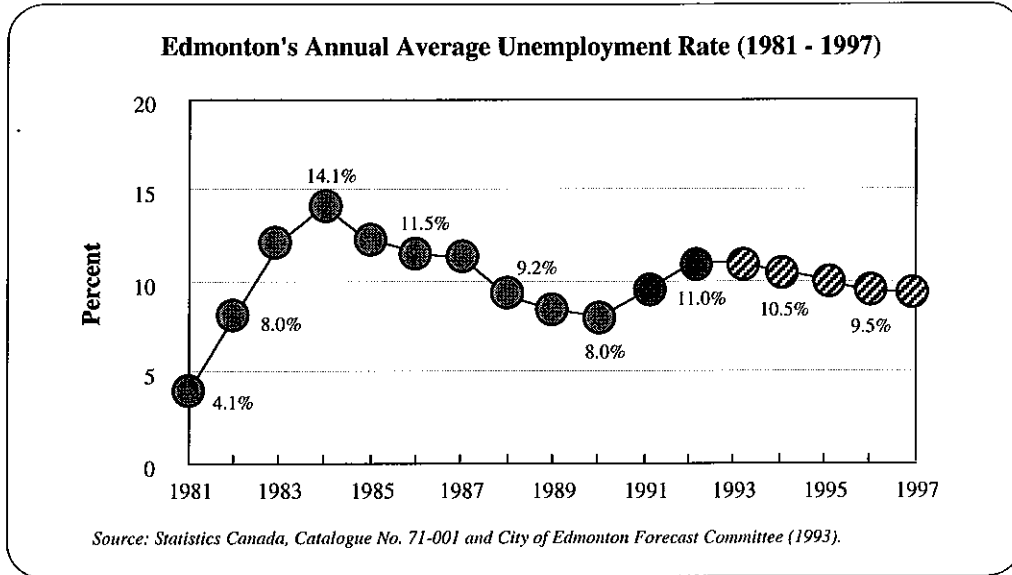
Edmontonians' rating of their financial well-being has fluctuated throughout the 1980's and into the 1990's. However, the gap between present and expected future financial well-being has remained relatively constant between 10 and 15 percent since the mid 1980's.



## Employment

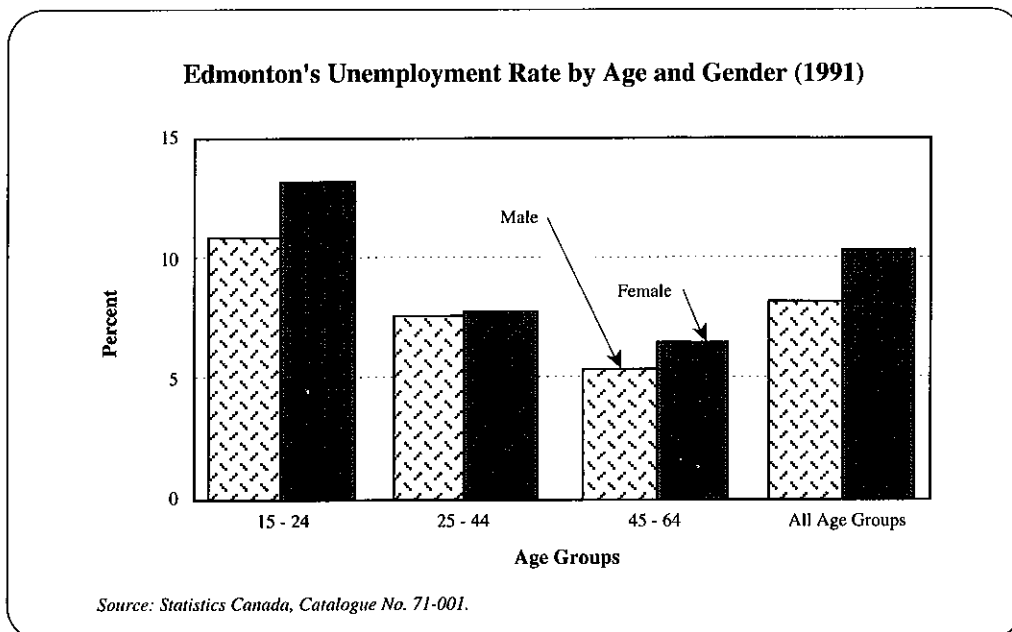
A community's well-being depends greatly on its level of employment. Employment influences spending patterns, social roles, status and self-esteem. Conversely, unemployment is associated with the occurrence of social problems such as poverty, family problems, poor physical and mental health, crime, and substance abuse.

The following figures illustrate several important trends concerning employment in Edmonton.



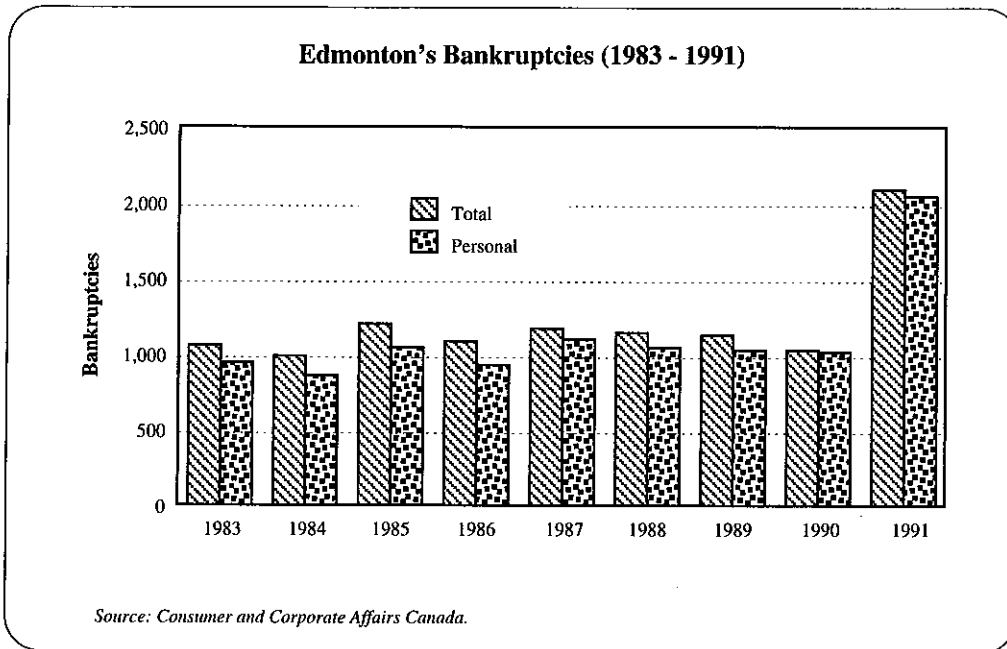
The unemployment rate is expected to slowly decline after 1993 and according to the City of Edmonton's Forecast Committee, remain somewhat lower than the national average. Therefore, Edmonton's labour force is expected to grow as a result of an influx of inter-provincial and international migration.

A person's age, and to some extent sex, has a bearing on whether or not employment is found. In all age groups, unemployment rates for men in 1991 were lower than for women.

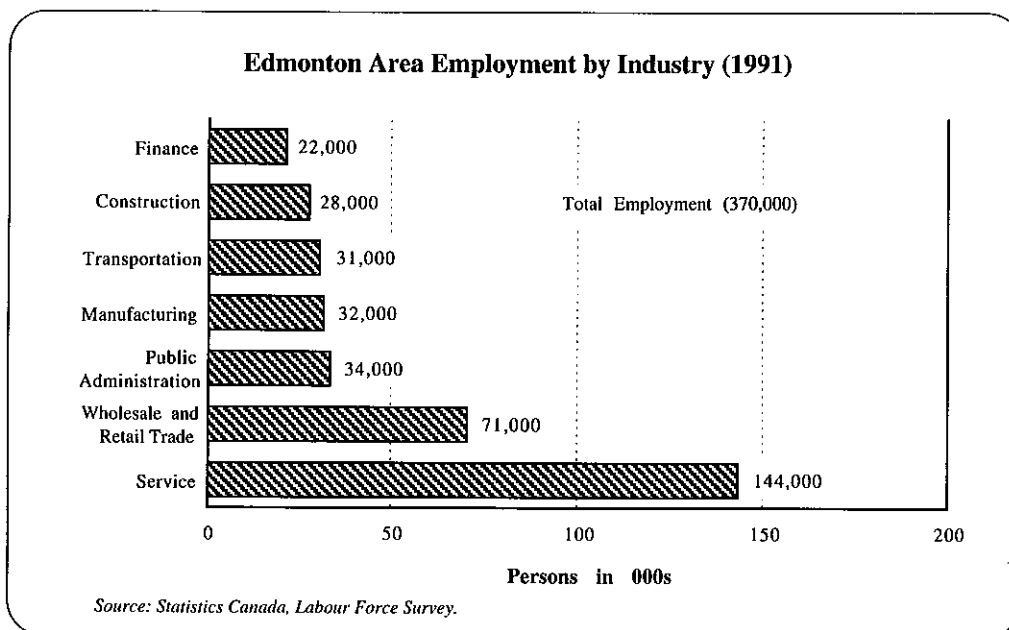


## Employment

In 1991, the dramatic increase in the number of personal and business bankruptcies reflected the decline in Edmonton's economic growth. According to City of Edmonton, Finance Department statistics, there was a net loss of businesses in Edmonton in 1991, for the first time since 1982. All sectors experienced an equal or higher rate of business closure relative to business creation with the exception of health and social services which grew by 3.8 percent.



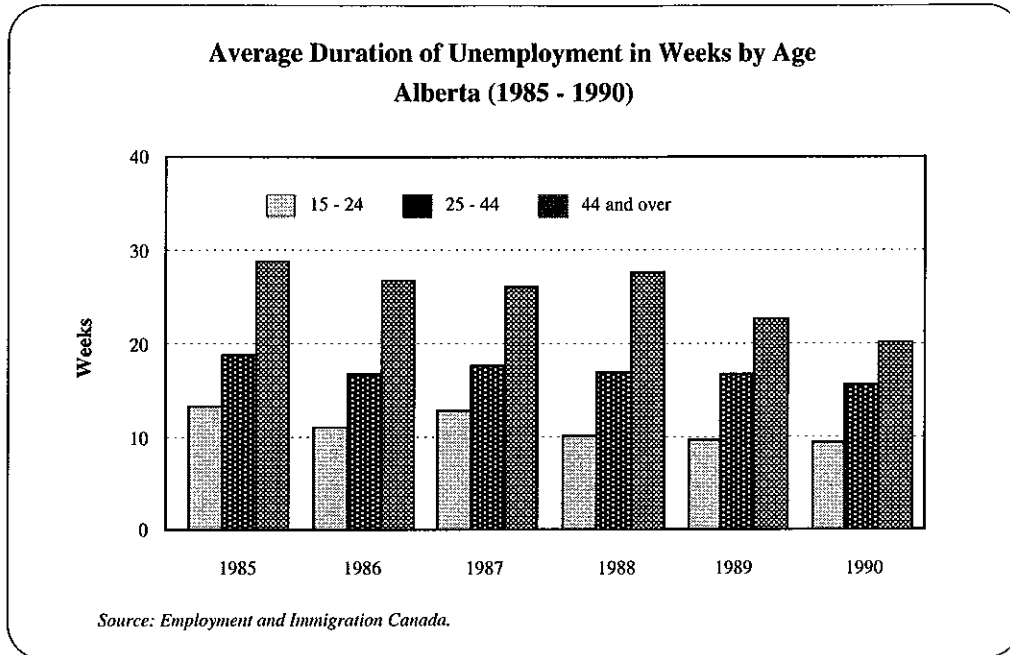
In the Edmonton area, more than one in three employment opportunities in 1991 were in the service sector (community, business and personal services). In comparison, one in five people were employed in the trade sector. These two sectors accounted for nearly 60 percent of all jobs in the region, but continue to be the two lowest paying areas of employment.



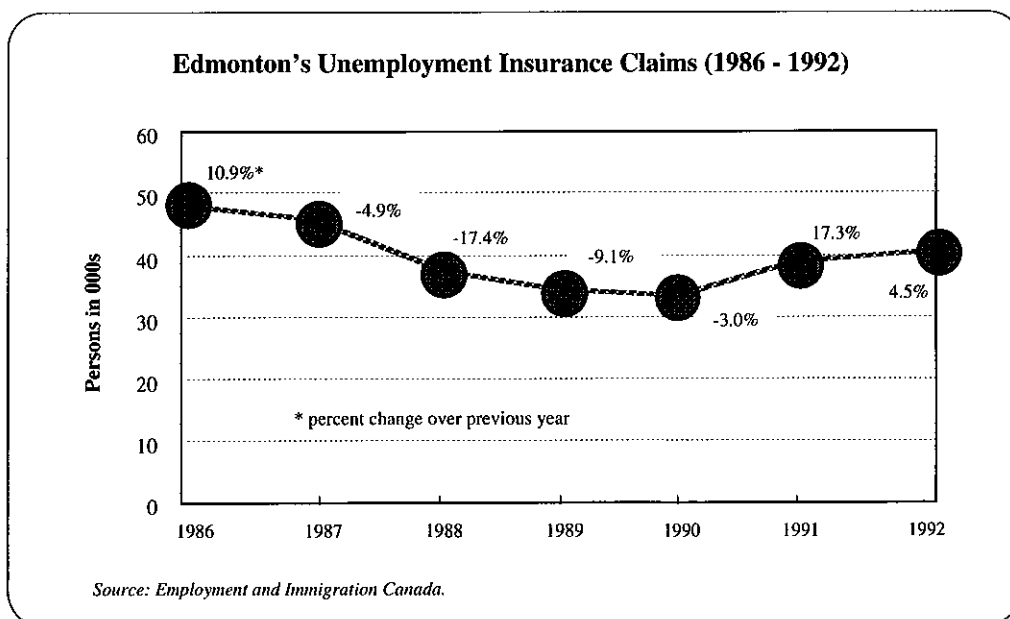


## Employment

The duration that an individual is unemployed is dependent on several factors including the health of the economy and a person's age. From the mid 1980's to 1990, Alberta's economy grew at a moderate rate and was reflected in a decrease, throughout all age groups, in the number of weeks persons remained unemployed. However, a person's age and susceptibility to longer term unemployment is directly related. Younger workers are more likely to find employment more quickly after being unemployed than older workers.

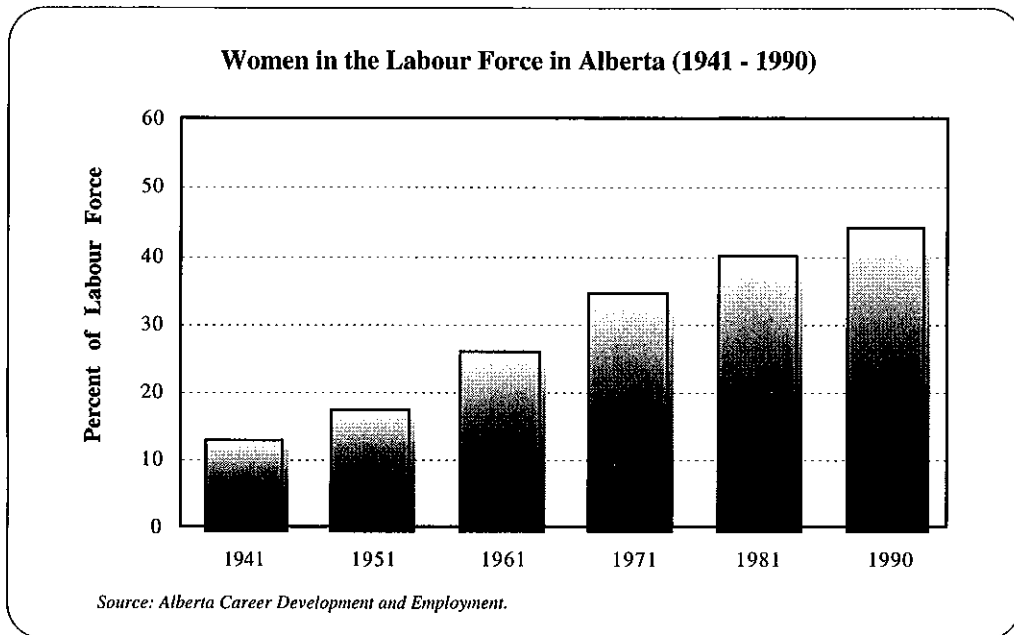


Unemployment insurance claims declined from 1986 to 1990. This was due in part to an improving economy and changes in the eligibility criteria (e.g. longer employment requirements to become eligible for unemployment insurance benefits). In 1991, a downturn in the Edmonton economy produced a 17 percent rise in local unemployment insurance claims. The number of claims continued to rise in 1992 by 4.5 percent.

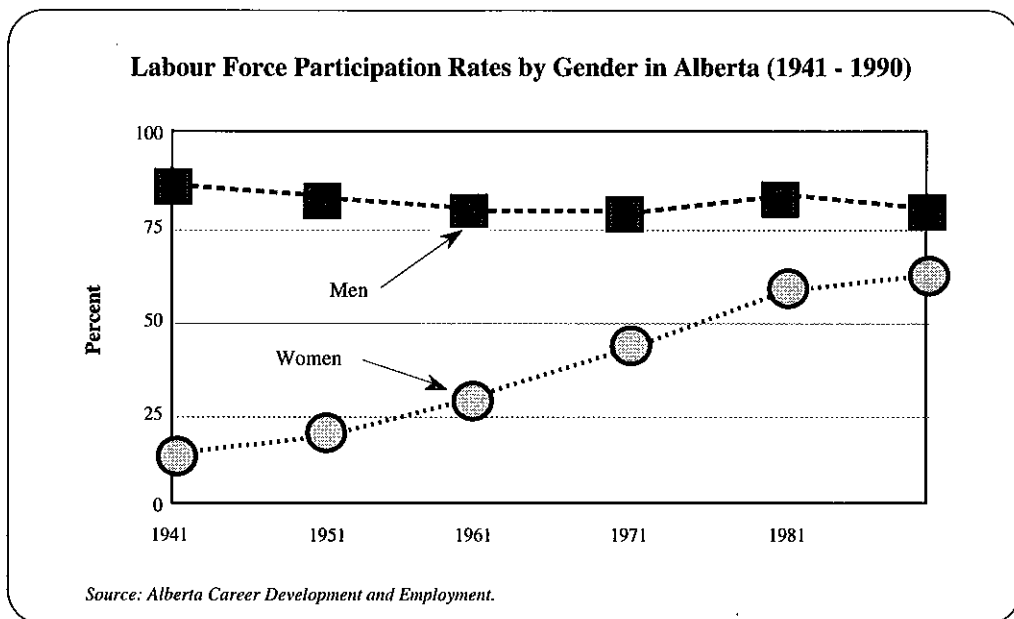


## Women in the Labour Force

Five decades ago women comprised only about 12 percent of Alberta's labour force. Changing social conditions, labour needs during the Second World War, greater acceptance of women as valuable contributors to the workplace, decreasing gender-related entry barriers and more recently, the economic need to augment family income have all contributed to a rapid and steady increase in women working for pay outside the home. In 1990, women represented almost half of all Alberta workers.



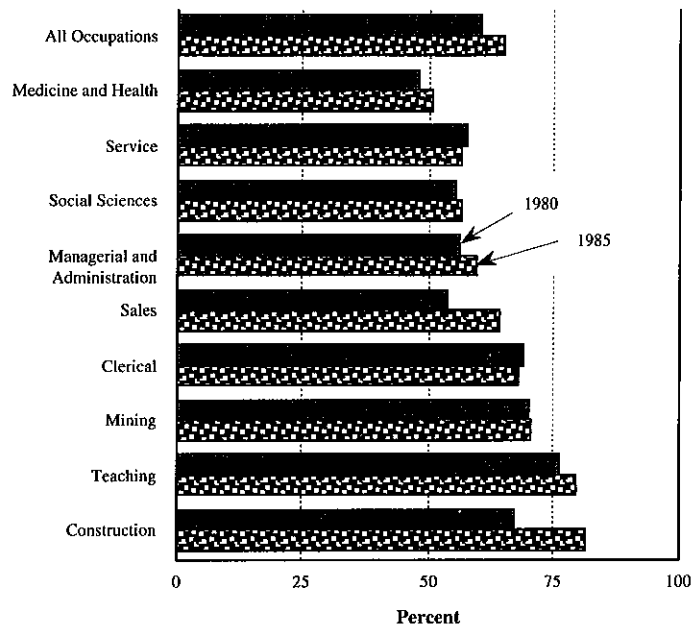
Comparison between sexes in labour force participation rate over the same time period shows this phenomenon even more clearly. Male participation remains generally unchanged over 50 years while that of women increases from about 20 percent to over 60 percent.



## Women in the Labour Force

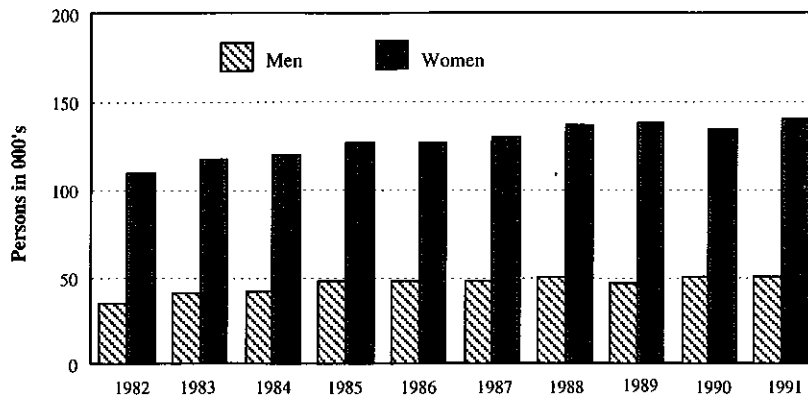
For full time occupations in all industrial work classifications, women continue to earn substantially less than do men, even though small gains have occurred in most areas. As well, female workers continue to be in “traditionally female” occupations such as clerical, teaching, social services and health-related jobs while their inroads into science and engineering, management, the primary industries and manufacturing continue to be minimal.

**Women’s Average Earnings as a Percentage of Men’s Earnings  
Alberta (1980 - 1985)**



*Source: Alberta Career Development and Employment.*

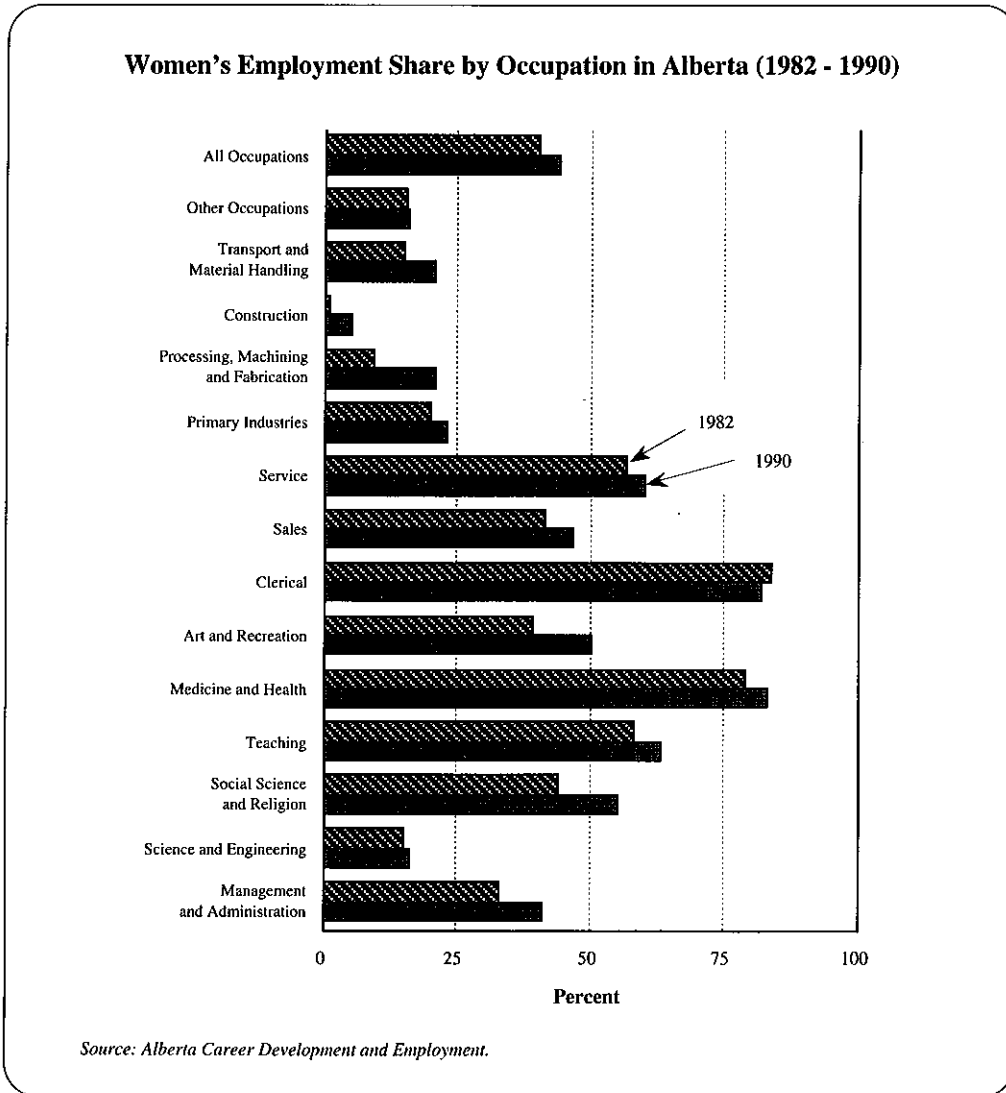
**Part-Time Employment in Alberta by Gender (1983 - 1991)**



*Source: Alberta Career Development and Employment.*

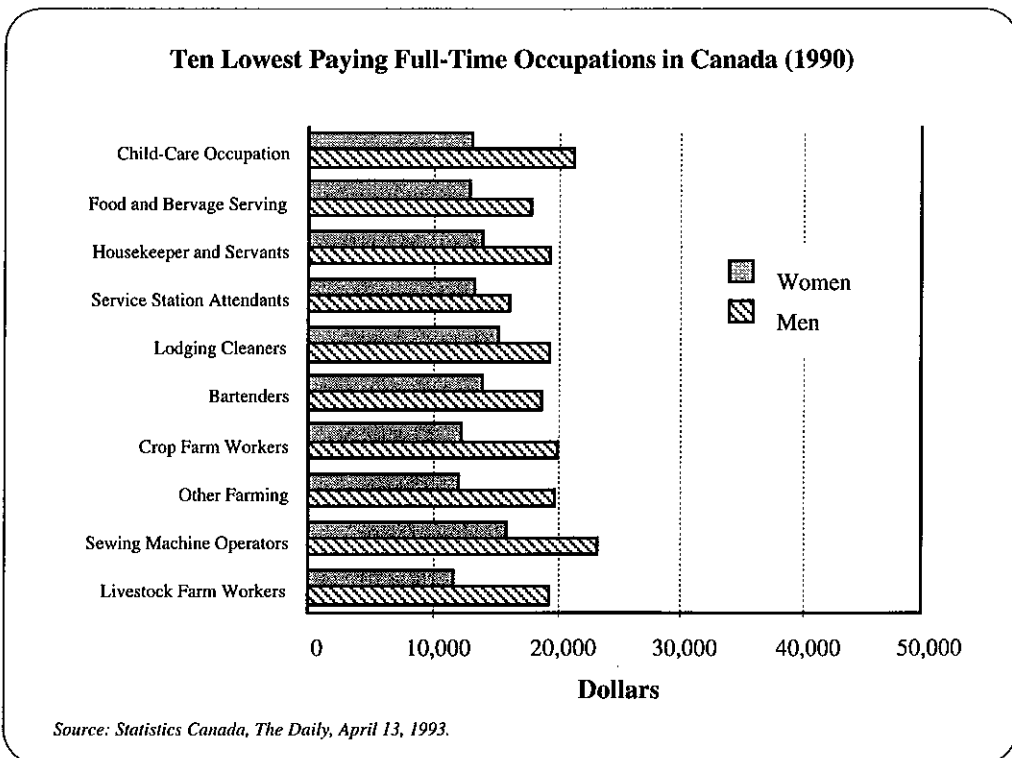
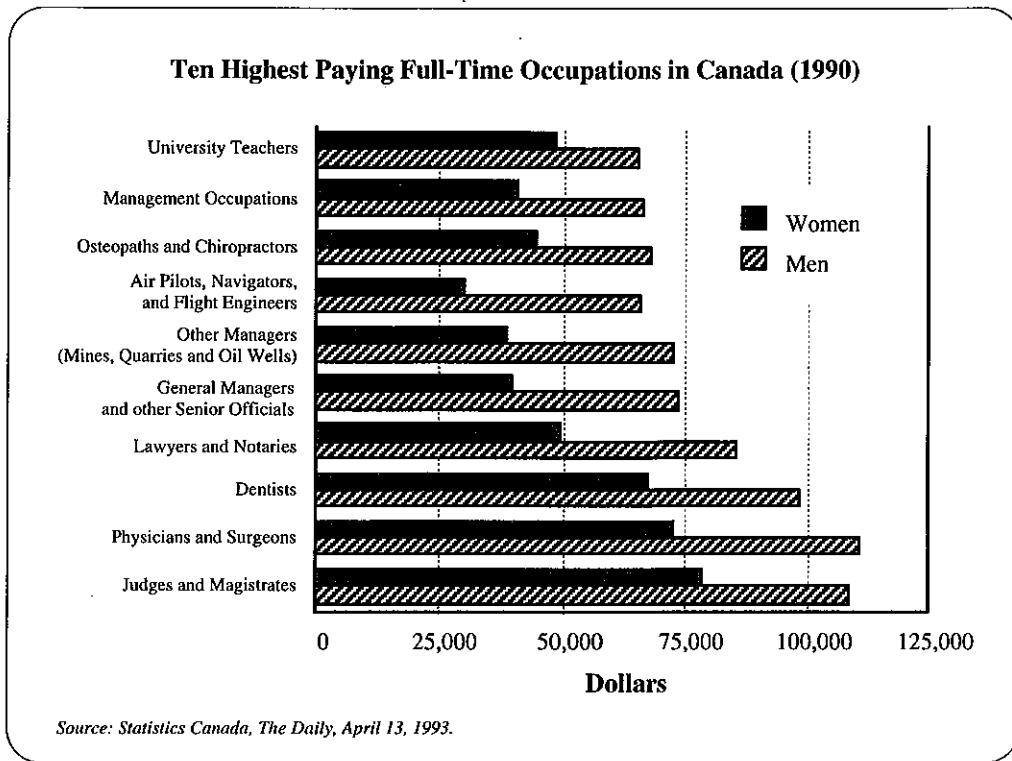
## Women in the Labour Force

Part-time occupations share many of the characteristics described above, while also usually denying work benefits, pension plans and job security. Yet, nearly 40 percent of the 6.5 million Canadian women who worked at some time during 1988, worked at part-time jobs. Women working part-time were over-represented in the service sector, particularly in the “lower-tier” service industries, clerical, sales and consumer services.



## Women in the Labour Force

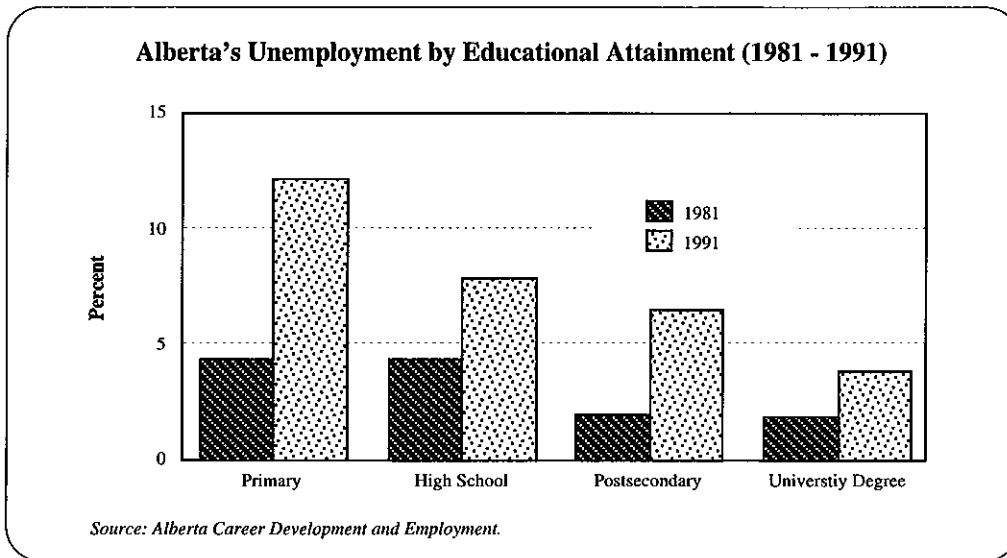
The two graphs below show the average income of men and women working full-time in the ten highest and lowest paying occupations in Canada in 1990. Women's incomes in the 10 lowest paying and the 10 highest paying occupations are approximately 70 and 63 percent of men's incomes, respectively.



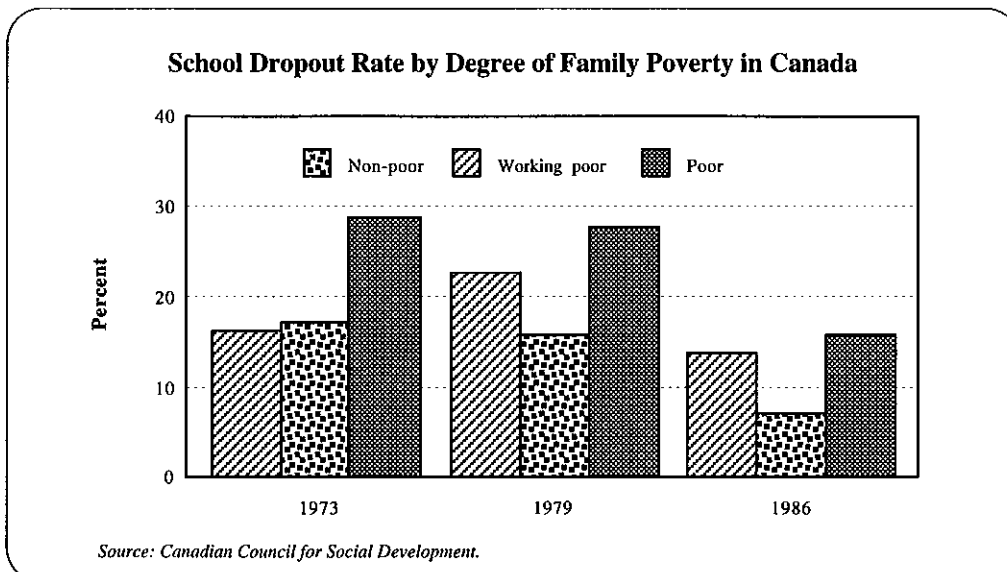
## Youth, Literacy and Employment

Education professionals state that nearly one third of students who enter high school do not complete grade 12, having dropped out along the way. A recent article from Statistics Canada states that during the 1990 school year, almost half of secondary school students aged 17 to 19 combined work with full-time studies, nearly one half of them working between 10 and 19 hours per week. Over the decade 1980 to 1990 the proportion of full-time students who were employed rose from 31 to 39 percent. Over 80 percent of these working students were in the service and retail industries.

The number of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs in our society has decreased. Entrance to better jobs require high technological training as well as good written and verbal communication skills. Youth who leave school early cannot compete at these levels. The chart below shows the relationship between educational attainment and unemployment, while also stressing that the overall situation has become more acute over the past decade.



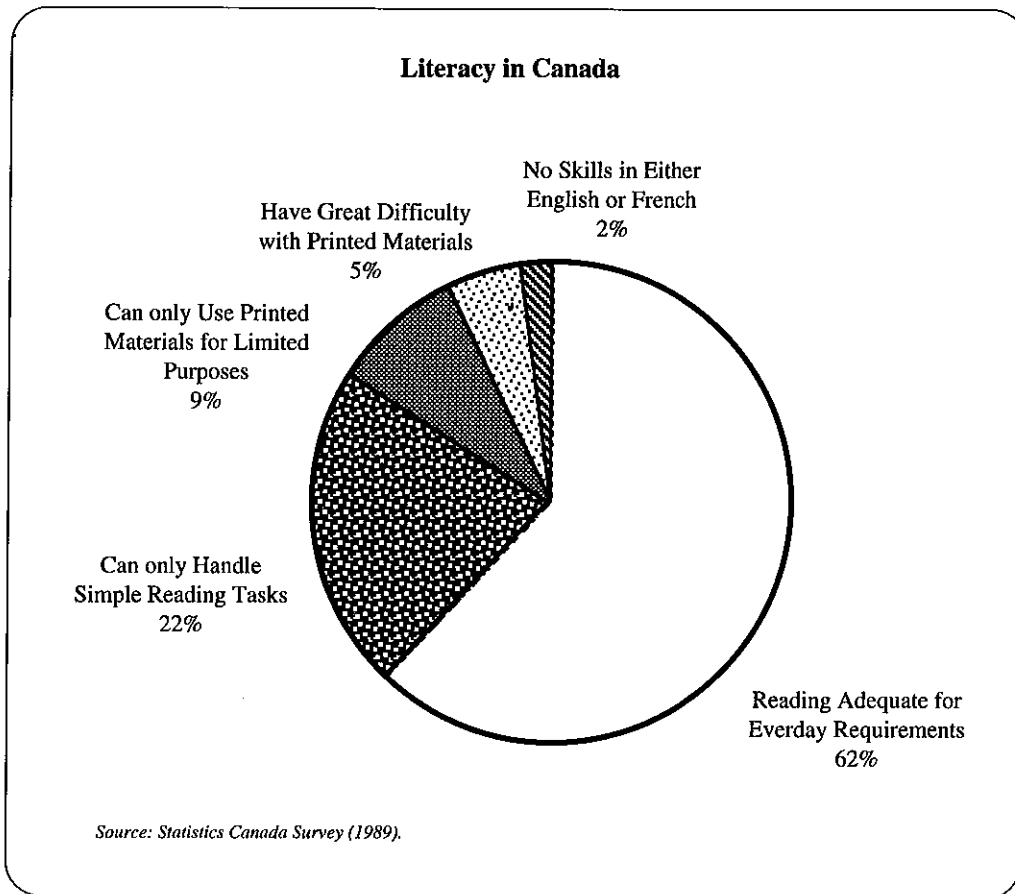
The Canadian Council for Social Development reports research that children of poor families have greater dropout rates than children of the non-poor, although the situation has generally been improving over the last decade.



## Youth, Literacy and Employment

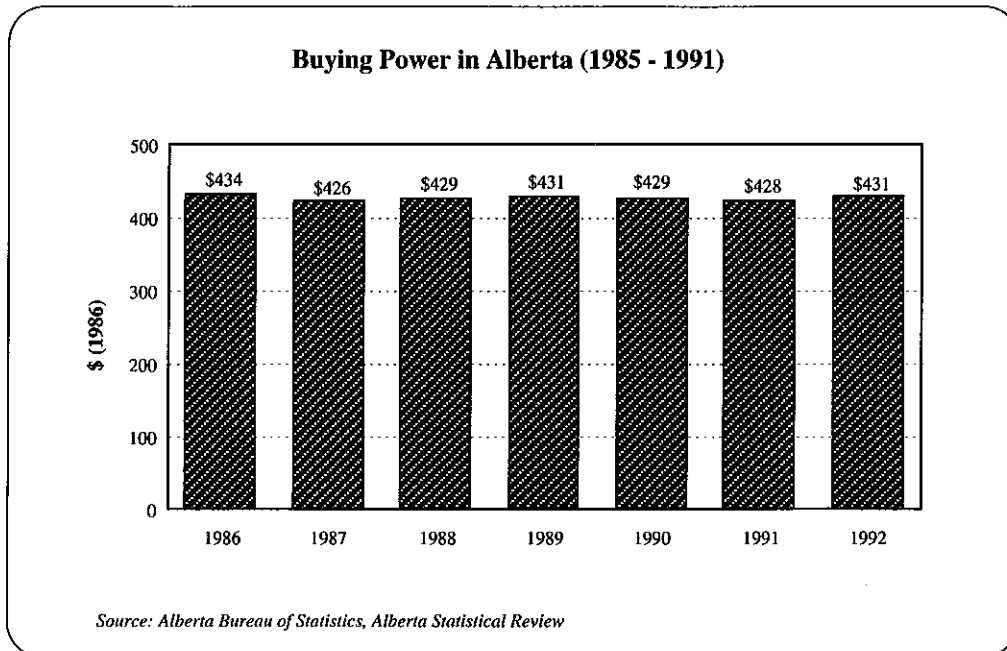
Young people dropping out of school are not the only cause for concern. A recent (1989) survey by Statistics Canada shows that nearly 40 percent of Canada's population have a reading capability which is considered less than adequate for ordinary, everyday requirements.

While only about seven percent can be judged as totally illiterate, over 30 percent were found to be so marginally capable in using the printed word that they had problems performing simple tasks such as reading traffic directions or transit schedules, while newspapers and magazines were barely manageable.

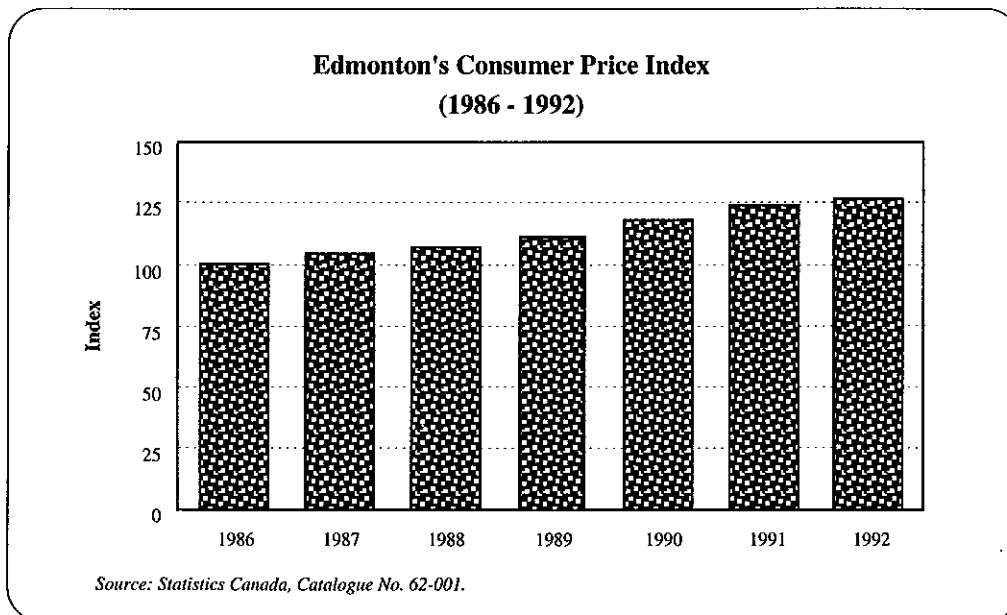


# Income

Buying power, in Alberta, has nearly kept pace with inflation. Accounting for inflation, average weekly earnings in 1992 were 431 dollars compared to 434 dollars in 1986.



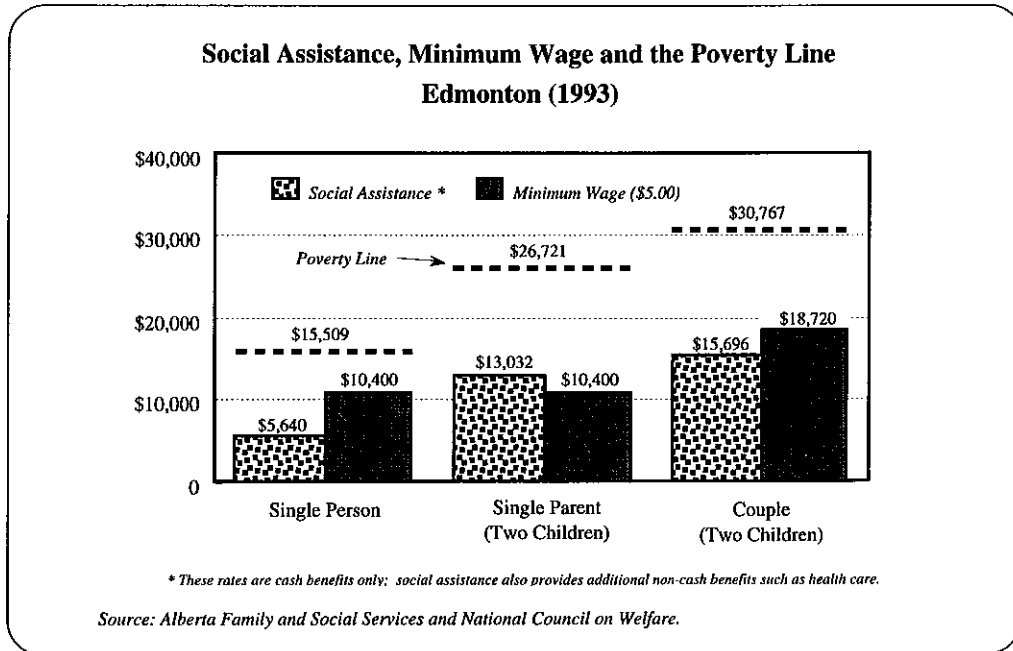
In Edmonton, since the mid 1980s, the price of consumer goods has increased on average 4.4 percent per year. In 1991, these increases were slightly above previous years due in part to the Goods and Services Tax (GST). By 1992, the rate of inflation had dropped to late 1980 rates. Increases in the consumer price index had the greatest impact on individuals living below the poverty line and those on fixed incomes who spend a higher proportion of their income on basic necessities.



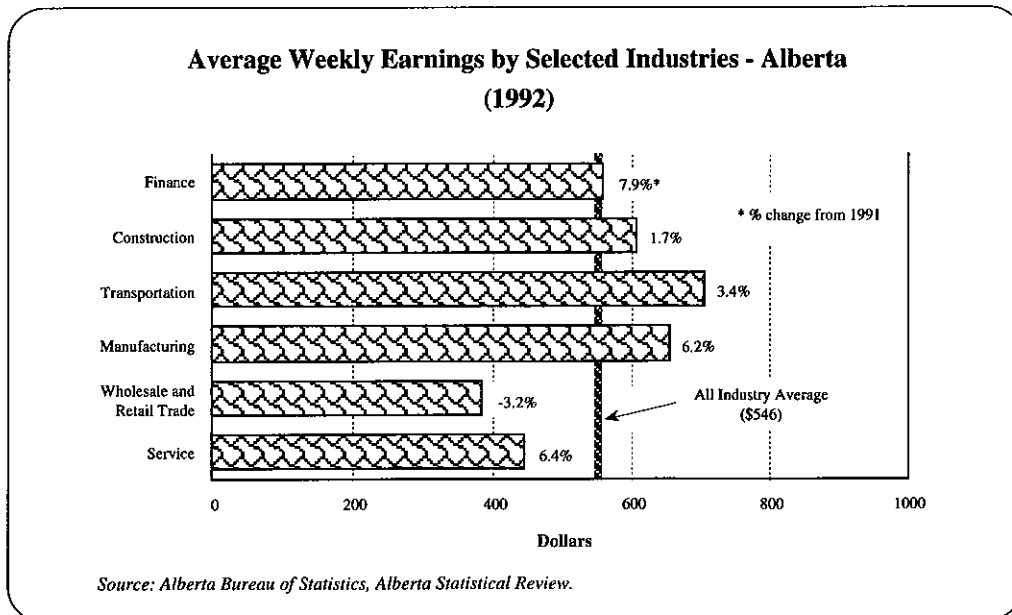


## Income

Wages or some source of government financial assistance are the primary sources of income for Edmontonians. As the following figure shows, many of those who are employed in low paying jobs or who receive only social assistance are poor. Although the minimum wage, in Alberta, was raised to five dollars per hour on April 1, 1992, an individual or family employed at this rate continues to be well below the National Council on Welfare's poverty line.

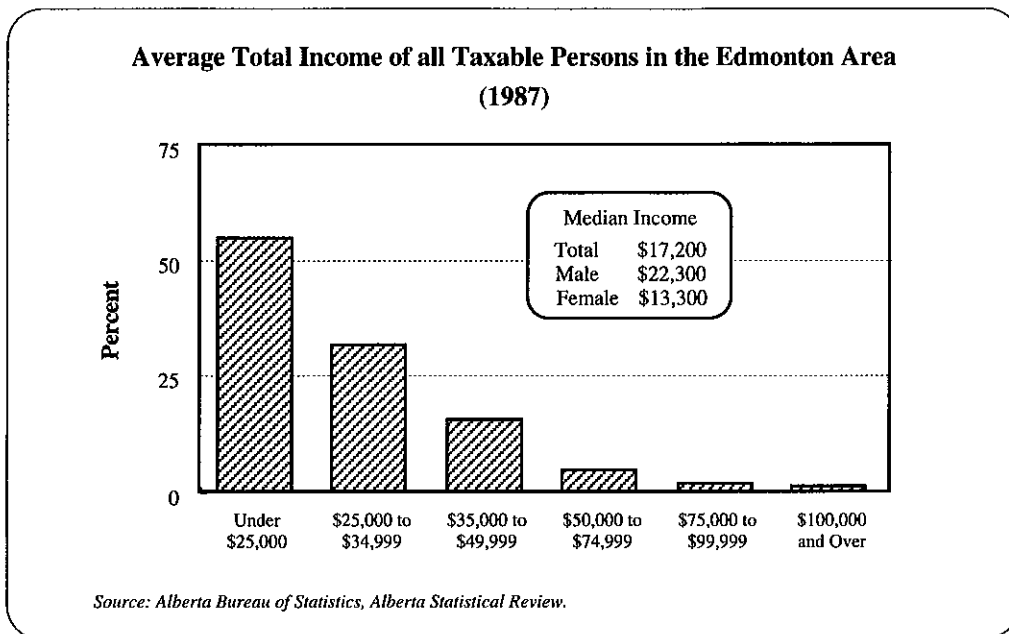


Individuals working in the trade and service sectors of the Alberta economy had average incomes significantly below the average of all industries. In 1992, the average weekly earnings of service and trade personnel were \$450 and \$389 respectively, compared to the overall industrial average of \$546. All average weekly earnings increased in 1992 except for the trade sector which declined three percent from 1991.

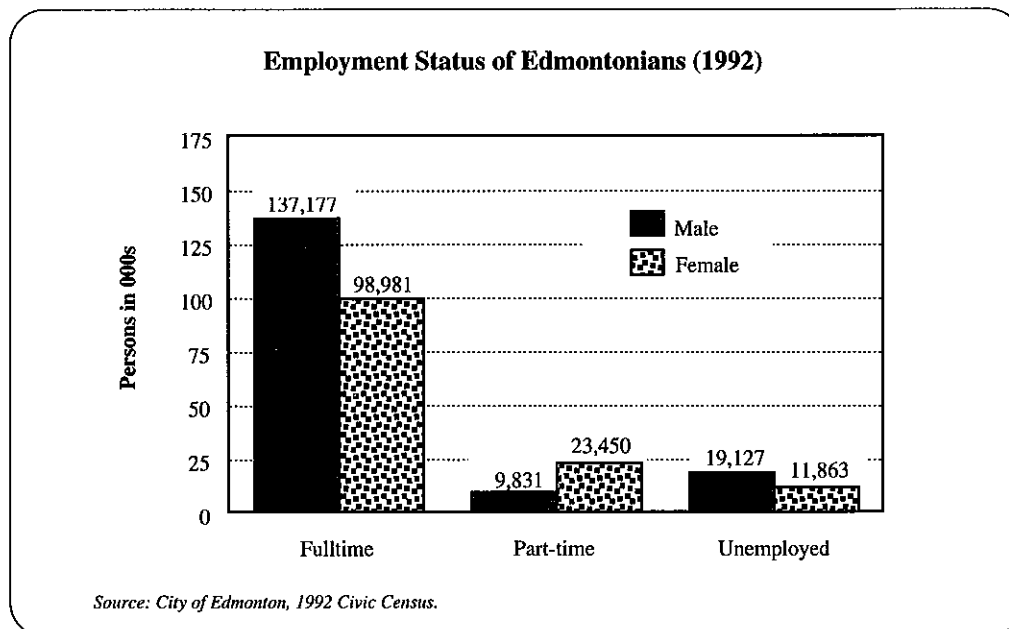


## Income

The following figure illustrates the income distribution of persons in the Edmonton area who submitted tax returns for 1987. It includes people who worked full-time, part-time and in temporary jobs during that year. The majority of persons (55 percent) had incomes under \$25,000 dollars. Nearly a third (32 percent) had incomes between \$25,000 and \$34,000.

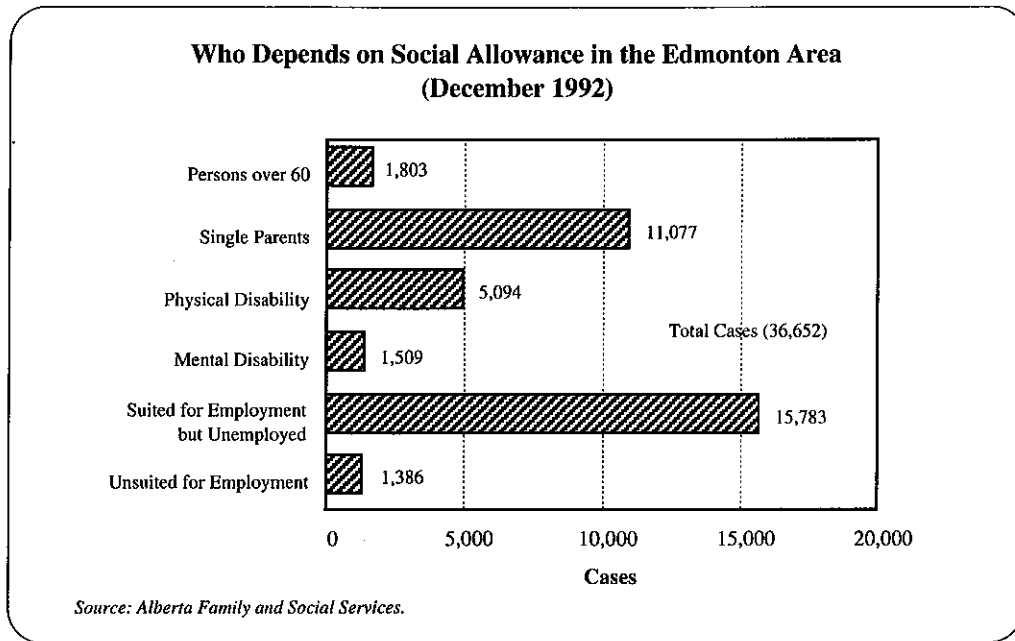


In 1992, more than 235,000 persons were employed full-time (four percent decrease from 1991) and more than 33,000 part-time (five percent increase). The increase in part-time employment at the expense of full-time employment has been occurring since at least the early 1980s. In 1981 full-time jobs in the Edmonton area comprised 88 percent of all jobs compared to 83 percent in 1992. In 1992, nearly 60 percent of those employed full-time were male, while about 75 percent of those employed part-time were female.

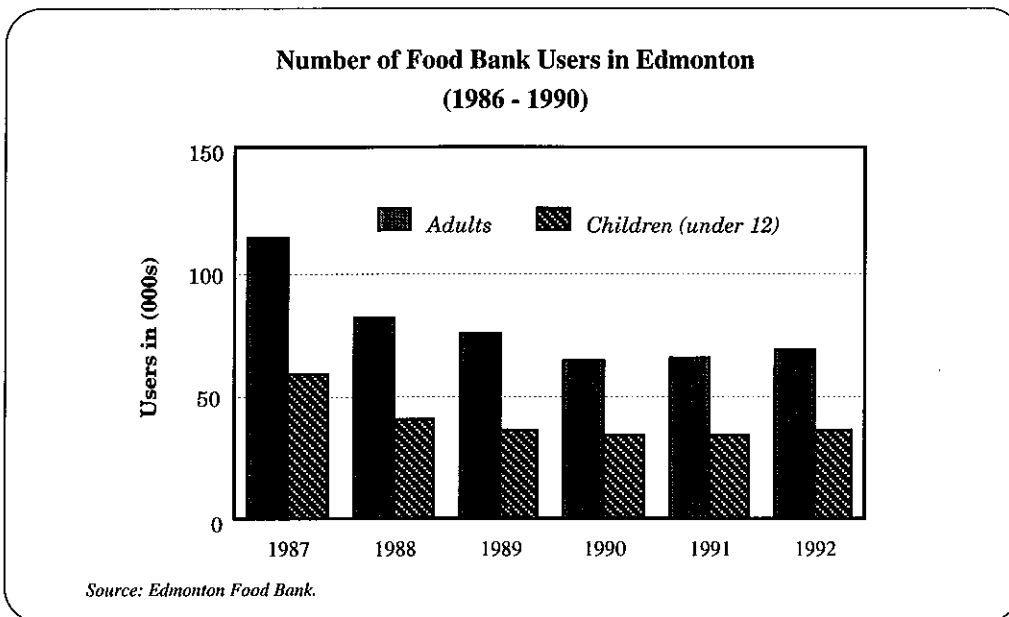


## Income

In December 1992, there were nearly 37,000 social assistance cases in the Edmonton area. The majority of assistance recipients fell into either the 'unemployed' or the 'single parent' categories. According to Alberta Family and Social Services, it is estimated that approximately 31,000 children were supported within the social assistance program in the Edmonton area; about 20,500 of these children were from single parent families.



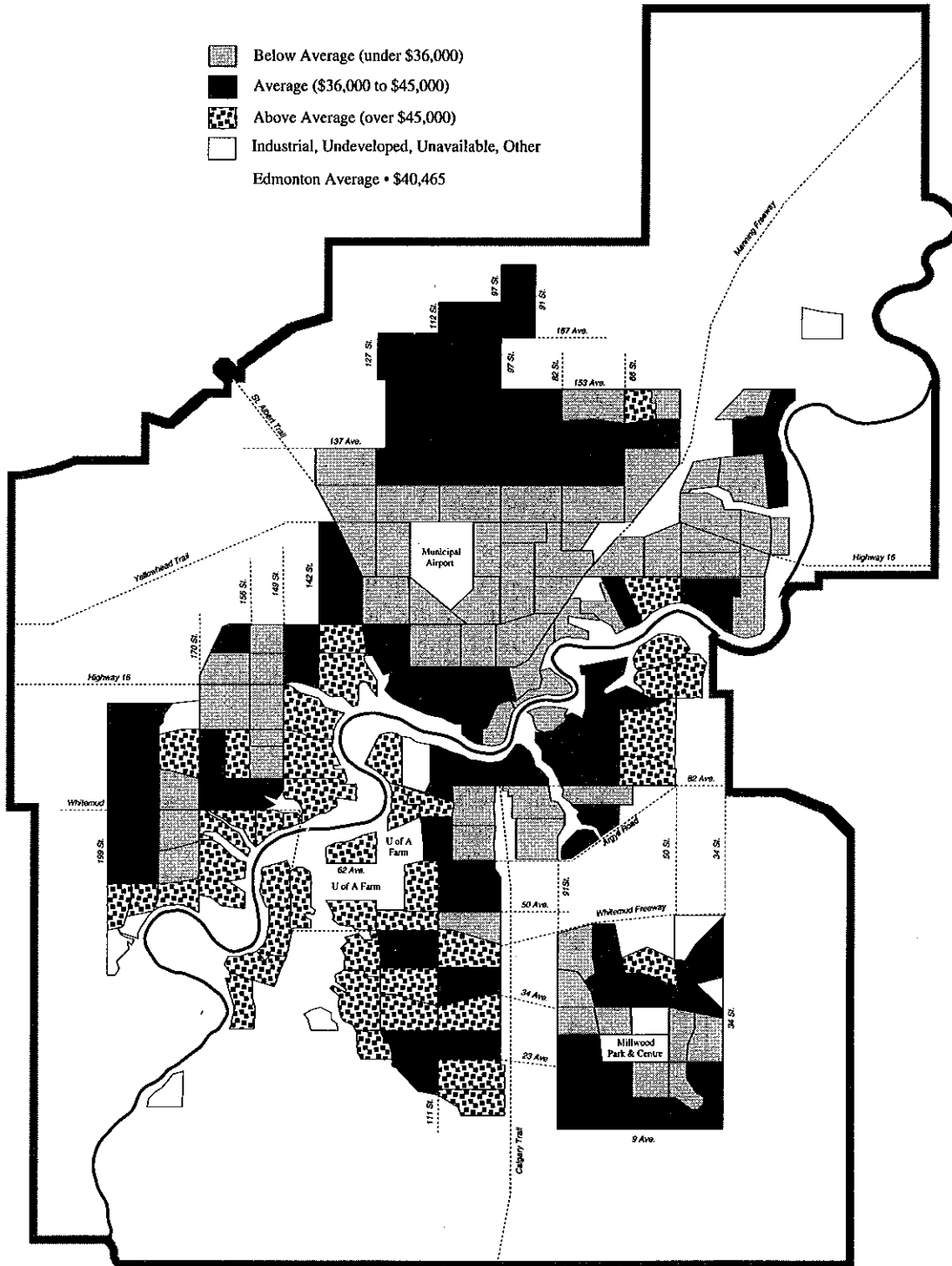
Some Edmonton residents have had difficulty getting the food they need. The Edmonton Food Bank, in conjunction with other agencies, helps to fill the gap by providing hampers and meals. Food Bank usage appears to have declined since 1987. However, according to the Edmonton Food Bank, although the number of hampers have declined, the amount of food distributed has increased from about 80,000 kilograms in 1988 to about 125,000 kilograms in 1992.



# Income

The following map shows average family income by Edmonton neighbourhoods. In general, neighbourhoods north of the the North Saskatchewan river have lower incomes than neighbourhoods south of the river. Neighbourhoods with the highest average family incomes are located in southwest Edmonton, both north and south of the river. (For a map of neighbourhood names, see page 23).

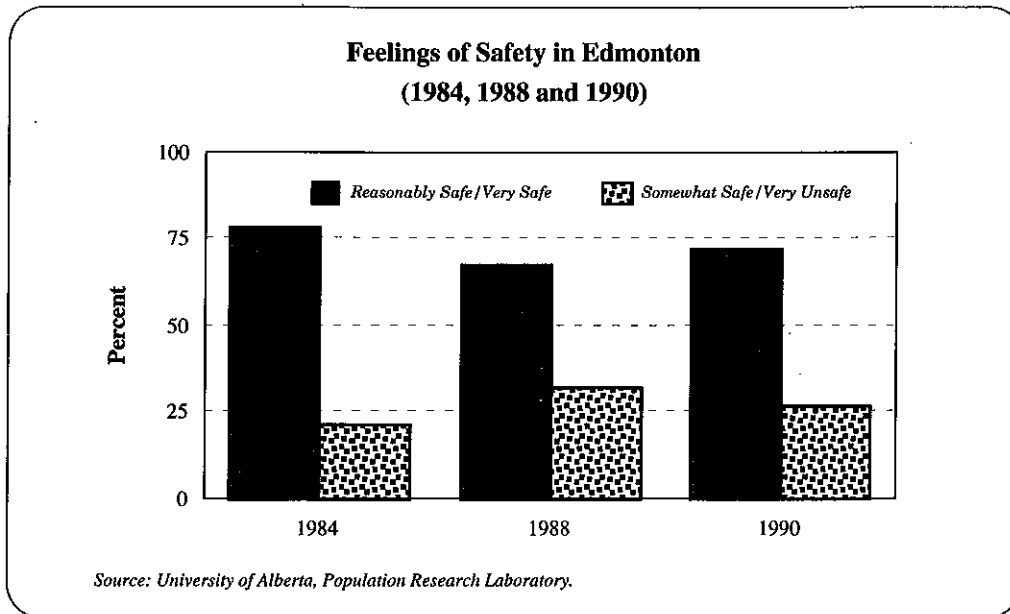
**Average Family Income by Neighbourhood in Edmonton (1986)**



Sources: Edmonton Community and Family Services and Statistics Canada Neighbourhood Data.

## Safety and Violence

The figure below illustrates feelings of safety Edmonton residents have about walking alone in their neighbourhoods after dark. In 1984, nearly 80 percent of Edmontonians felt reasonably safe or very safe in their communities. By 1988, this figure had declined to 68 percent but by 1990 there had been a slight increase in confidence. Approximately 73 percent of residents felt safe in their neighbourhoods after daylight hours in 1990.



The following table compares the number of reported occurrences of physical violence in Edmonton. From 1988 to 1992, the number of assaults increased substantially in four of the five categories. During this period, common assaults rose 16 percent, assaults with a weapon 30 percent, aggravated assaults 86 percent and family disputes 57 percent.

**Physical Violence in Edmonton  
(1988 - 1992)**

Type of Assault	1988	1990	1992
Common Assault	4137	4923	4779
Assault with a Weapon	981	1279	1280
Aggravated Assault	106	210	197
Family Disputes	4340	6019	6809
Homicides	27	27	27

*Source: City of Edmonton, Police Services.*

## Health and Illness

The data which is often used as measures of health does not tell the whole story. Rather than describing what makes people healthy, the data often refers to illness, or absence of illness. Data about sickness and premature death in Edmonton gives an image of a fairly healthy population. However, the figures do not show the differences between communities (e.g. across income groups).

Data about health behaviours suggest everyone has an equal opportunity to change behaviour. There are differences in the resources available to people, the skills, the cultural influences and the incentives to change. The data also imply that changing health behaviours is the key to improving health. In fact, many of the “causes” of health are social and economic, beyond individual behaviours.

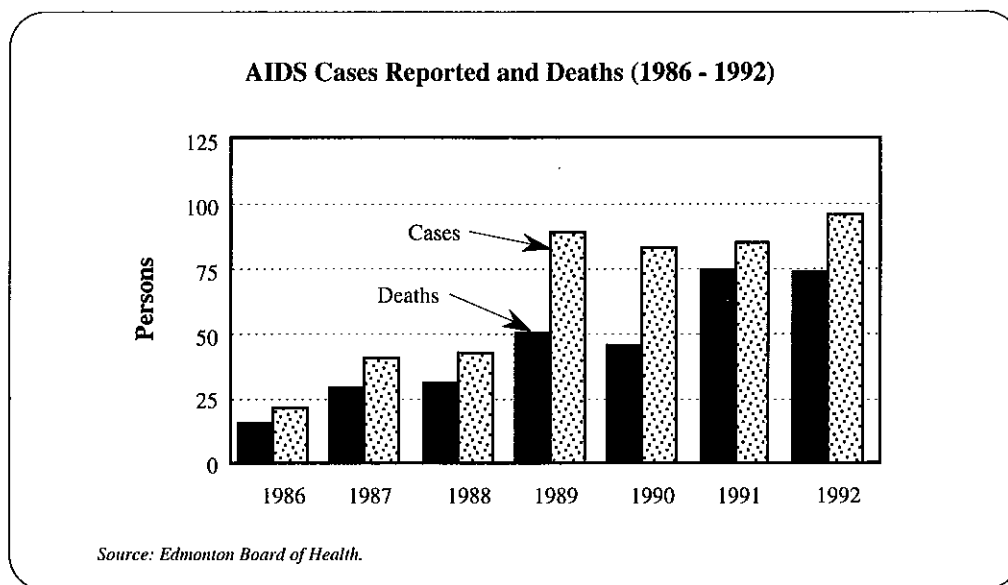
New measures of health, as “community health indicators”, are being developed to more accurately reflect the health of the population of Edmonton.

### Income, Food and Health

A 1990 study of 460 low income Edmonton households (i.e. more than 58.5 percent of income spent on food, clothing and shelter) found that three out of four people were having trouble getting enough food on a regular basis. Nearly 50 percent of respondents had run out of money to buy food in five of the previous 12 months. Of persons reporting that they were “not hungry”, 15 percent indicated that they were in poor health. In contrast, 47 percent of those that they were “very hungry”, reported poor health.

### People with AIDS

The impact of AIDS in Edmonton is partially measured by the reported number of people diagnosed with AIDS. HIV infection is estimated to be far higher with many people unaware that they are HIV positive. It is estimated that for each person with AIDS, 15 to 40 have the HIV infection.

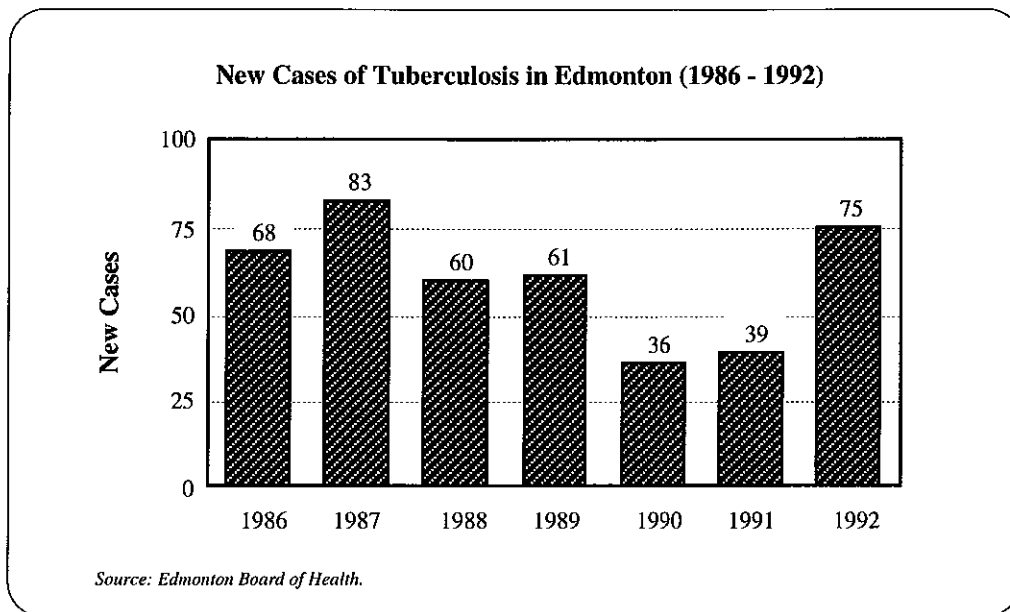


The number of women known to be HIV infected in Alberta was 110 as of January of 1993. Of the women reported to have AIDS, the largest proportion were infected through heterosexual contact. Often the symptoms are not recognized in women as HIV infection. Sexually transmitted diseases increase the risk of infection. In Edmonton, chlymidia is the major sexually transmitted disease, primarily affecting 15 to 24 year old women (1,347 in 1989; 1,569 in 1990; 1,250 in 1991).

# Health and Illness

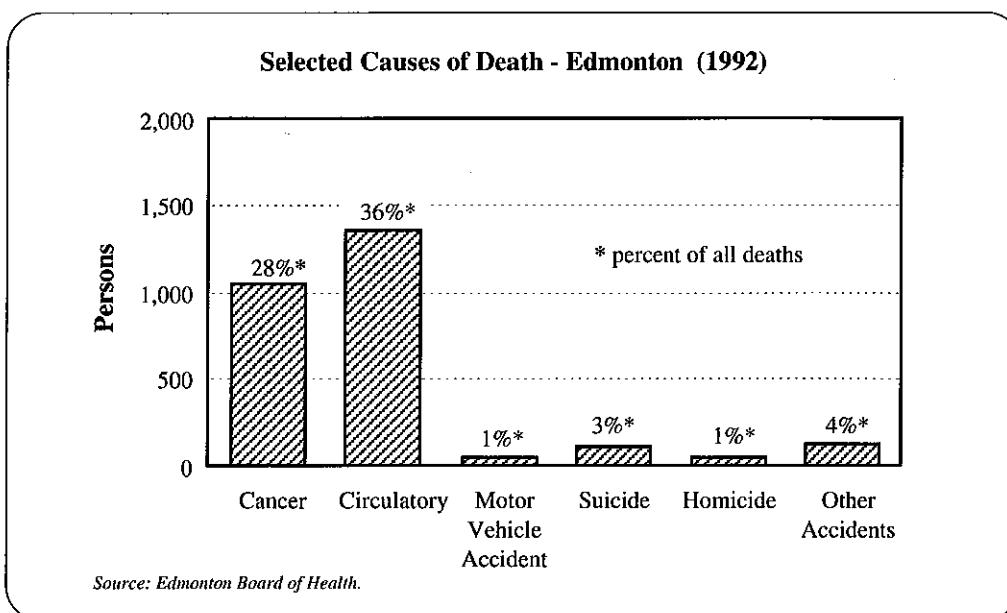
## Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis rates are rising in Edmonton, consistent with rising rates in United States and worldwide. In 1991, 64 percent of the reported cases were among persons not born in Canada (52 percent arrived within the last five years).



## Major Causes of Death

Circulatory system (including heart disease) and cancer continue to be the primary causes of death in Edmonton. In 1992, nearly 65 percent of deaths were attributed to these two causes (1,359 persons died of circulatory problems and 1,054 died of cancer).



## Summary of Edmonton Statistics

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>1987</b>		<b>1992</b>	
Population	576,249		617,712	
Net Migration	-2,237		-3,253	
Natural Increase	6,980		6,300	
<b>Population Segments</b>				
0-4	46,849	(8.1%)	47,799	(7.7%)
5-9	38,215	(6.6%)	44,296	(7.2%)
10-14	33,740	(5.9%)	38,179	(6.2%)
15-19	40,063	(7.0%)	38,492	(6.2%)
20-29	134,861	(23.4%)	118,156	(19.1%)
30-39	103,128	(17.9%)	120,414	(19.5%)
40-49	61,282	(10.6%)	77,159	(12.5%)
50-59	50,427	(8.8%)	51,683	(8.4%)
60-69	37,613	(6.5%)	43,643	(7.1%)
70+	30,071	(5.2%)	37,891	(6.1%)
Seniors (65+)	46,883	(8.1%)	57,954	(9.4%)
Those under 15 as a % of 15 to 64 Year Olds	27.3%		27.5%	
Those 65 and older as a % of 15 to 64 Year Olds	11.4%		12.5%	
<b>Economy</b>				
Alberta GDP (1986 Constant in Millions)	\$58,069		(1991)* \$65,294	
Consumer Price Index (All Items; 1986 = 100)	104.2		126.6	
(Food)	104.3		120.1	
(Housing)	101.8		122.3	
(Clothing)	103.8		126.9	
<b>Labour Force</b>				
Unemployment Rate	11.3%		11.0%	
Participation Rate	72.6%		72.0%	
<b>Income</b>				
Average Weekly Earnings (Alberta) - (current dollars)	\$450.28		\$546.10*	
<b>Family</b>				
Birth Rate (per 1,000 population)	17.8		16.3	
Death Rate (per 1,000 population)	5.7		6.1	
Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)	9.7		8.0	
Divorce Rate, Alberta (per 100,000 population)	386		(1991) 333	
General Fertility Rate (live births per 1,000 women aged 15-44)	65.9		63.1	
Births to Teenagers under 18 years of age	242		340	
Percentage of Births to Teenagers under 18 years of age	7.6		3.3	
<b>Health</b>				
Suicides (Total)	118		115	
(Males)	96		83	
(Females)	22		32	

\* estimate







**Part 2**  
**Trends and Service Implications**  
**for Aboriginal People**



# Aboriginal People of Edmonton: A Resilient Resourceful Lot

by Terry Lusty

Edmonton - an empty expanse of land 200 years ago. One hundred years later, it boasted a meagre 700 people; today a bustling several hundred-thousand.

But it wasn't always this way. Up until a century ago, it was Indians and Metis who ruled the west with hunting, trapping and fishing their chief source of livelihood. The region, prior to 1800, was largely populated by Blackfoot Indians with a sprinkling of Cree, Assiniboine and Iroquois. The latter two never became as populous as the Cree whose date of arrival on the prairies is not certain, but it's suggested they moved into Alberta in the 1690's.

One hundred years later, in 1795, the North West Company (NWC) and Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) established trade posts along the North Saskatchewan at Fort Edmonton. And, thanks to the labours of the Cree and Metis, especially, they grew and prospered. Their arrival forced the Blackfoot south; the Chipewyan and Slavey north; the Blood, Peigan and Sarcee south, and the Gros Ventre into the United States.

A distinct advantage of the Cree was their acquisition of the mighty "thunder-stick" (gun). With them, they were practically invincible as opposing tribes discovered, especially the Blackfoot. In 1840, HBC governor George Simpson wrote that the Saskatchewan River separated the Cree and Blackfoot. The two were bitter enemies who often warred with one another.

The demand for buffalo hides altered the economic base of the Cree from hunter/trapper to horse-mounted warrior and buffalo hunter. Their reward for hides was European trade goods - metal knives, axes, pots, cloth, beads, etc.

Although some Cree stayed in the bush as trappers and providers of meat and fish, those who worked for trade companies proved invaluable as middlemen. They settled around the posts and came to be the "Home Guard".

Indian life centered around the gigantic buffalo hunts. They used all parts of this animal which provided almost all their needs.

But, nothing is forever. By the 1870's, the buffalo was fast disappearing. Slowly, Natives were forced to convert to farming, wood-cutting, labourers, etc. Indian women married company men and their Metis offspring were educated to become clerks, traders, stockmen, even HBC factors. Metis and Indians enjoyed horse races, gambling and dancing, especially in the spare winter hours. The Cree continued to practice their language, culture and religion, even when it was outlawed. It simply went "underground". Because they lived close to settlements, it was only natural their culture would be affected by white society.

For many, towns spelled trouble. In 1888, for example, the Papaschase Indians had to give up their lands in the river valley and south part of Edmonton. It is believed the land extended from Edmonton, south as far as the Leduc oil fields. Band members dispersed to nearby reserves and actually made up the band at Enoch, a few others went to other reserves such as Saddle Lake. However, surviving descendants don't believe the sale of the reserve was legal and that is today being investigated.

With the enforcement of schooling, Indian and Metis lost still more of their culture. By the 1920/30's, some began to prosper at farming.

Apart from farming, the Metis worked on railroads, fishing, boat building, mailmen, riverboat pilots, etc. They moved into or near towns to be close to work. Most were highly independent, likely the reason why the Cree called them "O-tee-paym-soo-wuk," or "their own bosses".

By the early 1900's, Edmonton had a large Native population. The Metis knew they required help and began to organize. In '32, they formed the Metis Association. Under Joe Dion, Jim Brady, Malcolm Norris and Peter Tomkins, they convinced the province to investigate their need for education, health, housing and employment. A royal commission agreed. They received over a

*Continued: Aboriginal People of Edmonton: A Resilient Resourceful Lot*

million acres of land, all north of Edmonton. A few years later, in 1939, Indians formed the Indian Association of Alberta. Many Metis and Indians still inhabit the city where they number almost 50,000 according to Statistics Canada.

Since the 1940's, a host of Native organizations evolved to help make their world a better one. And many have now become lawyers, teachers, social workers, and other occupations that contribute to society in a positive and constructive fashion.

*Terry Lusty is a Metis teacher, historian and columnist.*

## Terminology and Definitions Affecting Aboriginal People

### **Non-Treaty Indian**

A person who is registered as an Indian but is not a member of a Treaty Band.

### **Non-Status Indian**

A person of Indian ancestry who is not registered as an Indian.

### **Registered/Status Indian**

A person recorded as an Indian in the Indian register. Those who are entitled to be registered are by virtue of descent from registered Indians.

### **Metis**

Metis is the French word meaning "mixed blood", which usually refers to those of French and Indian decent. Metis are not usually entitled to be registered as Indian.

### **Treaty Indian**

A Member of a band of Indians which was signatory to a Treaty with the Government of Canada.

## Bill C-31

The passing of Bill C-31 (1985) by the Federal Government allowed the reinstatement of Indians who had lost status or who were denied it as a result of discriminatory clauses in the Indian Act. For example, prior to 1985, a status Indian woman who married anyone but a status Indian was taken off the Indian Register. A male status Indian, however, was able to marry a non-status or non-Indian woman without loss of his status. His wife gained Indian status under the Indian Act.

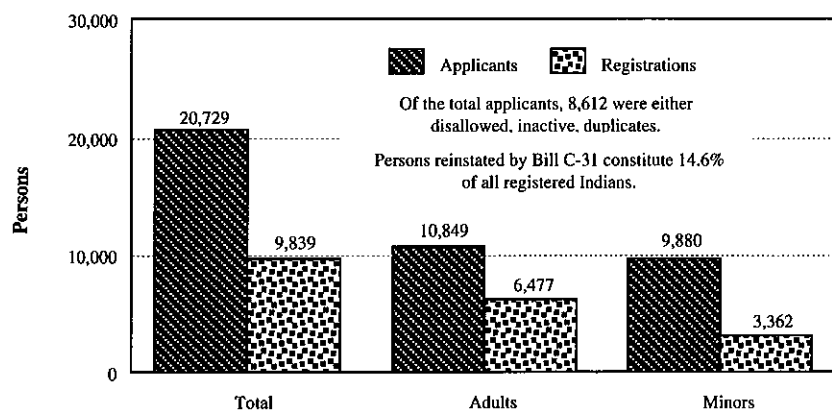
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) predicted at the time, that by the end of 1991, the population reinstated by Bill C-31, most of who live off reserve, would constitute 18 percent (92,000) of all registered Indians.

Many Aboriginal people consider the Bill to be another imposition on their internal affairs by the federal government. Indian organizations protest that they were not consulted on the practical implications of the Bill. They argue that 10,000 people in Alberta have been reinstated so far, but with no tangible benefits. If they go back to the reserves, due to lack of land or insufficient funding for programs, what they get is only frustration and dissatisfaction. In many cases Aboriginal people have lived for generations off reserve. When they return to a reserve they have often lost the ability to communicate in their native language.

Other people, especially women, support the Bill, because they feel it addresses some of the discriminations under the old legislation. But they find that many Bands refuse to facilitate their wish to move back to the reserves, particularly if they seek housing. Some feel they are discriminated against by their Band.

The passing of Bill C-31 has caused considerable conflict between Aboriginal peoples. A major reason for this conflict is that funding to meet federal government's Treaty and legal obligations to Indian people has not been increased to accommodate the reinstated Indian population.

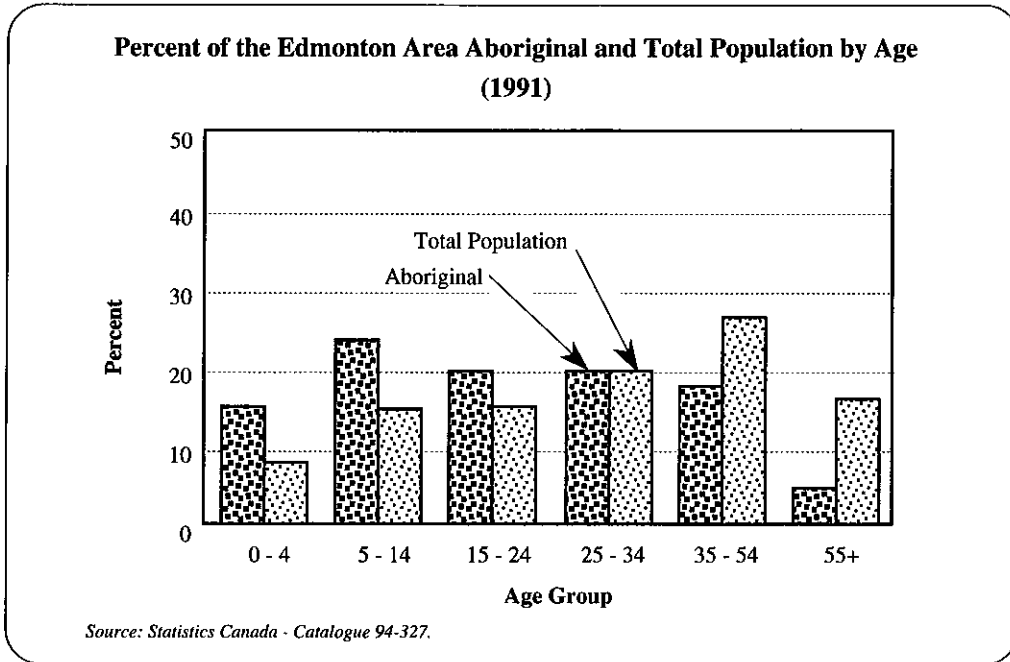
**Number of Applicants and Registrations under Bill C-31 in Alberta  
(1985 to March, 1993)**



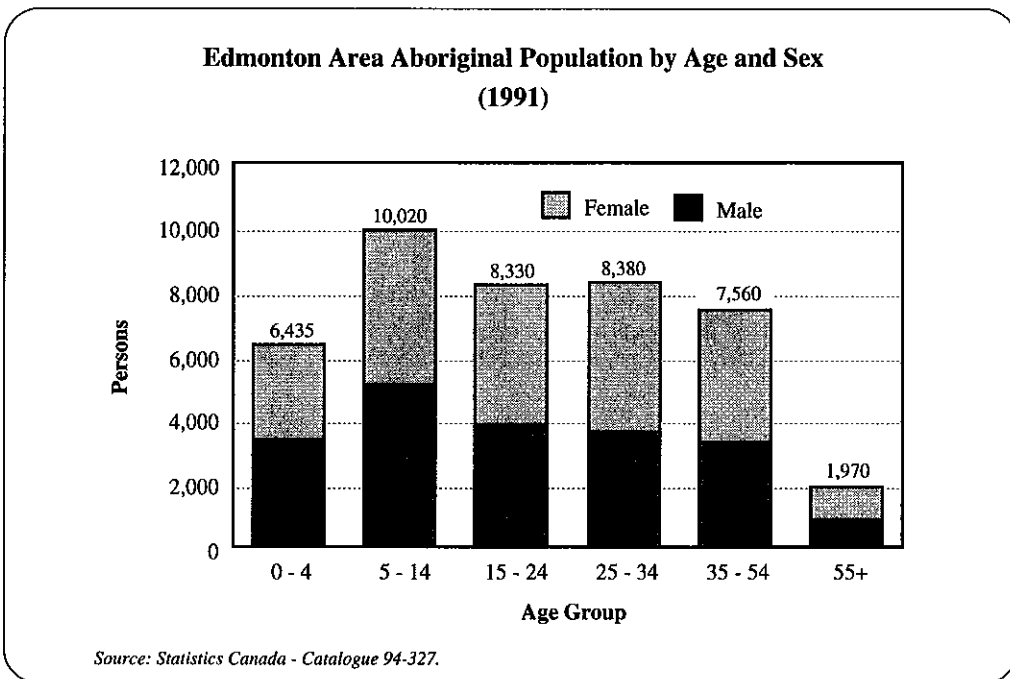
Source: Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada.

## Aboriginal People - General Profile

In 1991, 42,695 persons or slightly more than 5 percent of the Edmonton area population reported that they were fully or partly of Aboriginal origin (North American Indian, Metis, or Inuit). This segment of the population is substantially younger than the population as a whole. The proportion of Aboriginal youth and children is nearly double that of the general population. In contrast, the portion of Aboriginal persons 55 years of age and older is only a third that of general population.



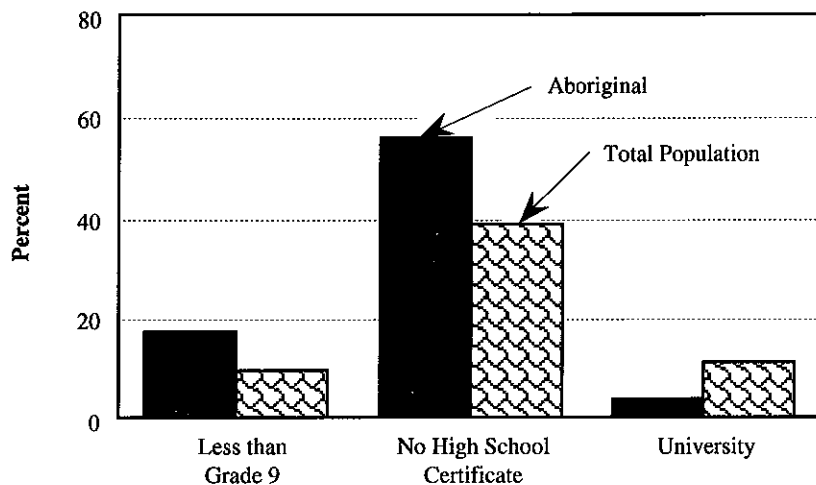
In addition, the proportion of women, 25 to 54 years of age, reporting Aboriginal origins was significantly greater than that of men. For every 130 Aboriginal women in this age group there were approximately 100 men.





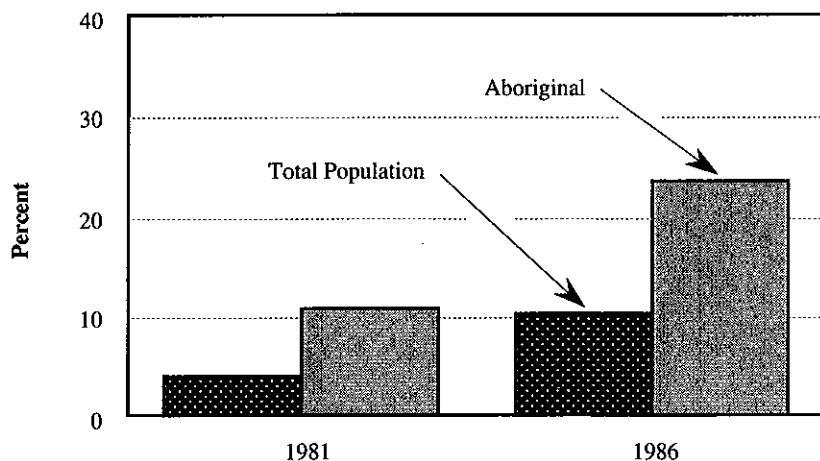
According to an Edmonton Social Planning publication, "A 1985 survey of Edmonton Aboriginal people revealed that, after employment, upgrading or completing education was the most common reason for relocation to the city from elsewhere. . . . Nevertheless, educational attainment remains considerably below that of the general population." It was also noted that the close links between level of education and the quality and quantity of employment places Aboriginal people at a considerable disadvantage in the job market.

**Educational Level Attained - Edmonton's Aboriginal and Total Population (1986)**



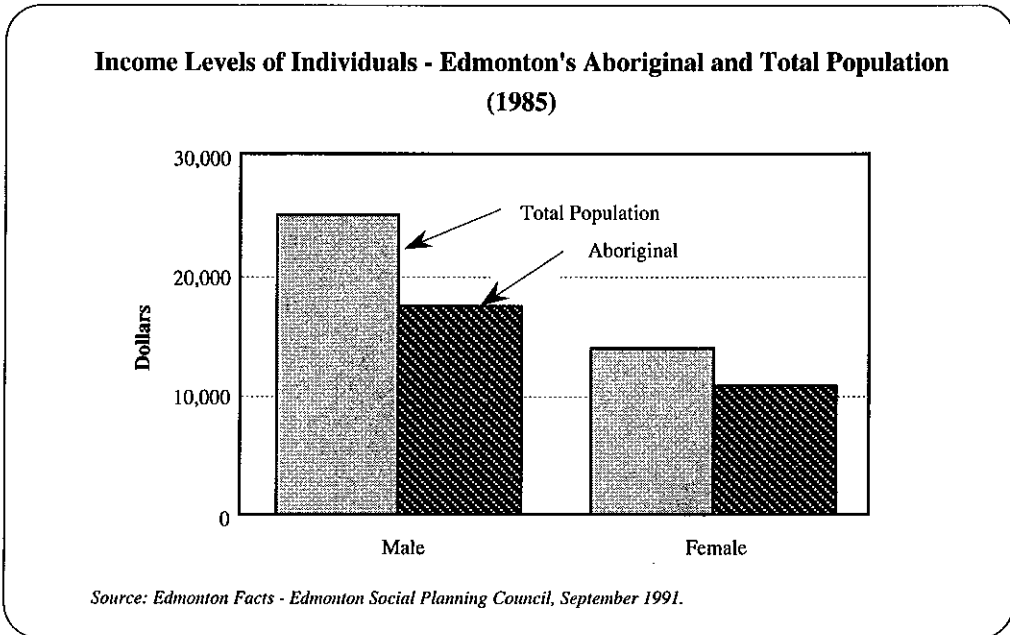
Source: *Edmonton Facts - Edmonton Social Planning Council, September 1991.*

**Unemployment Rates - Edmonton's Aboriginal and Total Population (1981 and 1986)**

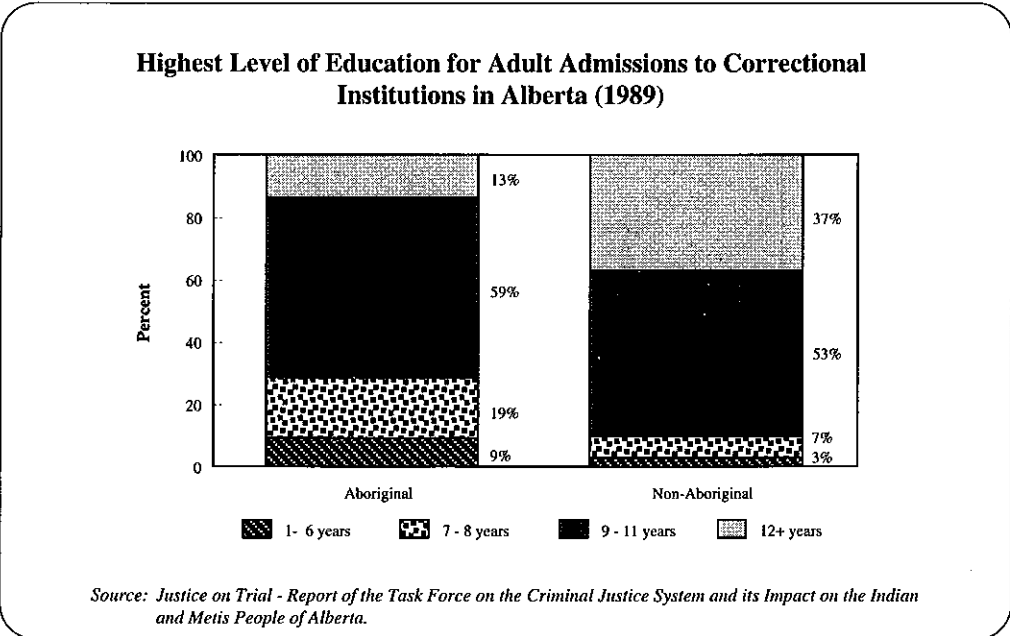


Source: *Edmonton Facts - Edmonton Social Planning Council, September 1991.*

As previously noted, Aboriginal people have much higher rates of unemployment. These high rates are one factor that combine to maintain Aboriginal income levels that are substantially below the general population. Other factors include the high percentage of single parent headed families (one in three compared to one in eight in the general population), fewer Aboriginal people in management and professional positions, and government transfer payments accounting for nearly 20 percent of Aboriginal family income compared to less than 10 percent for Edmonton families as a whole.



Aboriginal people also are over represented in correctional institutions. In the Solicitor General of Canada report, "Dimensions of Aboriginal Over-Representation in Correctional Institutions and Implications for Crime Prevention", 34 percent of inmates in Alberta's provincial institutions were Aboriginal inmates.



# Trends and Implications

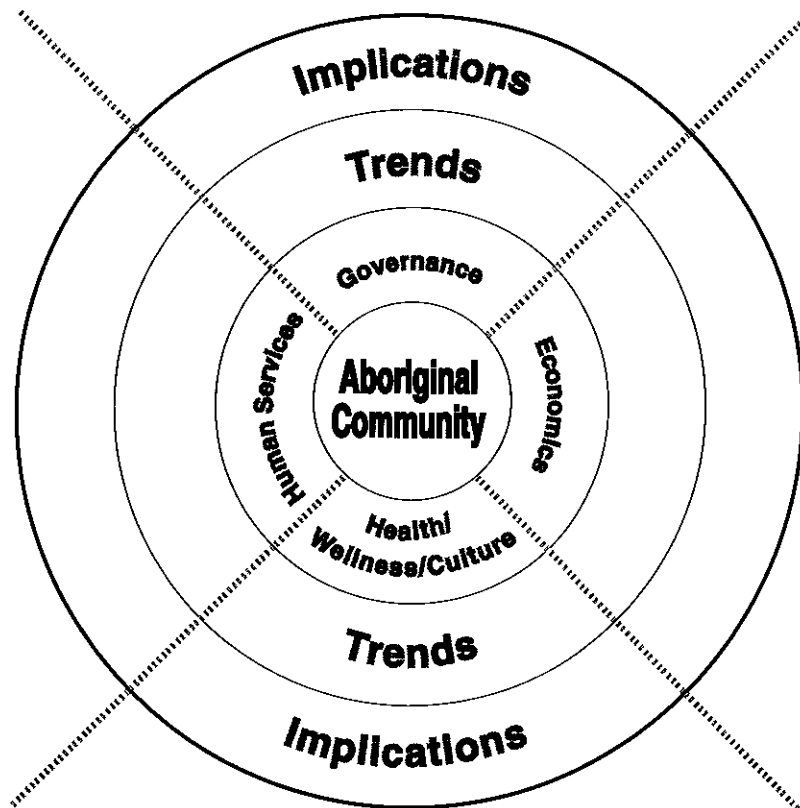
In order to understand more about the human service needs of urban Aboriginal people, the Community Trends Working Group met with various Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal **service providing organizations**. Six Indian and Métis organizations participated in a survey to identify what information may help in future planning. About 80 service-providing organizations in Edmonton answered questionnaires which asked the following question:

*“In the 1990’s, what trends or issues do you think are likely to have significant influence on the needs and services of Aboriginal people living in the Edmonton community?”*

A series of eight “focus group” discussions were held with these service providers which ultimately included 92 participants.

The trends and implications identified by **service providers** have been loosely categorized under the four main themes of governance, economics, social services and health/ wellness/culture. The subject areas covered by each theme have also been included. Each of the trends and implications listed was not shared by every participant.

Many of the trends have several relevant implications. Similarly, many of the implications are applicable to more than one of the listed trends. The circular diagram below shows our understanding that these issues, trends and implications are intricately interconnected.



(intergovernmental relationships)

**Trend**

Aboriginal people are becoming more active in public policy decision-making at all levels of government, on volunteer boards and advisory committees. They are also demanding equitable representation in social service organizations.

*'Our service standards need to be established by ourselves, no others.'*

**Implications**

- *Native representation in government, on boards, and committees will probably increase.*
- *Mainstream agencies who are funded to provide programs for Aboriginal people should be held accountable for the disposition of these funds.*

(forms of government)

**Trend**

Constitutional discussions have heightened Aboriginal demands for self-government and may have enhanced the non-Native community's understanding of this issue.

*'The politicians know about issues like abortion, capital punishment, etc., but not about native issues on self-government.'*

**Implications**

- *Aboriginal communities will govern and heal from within.*
- *Jurisdictional issues will inevitably arise.*
- *All service organizations need to consider how self-government could affect their agency.*

(service equity)

**Trend**

Métis and non-status Indians are lobbying for services and benefits comparable to those provided to Treaty Indians.

(justice and incarceration)

## Trend

A parallel system of justice is developing in some areas and there is increasing involvement with self-policing.

## Implications

*'We are tired of being the economic base for the jails. We need self-government and some of the public servant jobs for us.'*

- *Over-representation of Native people in the criminal justice system requires innovative programs and practices, laws and sanctions which are more culturally appropriate.*
- *Alternatives to incarceration are needed, such as Native community based supervision.*
- *Support and guidance from non-Native communities will be necessary.*

(racism)

## Trend

Racism continues against Native people. Among other things, this creates difficulty in obtaining adequate housing and employment.

## Implications

*'Negative self-image has likely been affected by racial stereotyping and/or prejudice.'*

- *Non-Native communities need to learn more about Native culture.*

(women)

## Trend

The trend toward Aboriginal women being providers of strength and direction for their community is significant.

(employment and human services)

**Trend**

Economic conditions in the future will result in fewer dollars available for social services, yet some Aboriginal needs will become more acute.

**Implications**

- *Increased short-term financial support to Native organizations may lead to less need for long-term assistance.*

(migration)

**Trend**

The economic conditions on reserves and settlements are pushing Natives to migrate into urban areas, especially youth. Large numbers settle in low-income parts of the city where housing may be more affordable. In addition to urban migration, Aboriginal population increases in urban centres can be attributed to a high birth rate due to the relative youth of the population.

**Implications**

- *There is a need for decent, affordable and accessible housing in low-income areas of the city.*

*'There is an increased migration from rural to urban, especially of Native youth.'*

(employment)

**Trend**

Because of the shortage of full time employment, many Aboriginal people will be compelled to work on a part-time or contract basis with few company benefits and little job security.

(employment)

## Trend

Unemployment rates are much higher in the Aboriginal community than in the community-at-large. There is a continuing need for job training, upgrading, employment placement and on-the-job support for Native people in urban areas, especially for youth.

*Unemployment rates are higher among Aboriginal people than for the population as a whole. Unemployment is particularly high for the inner city where many Aboriginal people live.*

## Implications

- Existing educational institutions are not equipped to accommodate growing demand for upgrading and training programs required by the urban Native population. Special curricula are needed.
- All levels of government will have to reorganize their education and training methods to address these needs.
- More Native liaison workers need to be hired and trained to deal with the home, school or job placement of Native people who have recently come to the city.
- One-stop service agencies should be considered to give information on key issues.

(post-secondary education)

## Trend

Employment and education equity programs directed to Aboriginal people will continue. This may cause resentment from other groups seeking work and/or entrance into post-secondary institutions.

## Implications

- Statistics on the numbers and composition of Native people living in, or moving to particular areas of the city need to be compiled. Funding priority should be to those areas with a high proportion of Aboriginal people.

(workforce)

## Trend

Aboriginal professionals are entering the workforce in greater numbers.

(planning and delivery)

## Trend

Aboriginal people want increased control in the planning and delivery of human services which affect them. More Native-specific services are needed, especially during recessionary times when eligibility criteria tend to be tightened.

*'Control should be with the Aboriginals, at both the development and operational stages of service delivery.'*

## Implications

- *Aboriginal people must be involved in policy making and implementation of new services and evaluating existing services.*
- *Networks should be created between existing Native serving agencies in order to improve coordination and decrease overlap of human service delivery.*
- *More services on reserves will be needed for Natives returning from cities. There will also be a great demand for trained Aboriginal staff.*

(child welfare)

## Trend

Aboriginal people are seeking to provide their own child welfare services and this trend will increase in the next few years.

*'When working with Aboriginal people, we must think of family; we can't separate children, youth, from parents, . . . all members of the extended family.'*

## Implications

- *Professional training must be provided to Native workers to ensure that they are equipped with the necessary skills to provide such services.*
- *Agencies offering only conventional social services will have to adapt and implement programs to accommodate the needs of the Aboriginal community.*
- *Native agencies are becoming significant service providers, but more financial resources are needed for programs.*



(service delivery)

## Trend

There is an increasing demand for a coordinated approach toward service delivery to Natives. There is also an increase in the number of Aboriginal human service organizations which offer cultural instruction as an intrinsic part of their program.

*'The idea is not to find solutions, but different directions (approaches). That's the Indian way.'*

## Implications

- *One priority of funding criteria should be on initiatives which enhance the personal empowerment and self reliance of Native peoples.*

(substance abuse)

## Trend

Increasing numbers of Aboriginal people are seeking help regarding substance abuse.

## Implications

- *The Aboriginal community wants and needs more support programs to deal with drug and alcohol addictions.*

(literacy)

## Trend

There is a lower literacy rate in the Native community than in the non-Native. Lower literacy of the English language is found in communities where Native languages are primarily used for daily communication.

*'Low level of education increases sense of isolation and negative image.'*

## Implications

- *Literacy programs have to be sensitive to the needs of Aboriginal students, including relating the provincial curriculum to Aboriginal students and using Aboriginal tutors as role models.*

# Human Services

(completing schooling)

## Trend

The junior high/high school drop-out rate continues to be high among Native youth.

## Implications

*'We need Native control of education, we need Boards made up of Natives.'*

- *Offering the history, culture and language of the Native people in school curriculums may keep young people interested in their schooling.*
- *The lack of adequate support given to Native families from existing organizations must be addressed. Agencies must assist Native families to better deal with parenting and other family-related concerns.*

# Health/Wellness/Culture

(role models)

## Trend

There is an increasing (but still inadequate) visibility of Native professionals and other positive role models.

## Implications

*'Aboriginal people must be better represented as teachers, counsellors, etc.'*

- *More positive role models are needed within the Aboriginal community.*

(mental health services)

## Trend

Increasing numbers of Native people are seeking mental health services.

# Health/Wellness/Culture

(wellness)

**Trend**

High rates of family violence, spousal abuse, incest, suicide and alcohol and drug abuse continue to hurt the Aboriginal community. There is also a disproportionate number of youth who become involved in prostitution.

**Implications**

*'We need a wholistic approach; mind-body-spirit.'*

*'Empowerment of traditional healers. Empowerment of our own definition of health/wellness.'*

- *Traditional Healing Centres must be more accessible.*
- *There is a need for Native people in the health fields to work as para-professionals alongside non-Native professionals.*
- *Agencies will have to change the delivery of services to be more sensitive to Native cultural issues.*
- *Effective teaching methods need to be developed for persons whose learning capabilities have been damaged by substance abuse.*
- *More assistance and education must be given to high risk people within the Native community, to take effective precautions to avoid sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, and to avoid unwanted pregnancy.*

(cultural identity)

**Trend**

In the Aboriginal community there is an increased awareness of cultural identity as Aboriginal people seek lifestyles that are socially relevant and meaningful. The role of elders, band leaders and Native cultural leaders is becoming increasingly important.

**Implications**

*'Teaching Aboriginal culture to teachers, counsellors, social workers and Aboriginal students in the school must be a priority.'*

- *Innovations, such as including Elders in program development and delivery, may be needed to encourage Aboriginal participation.*
- *There is a need to integrate Aboriginal based child care concepts into existing day care services. This would involve providing training to current staff as well as hiring more Aboriginal staff and/or volunteers in areas with high Aboriginal population.*

# Health/Wellness/Culture

(culture and spirituality)

**Trend**

Non-Aboriginal people are starting to become more aware of the culture, history and spirituality of Aboriginal people through increased media coverage and a stronger Native voice. Service providers and caregivers are trying harder to understand Native culture and spirituality.

*"There is still a division of Native and non-Native people. Multi-culturalism is not possible with ignorance."*

*"Tired of categorization. Let's stop the commercialization of 'Indianism'."*

("Aboriginal")

**Trend**

As the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities are made more aware of Aboriginal culture, a clearer and stronger definition of "Aboriginal" will develop along with recognition that "Aboriginals" are not a homogenous group.

# Summary of Responses Service Users and Others

A series of eight focus groups were held with Aboriginal adults and youth from different parts of the city and from differing social and economic backgrounds. Participants included university students, inner city youth, adults attending upgrading classes and others. The themes and comments were raised by people in our consultations. They may not necessarily represent the views of the editors or those of all the participants. A total of 92 participants, 40 adults and 52 youth, contributed to this important aspect of the study. Participating groups are listed at the end of this publication.

## What is it like to be an Aboriginal person in Edmonton?

### Adults

- it is difficult to adjust to the city when you first come from the reserve
- you're looked down upon
- doors are shut in your face
- life is good
- I'm proud to be Native
- lots of struggles — its a challenge to maintain a balance

### Youth

- more opportunity here than on the reserve — but also more racism
- hard to meet people/make friends if not in school
- easy to get into trouble if you are poor (crime, prostitution, drugs)
- subject to racial discrimination; being treated differently for skin color
- getting into fights with other kids trying to stick up for yourself or for a friend

## What have been the positive aspects/events in your life?

### Adults

- my children / parents / friends / spouse
- being involved in the Native community
- having self-esteem and confidence
- being able to stand up for myself
- loving someone
- spirituality
- having good health
- being employed and having a goal

### Youth

- pow-wows
- dancing
- being allowed back into school
- my family and friends
- learning about my culture from Elders
- things that make me proud to be Native

## What have been the negative aspects/events in your life?

### Adults

- having been involved in drugs/alcohol
- lack of money
- lack of support
- having a low self-esteem
- no one seeming to care
- the law (police, security guard, judges) picking on Native people
- getting the run-around from social workers
- few people taking leadership to make real changes in the Native community (a lot of talk but no action)
- having been a victim of child abuse
- having few positive Native role models

### Youth

- doing drugs/alcohol, partying too much
- getting pregnant
- lack of education about the Native culture
- suicide/death of Indian people I know
- the stereotype that people have about Natives, racism against Natives
- in stores, people look at you suspiciously if you are Native
- meeting and hanging around with the wrong people

## What are your goals?

### Adults

- to finish my education
- to learn more about my heritage
- help myself and others in personal development
- to get off welfare
- make our children aware of Native culture
- help our children finish high school
- to help change the way the system treats Native people
- to have a good career
- own a home
- be more involved in Native traditions
- work toward a career as a counsellor
- have a steady job
- to work with the government
- to get a high paying job with a Native organization

### Youth

- finish high school and go to college or university
- raise a family
- become a hair dresser; a professional Native dancer; a law enforcement officer; a Native counsellor; work with computers; learn about Native art
- get more involved with Native community
- learn more about my culture and teach others about it
- don't know (comment by several young students)

## What barriers might stop you from achieving your goals?

### Adults

- racism against Natives
- lack of money
- lack of education / skills
- inaccessibility to Native organizations
- lack of information about services and programs available to me
- lack of adequate day care for my children
- poor health conditions
- it's tough being poor, a single mother and also trying to upgrade in school
- other people thinking that Aboriginal people will take their jobs from them if employment equity programs are created

### Youth

- lack of money
- becoming pregnant
- ending up in a detention centre or jail
- lack of motivation and self-confidence
- becoming dependent on welfare
- violence, getting killed
- family problems
- not being able to get a job
- easy to make money other ways (crime)
- lack of role models
- it takes me an hour to get to school

## What services or policies might help you achieve your goals?

### Adults

- programs like this one ( Native Women's Pre-Employment Training Program)
- political support from the Native and/or non-Native community
- a one-stop Native Resource /Social Services Centre
- make training programs more accessible
- have quotas for Native students in colleges as well as universities
- consulting with Native people about service needs before developing more programs
- to offer accessible parenting classes
- a policy to ensure the coordination of Native funding and service agencies
- to have more treatment centres like Poundmakers Lodge, but in the city
- to open more housing projects that provide safe, affordable housing
- educating non-Natives about Natives to increase awareness and decrease racism

### Youth

- Friendship Centre
- W.O.W. Programs (Work Oriented Workshops)
- Native Counselling/Peer Counselling
- Life skills courses
- AADAC (Alcohol and Drug Abuse Centre)
- more classes for (Native) kids who have difficulty in school
- safe recreational activities for kids (social clubs)
- support groups for Aboriginal children
- job training programs for Natives on reserve

## **Respondents and Focus Groups Participants**

Chester Cunningham	Nancy Byway	Jackie Fiala
Patricia Hebert	Susan Chorney	Ann Harvey
Brian Fayant	Pat Ehman	Tim Collins
Pat Dellaire	Thersa Willier	Patrick Bernard
Gordon Watson	Normajeane McGuire	Lauri Baldwin
Stan Plante	Tara-Leigh Barker	Ina Flipsen
Audrey Pacha	Diane Paul	Luella Massey
Ann Krahn	Sharon Long	Alice Altopiedi
Michael Rutherford	Jerry Vossos	Georgina Donald
Steve Ramsankar	Maureen Collins	Sam Sinclair
Doreen L'Hirondelle	Howard Sapers	Mike Heron
Carol Hutchings	V.E. (Vern) Colley	Melony Desjardis
Hugh Nicholson	Mark McCallum	Elaine Ross
Irene Feika	Chris Cruikshank	Don McMahan
Debbie Cashion-Kalinowski	Jennifer Kain	Rocky Sinclair
Teri House	Rev. Philip Behman	Sharon Richardson
Jane Martin	Sonja Jardine	Nova Laurin
Janet Meddings	Rose-Marie McCarthy	Richard Arcand
Margaret Duncan	Fran Wolver	

## **Focus Groups**

United Way Way Focus Groups Summary  
University of Alberta Aboriginal Students Association  
Focus Group Summary, May 12, 1992  
Ben Calf Robe Junior High School  
St. Joseph High School  
McCauley School  
N.A.I.T. Public Forum with students of the Management Training Program  
Native Women's Pre-Employment Training Program

## **Members of the Community Trends Working Group**

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Michelle McGeough	Pratima Rao	Luciana Pizzi
Carlos Pilquil	Sheila Kushniruk	Don Taylor
Eleanor Fisher	Dennis Lazarowich	Donna Rempel
Betty Vepstas	Karen Bardy	Jonathan Murphy