



First Call is a partner in the [Economic Security Project](#), a joint initiative of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA-BC) and Simon Fraser University. The Economic Security Project is a five year research project that was launched in January 2004, and is focused on examining how public policy changes in BC have affected the economic well-being of British Columbians and particularly vulnerable populations, including children and families.

To date, CCPA-BC has published 10 reports and studies as part of the Economic Security Project as well as numerous press releases, editorials, and “Behind the Numbers” fact sheets; many of these are relevant to the work of First Call and its coalition partners, particularly in relation to three of First Call’s Four Keys to Success for children and youth:

- Support for youth transitions
- Safe and caring communities
- Increased economic equality.

An overview of the findings of the Economic Security Project that focus on public policy changes affecting youth transitions in BC and links to these publications is provided below.

In the 1990’s, poor families in BC became poorer while rich families got richer, exacerbating economic inequality (see [New Perspectives on Income Inequality in BC](#)).

Significant changes to welfare policy have resulted in increased difficulty in accessing income assistance, particularly for the most vulnerable populations (see [Denied Assistance: Closing the Front Door on Welfare in BC](#)). [Denied Assistance](#) concludes that, while some unsuccessful welfare applicants are able to find employment, others “are being diverted to homelessness, greater financial insecurity and vulnerability.” These unsuccessful applicants include young people who are unable to access welfare based on the two-year independence test implemented in 2002; many young people have simply not had the opportunity to work enough to meet this requirement.

First Call has found that virtually no research went into the 2002 changes to welfare policy that has impacted the economic equality of many BC families. [Budget Savings on the Backs of the Poor](#) details how cuts and “claw backs” affect families on welfare; specifically, funding for shelter has been significantly reduced from its already low rate for families of 3 or more, cuts to benefits for single parent families means a parent with two children is receiving \$90 less per month in benefits, and cancellation of the spousal support exemption means that a single parent can no longer keep any amount of child maintenance from their former spouse.



[A Better Way to Set Welfare Rates](#) looks at income assistance from a “basket of goods” approach, detailing more realistic welfare rates for families of various sizes that take into account real costs of housing and supplying nutritious food for a growing family.

Other recent public policy changes made since 2003 negatively impact the families of health care support workers (many of whom are women) with lower wages, stressful working environments, and lack of time and energy to spend with their children (see [The Pains of Privatization: How Contracting Out Hurts Health Support Workers, Their Families, and Health Care](#)).

Changes to the welfare system and other public policy changes made in the last several years disproportionately affected vulnerable populations, including children, families, and single mothers.

Follow these links for more information on the Economic Security Project and findings related to [safe and caring communities](#) and the [support for youth transitions](#).