



# NEWS RELEASE

## 99% of Canadians who graduate high school, get full-time work, and don't have children until in a committed relationship avoid poverty

March 26, 2019  
For immediate release

**VANCOUVER**—Canadians who graduate high school, secure any kind of full-time employment and wait to have children until in a committed relationship have a 99 per cent chance of avoiding long-term poverty, finds a new study released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“Too often, poverty advocates and governments focus on policies that affect the poor instead of trying to understand and address those factors that cause long-term poverty in the first place,” said Christopher Sarlo, Fraser Institute senior fellow, economics professor at Nipissing University and author of *Causes of Poverty*.

The study finds that just 0.9 per cent of Canadians who finished high school, got a full-time job and waited to have children until they were in committed relationships lived in long-term poverty—defined as having income below the estimated cost of life's basic necessities, such as healthy food, rent, hygiene supplies, clothing, etc.

Conversely, the poverty rate jumps significantly for Canadians without full-time employment (14 per cent) and for all single-parent households (11.7 per cent for female-headed single-parent families, 3 per cent for male-headed single-parent families).

“The evidence is clear—there are certain societal norms that, if followed, are key to avoiding long-term poverty,” Sarlo said.

“Before government enacts policies to combat poverty, policymakers should first understand what factors lead to poverty.”

This is the first study in a new series exploring the underlying causes of long-term poverty.

**The poverty rate for Canadians by household type (2015)**

All households	5.5%
Reference person not employed full-time	14%
Reference person employed full-time	1.7%
Two-parent families with children	2.4%
Single-parent families (female headed)	11.7%
Single-parent families (female headed) where the head of household employed full time	2.8%
Single-parent families (male headed)	3%
Two-parent families whose reference person is employed full-time and graduated high school	0.9%

**MEDIA CONTACT:**  
Christopher Sarlo, Senior Fellow  
Fraser Institute

*To arrange media interviews or for more information, please contact:*

Bryn Weese, Media Relations Specialist, Fraser Institute

(604) 688-0221 Ext. 589

[bryn.weese@fraserinstitute.org](mailto:bryn.weese@fraserinstitute.org)

Follow the Fraser Institute on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

The Fraser Institute is an independent Canadian public policy research and educational organization with offices in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal and ties to a global network of think-tanks in 87 countries. Its mission is to improve the quality of life for Canadians, their families and future generations by studying, measuring and broadly communicating the effects of government policies, entrepreneurship and choice on their well-being. To protect the Institute's independence, it does not accept grants from governments or contracts for research. Visit [www.fraserinstitute.org](http://www.fraserinstitute.org)