

## ISSUE

We all need a social safety net when times are tough and work is hard to find. Employment Insurance used to be there for the majority of unemployed workers—but no longer. Today, if you're out of a job, you're also probably out of luck. Young workers, women, immigrants and residents in large cities are especially left out in the cold with the lowest rates of EI access.

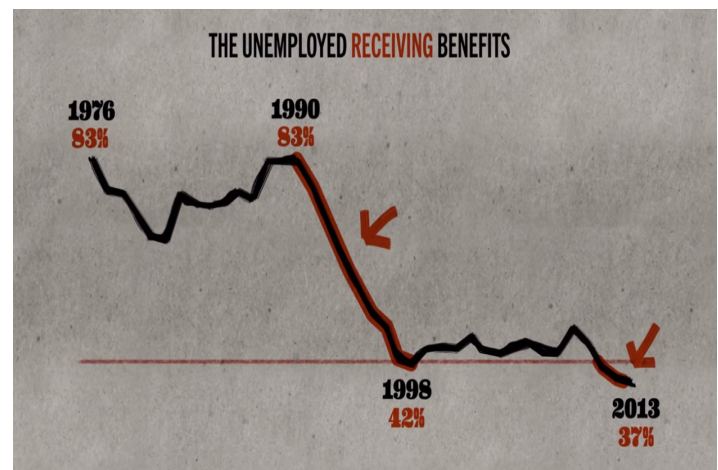
## CONTEXT

From 1976 to 1990, an average of 76% of unemployed workers received EI benefits. In 2012, it was down to just 39% of unemployed workers. Despite paying into the EI system, most unemployed workers no longer benefit from it. New EI regulations that took effect in January 2013 have made it even harder for people to receive adequate benefits to help find a job. After six weeks of unemployment, three-quarters of beneficiaries are now required to accept a job outside of their usual occupation, with a salary 20-30% lower than their previous salary and located up to one hour from their home. With the dramatic rise in temporary, short-term contract work, it's particularly difficult for workers to accumulate the required number of work hours to qualify for EI. New workers, newcomers to Canada and workers returning to the labour market face the greatest hurdle where 910 hours are required to qualify.

The EI program is financed entirely from the mandatory contributions of workers and employers. No public funds are used. Workers pay into the system and should be able to benefit from it in times of need. We need to make the system work for all workers. It's only fair.

## QUESTIONS

- How will your party ensure that Canadians have access to EI benefits when they are unemployed?
- What will your party do to remove barriers that young workers, women, immigrants and residents in large cities face in accessing EI?



Source: Public Service Alliance of Canada (2013)

## RESOURCES

For more information and additional fact sheets in this series: <http://spno.ca/canada-votes-2015>