



Canada Social Report

# Federal Policy Monitor

June 2013



CANADA SOCIAL REPORT



The [Caledon Institute of Social Policy](#) regularly scans for the release of federal government policies and programs that impact areas of interest, including income security, disabilities, health, housing, poverty reduction, recreation, seniors and youth.

Monitors can be searched on the Canada Social Report website by date and category.

#### ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Details released of the \$241 million in new funding to help First Nation youth ages 18 to 24 get personalized job and skills training. Investments will be targeted to First Nation youth receiving Income Assistance. An additional \$132 million over four years for Enhanced Service Delivery will support First Nations in identifying individuals' employment needs and in overcoming barriers to employment. First Nation organizations that receive funding for enhanced service delivery must implement mandatory participation in personalized case management for Income Assistance recipients. This approach is consistent with existing social assistance programming in provinces and territories. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada will incrementally implement the initiative across the country, starting with communities that are most ready and willing, and where there are specific opportunities to access the job market.

The government will also be increasing the availability of training services through a new First Nations Job Fund. This fund will provide \$109 million over four years so that Active Measures participants will have access to necessary training and employment services support, such as skills assessments, personalized training and job coaching. The fund will be administered by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada through its Aboriginal Skills, Employment and Training Strategy.

<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1371048149693/1371048172737>

Five pieces of legislation aimed at increasing opportunities for Aboriginal people and northerners have received Royal Assent to date in 2013:

- the *Northern Jobs and Growth Act* – to bring efficiency to the regulatory and environmental review processes for major northern projects
- the *First Nations Financial Transparency Act* – requires First Nation governments to publish the annual audited consolidated financial statements they already prepare as well as a schedule of chiefs and councillors' salaries and expenses in line with accounting standards and other levels of government in Canada
- the *Family Homes on Reserves and Matrimonial Interests or Rights Act* – enhances the rights and protections offered to First Nations living on reserve, particularly women and children in the event of a relationship breakdown, divorce or death. Until now, women and children living on reserve lacked those legal protections enjoyed by all other Canadians
- the *Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act* – will enable safe on-reserve drinking water and wastewater treatment by developing regulatory safeguards
- *Yale First Nation Final Agreement Act* – brings into effect the Yale First Nation Final Agreement. The Final Agreement includes 1,966 hectares of treaty settlement lands, a capital transfer of \$10.7 million, and greater self-sufficiency and decision-making powers through self-government for the Yale First Nation in BC.

<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1371671557056/1371671592594>



## DISABILITY

Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) has received \$600,000 in funding through the federal government's New Horizons for Seniors Program. CACL will develop community responses across Canada related to the abuse of older people with disabilities and people who are deaf. The project engages communities to develop tools, resources and best practices on awareness and prevention of elder abuse. In addition, older individuals with disabilities and their families will develop individual safety plans to support them in their communities.

[Link](#)

Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) opened a Barrier Free Transitional Accommodation unit to assist recovering seriously injured CAF members from the Winnipeg region. Part of the Legacy of Care funding initiative announced in September 2010, the unit is intended to accommodate seriously injured CAF members who are receiving regular, specialized treatment in a geographical location other than that of their principal residence. There are currently eight Barrier-Free Transitional Accommodations units that are ready for use and an additional three units are currently under development.

[Link](#)

## FAMILIES

Expansion of the Adoption Expense Tax Credit. The period during which parents are able to claim certain expenses will be extended. Parents will be able to claim initial costs that were not previously eligible, such as fees for provincially-required home studies and mandatory adoption courses, because such expenses were incurred prior to when the child was matched with his or her adoptive family.

<http://www.fin.gc.ca/n13/13-082-eng.asp>

## GOVERNANCE

Launch of the federal government's Open Data Portal ([www.data.gc.ca](http://www.data.gc.ca)). The site contains datasets compiled by 20 departments and agencies, covering topics that include housing, health and environmental data. The site includes targeted search capabilities and a Developers Corner, where Open Data developers can access specific technical information to assist them in creating user-friendly applications. The Portal also features the new Open Government Licence, which offers unrestricted re-use of government data and information.

[Link](#)

The Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) (interim) has posted the data received from federal departments and agencies related to Information Request IR0113 on the website Fiscal Savings from Budget 2012 - Data. Key elements of the PBO information request remain unfulfilled. The additional information will be posted if and when it is provided by the government.

[http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/files/files/IR113\\_EN\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/files/files/IR113_EN_FINAL.pdf)

The final devolution agreement was signed between the federal government and the Government of the Northwest Territories. The final agreement will provide jurisdiction over lands and resources, give residents control over their own destiny and create the conditions for economic growth, jobs and long-term prosperity for the people of the Northwest Territories. The parties are working toward April 2014 for the transfer of responsibilities to the territorial government.

<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1372178557539/1372178592781>

## HEALTH

Signing of the 10-year Canada Funding Agreement (CFA). The \$4.7 billion agreement will enable the BC First Nations Health Authority (BC FNHA) to assume responsibility for design and delivery of health programs and services for British Columbia First Nations. The phased transfer of responsibilities from Health Canada to the BC FNHA supports the integration of health service delivery for BC First Nations with provincial health services. It will be initiated on July 2, 2013 and completed in October 2013.

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hcs-sss/pubs/cha-lcs/2013-cha-lcs-ar-ra/index-eng.php>

Launch of the Plain Language Labelling Initiative, which aims to improve the safe use of drugs by making drug labels and safety information easier to read and understand.

<http://www.terenceyoung.com/newsletter/june-2013/government-launches-plain-language-labelling-initiative.html>

Launch of a new mobile application that will assist veterans, personnel of the Canadian Armed Forces, and members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police with operational stress injuries (OSIs). The application, called OSI Connect, provides information and assistance for people living with post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and other types of OSIs, as well as their family members. The application is also a resource for professionals who work with individuals who could be suffering from an OSI. They include physicians, nurses, psychologists, psychiatrists, teachers, social workers and community workers at detox centres and homeless shelters. OSI Connect is free and available in English and French (Connexion TSO) from iTunes, BlackBerry and Android app stores.

[Link](#)

Funding for nine innovative projects that will help children, youth and their families achieve and maintain healthier weights and healthier lifestyles in their communities.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-eng.do?mthd=tp&crtr.page=2&nid=753089&crtr.tp1D=1>

## HOUSING

Further details announced regarding Budget 2013's commitment to Affordable Housing. More than \$1.25 billion in federal funding will be



made available over five years to renew the Investment in Affordable Housing to 2019; \$100 million, over two years, to support the construction of about 250 housing units in Nunavut; and \$119 million per year over five years, nearly \$600 million in total, to the Homelessness Partnering Strategy using a Housing First approach.

<http://www.schl.ca/en/corp/hero/here/2013/2013-06-08-1230.cfm>

The average rental apartment vacancy rate in Canada's 35 major centres increased to 2.7 percent in April 2013 from 2.3 percent in April 2012, according to the spring Rental Market Survey released by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The survey reveals that the major centres with the lowest vacancy rates in April 2013 were Edmonton and Calgary (1.2 percent each) and St. John's (1.5 percent). The major centres with the highest vacancy rates were Saint John (10.4 percent), Charlottetown (8.7 percent) and Moncton (7.4 percent).

<http://www.schl.ca/en/corp/hero/here/2013/2013-06-20-0815.cfm>

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation expects housing starts to regain momentum in the later part of the year and/or into 2014. Overall, total annual housing starts are expected to be lower in 2013 compared to 2012, mostly due to moderation observed in the first half of 2013.

<http://www.schl.ca/en/corp/hero/here/2013/2013-06-25-0816.cfm>

The vacancy rate for standard spaces, which dominate seniors' residences in Canada, decreased slightly over the past year, reaching 10.3 percent in 2013 compared to 10.6 percent in 2012.

<http://www.schl.ca/en/corp/hero/here/2013/2013-06-27-0816.cfm>

#### INCOME SECURITY

The new federal income support for parents of critically ill children is now available through the Employment Insurance program (the *Helping Families in Need Act*).

[Link](#)