



Canada Social Report

Federal Policy Monitor

November 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

The *Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act* has come into effect. Regulations supporting the Act are being developed on a region-by-region basis and will be phased in over time. This initiative will give First Nations and the government the time necessary to bring infrastructure and capacity to the level required to meet the regulations. Between 2006 and 2012, 177 government-funded major water and wastewater projects were completed by 152 First Nations (a major project is one that costs over \$1.5 million). Total Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada investment in these projects was \$846.6 million between 2006 and 2012. In 2011-2012, 402 major and minor First Nation water and wastewater infrastructure projects were started, and 32 major capital projects to build or significantly upgrade water and waste systems were completed.

<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1383314534258/1383314730710>

The government is taking action to strengthen emergency management support in order to ensure that all residents of First Nation communities receive emergency services comparable to those that protect every other Canadian. The government will:

- create a new single-window for First Nations to secure funding for emergency costs, including those previously supported under the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements, which will eliminate overlap and provide First Nations and provinces/ territories improved access to emergency funding when needed
- allocate \$19.1 million from within the government's resources to facilitate negotiation and implementation of new or renewed agreements with provinces/territories and support emergency preparedness activities, including the development of emergency management plans for First Nation communities
- commit stable funding for response and recovery activities which, in turn, would provide greater certainty to First Nations and provinces/ territories, and confirm our commitment to address their needs
- revise the Emergency Management Assistance Program to provide greater clarity about expense eligibility and strengthen program management.

<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1384884225369/1384884351019>

New data from the *Aboriginal Peoples Survey* reveal that 72 percent of First Nations people living off reserve, 42 percent of Inuit and 77 percent of Métis ages 18 to 44 had a high school diploma or equivalent in 2012. Of these high school graduates 14 percent of off-reserve First Nations people, 15 percent of Inuit and 9 percent of Métis had left school at least once before later returning to obtain a high school diploma. This first release of data from the 2012 *Aboriginal Peoples Survey* provides insights into factors associated with staying in or dropping out of school, how educational background can affect work experiences, and plans for



further schooling among First Nations people living off reserve, Inuit and Métis ages 18 to 44.

A detailed analysis is available in the article “The Education and Employment Experiences of First Nations People Living Off Reserve, Inuit, and Métis: Selected Findings from the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey.” <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/131125/dq131125-eng.pdf>

CHILDREN

Introduction of legislation to address criminal behaviour associated with cyberbullying. It would:

- prohibit the non-consensual distribution of intimate images
- empower a court to order the removal of intimate images from the Internet
- permit the court to order forfeiture of the computer, cell phone or other device used in the offence
- provide for reimbursement to victims for costs incurred in removing the intimate image from the Internet or elsewhere
- empower the court to make an order to prevent someone from distributing intimate images.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=793819>

EDUCATION

The Auditor General of Canada report states that the Nunavut Department of Education has not adequately managed most aspects of the implementation of the *Education Act*.

http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/mr_20131119_e_38779.html

Further, the Auditor General concludes that the departments of Education, and Community and Government Services are not fulfilling their key responsibilities related to the safety of schools and childcare facilities.

http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/mr_20131119_e_38778.html

EMPLOYMENT

Statistics Canada’s Labour Force Survey results, October 2013: Employment was little changed for the second consecutive month and the unemployment rate remained at 6.9 percent in October. Compared with October 2012, employment increased by 1.2 percent or 214,000, with gains in full-time and part-time work. Over the same period, the number of hours worked rose by 1.4 percent.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/131108/dq131108-eng.pdf>

GOVERNANCE

The Parliamentary Budget Office released “Supplementary Estimates (B) 2013-14,” a report which made the following points:

- these Supplementary Estimates are seeking approval of a further \$5.4 billion in expenditures for the current fiscal year, which would increase total budgetary authorities to approximately \$259.9 billion. This is slightly higher than the total budgetary authorities sought in the previous year (0.3 percent).
- more than half of the proposed increase pertains to increased transfer payments and subsidies to third-parties (e.g., negotiation of First Nations’ specific claims) and other levels of government (e.g., reimbursement of costs related to natural disasters). The remainder primarily pertains to increases in departments’ and agencies’ operating budgets, in particular for personnel expenses (e.g., termination of accumulated severance benefits).
- the Supplementary Estimates also contain a substantial number of the new spending measures announced in Economic Action Plan 2013 (22 measures, valued at more than \$925 million), including the enhancement to Veterans’ funeral benefits
- the government has been unable to spend approximately \$10 billion of the budgetary authorities provided by Parliament over each of the past three years. Parliamentarians may wish to seek clarification regarding why this level of unspent money remains so high, what measures will be undertaken by departments and agencies to ensure that spending directed by Parliament occurs and whether all of the \$5.4 billion sought in these Supplementary Estimates is actually required.

[http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/files/files/2013-14%20Supplementary%20Estimates%20\(B\)%20Report_EN.pdf](http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/files/files/2013-14%20Supplementary%20Estimates%20(B)%20Report_EN.pdf)

The Auditor General’s November 26 report identified several areas of concern with respect to service delivery:

- the government has not significantly expanded its online service offerings since 2005, though some departments have introduced new services or enhanced existing functionalities
- the integration of service delivery and the sharing of information among departments are limited
- the government has introduced services to enable individuals to interact online with departments securely. However, multiple steps are required to set up a secure account and then enrol in a program, the latter of which users must repeat for each department from which they receive services
- while industry standards and other governments have identified that the delivery of services online is less expensive than other methods, the government does not actively analyze and report this information. There is no government-wide strategy to guide departments on how online services should be delivered, and not all departments have



developed integrated service delivery strategies that have identified key factors such as costs, benefits, and consideration of client expectations.

http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag-_201311_02_e_38796.html

HEALTH

The 2011/2012 and 2012 Canadian Community Health Survey: Public Use Microdata Files are now available from Statistics Canada. During 2011 and 2012, data were collected from approximately 130,000 respondents ages 12 or older, residing in households in all provinces and territories. The files provide data for 109 health regions or combined health regions across the country and include information on a wide range of topics including: physical activity, height and weight, smoking, exposure to second hand smoke, alcohol consumption, general health, chronic health conditions, injuries and use of health care services. It also provides information on the sociodemographic, income and labour force characteristics of the population.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/131113/dq131113-eng.pdf>

\$4 million in funding for credential recognition projects that are designed to attract, retain and help Canadian and internationally-trained nurses get jobs in their field faster, anywhere in Canada.

[Link](#)

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency joined the Health portfolio in October 2013. With the release of the Auditor General's November 26 report, the Agency has accepted all 11 of the report's recommendations and completed one of them – better monitoring of corrective action requests.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-eng.do?mthd=tp&crtr.page=1&nid=795579&crtr.tp1D=1>

HOUSING

Statistics Canada reports the New Housing Price Index was unchanged in September, following a 0.1 percent advance in August. A monthly price increase in Calgary was offset by a decline in Edmonton, resulting in no change to the Canada level index.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/131114/dq131114-eng.pdf>

Beginning November 21, 2013, social housing providers whose operating agreements allow for the establishment of a Subsidy Surplus Fund (SSF) can now retain any money they may have in this fund to use after their operating agreements mature. These funds can be used to lower the cost of housing for low-income households living in existing social housing including individuals, families, seniors, persons with disabilities and Aboriginal people.

The SSF is a component of some operating agreements entered into between CMHC and non-profit and co-operative housing providers. The

Fund is established by housing providers so that they can retain unused federal funding, up to a certain limit to lower rents for low-income households. This change will apply retroactively. This means that for housing providers whose agreements have already matured and who have repaid CMHC amounts that remained in their SSF at time of maturity, CMHC will refund the funds it collected, provided the project continues to be owned and operated by the social housing provider.

<http://www.schl.ca/en/corp/nero/here/2013/2013-11-21-1315.cfm>

INCOME SECURITY

Statistics Canada reports the rate of eligibility for receiving regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits in 2012 was 81.9 percent, up from 78.4 percent in 2011 and similar to rates observed prior to the 2008-09 recession. The most notable change from 2011 was a higher eligibility rate for those ages 25 to 44, returning it to historical averages.

In 2012, 808,000 unemployed individuals contributed to the EI program, down from 867,000 a year earlier. Of the 808,000 contributors, about 629,000 had a job separation that met the EI program criteria. Of those, 515,000 or 81.9 percent had worked enough hours and were eligible to receive EI, up from 78.4 percent in 2011. The rate in 2012 was similar to rates observed from 2003 to 2008, but lower than the high of 86.2 percent recorded in 2009, during the recession.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/131115/dq131115-eng.pdf>

Statistics Canada reports that following three months of little change, the number of people receiving regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits decreased slightly in September (-1.4 percent or -7,100) to 503,800. Compared with September 2012, the number of beneficiaries was down 8.8 percent.

The slight monthly decrease nationally did not mirror variations observed at the provincial level, as British Columbia and Ontario posted notable declines in September, while Saskatchewan and Alberta exhibited smaller declines. At the same time, there were more beneficiaries in Quebec and Manitoba as well as in the Atlantic provinces.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/131121/dq131121-eng.pdf>

SENIORS

Members of the National Seniors Council met in Toronto with seniors' organizations, service and health providers, as well as researchers and practitioners from across Ontario, for the first of a series of cross-Canada round tables assessing how social isolation affects seniors and how best to tackle the issue in Canada.

[Link](#)

The Financial Consumer Agency of Canada has developed Living in retirement, a comprehensive free guide that covers a variety of financial matters that many seniors will face.

<http://www.fin.gc.ca/n13/13-149-eng.asp>



According to preliminary Statistics Canada estimates, 5,379,600 Canadians, or 15.3 percent of the country's population, were ages 65 and over on July 1, 2013. This proportion has risen steadily since the beginning of the 1960s mainly because of fertility rates persistently below the replacement level and increasing life expectancy. In 1960, the proportion of Canadians aged 65 and over was 7.6 percent.

As of July 1, 2013, the median age of the Canadian population was 40.2 years. The median age was higher for women (41.1 years) than men (39.4 years). This difference is largely explained by a persistent, although diminishing, gap in life expectancy in favour of women.

Canada has one of the lowest proportion of seniors among G8 countries. At 15.3 percent, its proportion remains below that registered in Japan (25.0 percent), Germany (21.0 percent), Italy (21.0 percent), France (17.0 percent) and the United Kingdom (16.0 percent). However, it is higher than those recorded in the United States (14.0 percent) and Russia (13.0 percent).

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/131125/dq131125-eng.pdf>