



Canada Social Report

Federal Policy Monitor

February 2014



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

Changes to the Urban Aboriginal Strategy will consolidate four programs into two and give greater support to the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) for the delivery of the programs. The federal government will be providing \$43 million per year over the next two years to the NAFC for the delivery of funding to organizations offering programs and services that align with the Government's priority of increasing the participation of urban Aboriginal peoples in the economy. The new approach is designed to achieve greater efficiency and reduced duplication.

<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1391702890285/1391703099560>

Budget 2014 renews the federal government's First Nation Water and Wastewater Action Plan commitments, allocating \$323.4 million over the next two years.

<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1392645668037/1392646057859>

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Employment-related highlights include:

- launch of the Canada Job Grant and an enhanced Job Matching Service
- introduction of a new Canada Apprentice Loan to help registered apprentices in Red Seal trades with the cost of training
- investment in the on-reserve education system, in partnership with First Nations, through the *First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act*
- investment in programs to help older workers and persons with disabilities access the labour market
- new paid internships for young Canadians entering the job market
- \$1.5 billion over the next 10 years for the Canada First Research Excellence Fund for post-secondary research.

Family- and community-related highlights include:

- increasing the Adoption Expense Tax Credit to help make adoption more affordable for Canadian families.
- acupuncturists' and naturopathic doctors' professional services now exempted from the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax
- \$390 million investment in food safety
- \$300 million to bring faster broadband internet to rural and Northern Canada
- \$200 million to establish a National Disaster Mitigation Program
- announcement of a new Search and Rescue Volunteers Tax Credit.

<http://www.fin.gc.ca/n14/14-019-eng.asp>



CHILDREN

The Auditor General reports that Yukon Territory is not adequately fulfilling several of its key responsibilities for the protection and well-being of at-risk children, youth and their families. The audit found that the Department involves First Nations as required under the *Child and Family Services Act*, and it develops plans for most families and children when it receives reports of children needing protection. However, most of these plans were not reviewed and updated as required under the Act. The Department also did not ensure that all children in its care or custody received annual medical and dental examinations, or that foster homes were reviewed annually. The audit noted weaknesses in performance measurement, data collection, and information analysis.

http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/mr_20140218_e_39085.html

Nine new measures introduced to better protect children from a range of sexual offences and exploitation at home and abroad.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=819379>

\$350,000 in funding for the Vancouver Child and Youth Advocacy Centre (CYAC) Society to establish a new centre to provide services to young victims of abuse and their families. This new project builds on work done by Family Services of Greater Vancouver between 2011 and 2013 that brought together key partner organizations to identify the needs in the Greater Vancouver area and explore the feasibility of establishing a CYAC.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=823339>

COMMUNITIES

Statistics Canada releases Canada's population estimates for sub-provincial areas. It reported that on July 1, 2013, 24,517,700 people – or more than two-thirds (69.7 percent) of the Canadian population – were living in a census metropolitan area (CMA). Canada's three largest CMAs together (Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver) were home to more than one in three Canadians (35.2 percent).

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140226/dq140226-eng.pdf>

DISABILITY

Yukon and Northwest Territories sign on to the new Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities (LMAPDs), which are designed to improve employment prospects for Canadians with disabilities and better meet the needs of Canadian businesses. This is also the first time that these agreements have been available to the Territories. Under this agreement, the Government of Canada will provide \$1.25 million per year to each jurisdiction, a contribution that will be matched by the territory.

[Link](#)

EDUCATION

Statistics Canada study that followed a group of men and women for two decades reports found that men who had obtained a bachelors degree by 1991 had earned, on average, \$732,000 more than those whose

education ended at a high school diploma. For women, the difference between the two groups was \$448,000.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140227/dq140227-eng.pdf>

EMPLOYMENT

Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey reported that employment rose by 29,000 in January, the result of an increase in full-time work. The unemployment rate declined 0.2 percentage points to 7.0 percent. Over the past 12 months, employment increased 0.8 percent or 146,000 and the number of hours worked rose 0.7 percent. During the same period, the employment rate fell 0.3 percentage points to 61.6 percent as employment grew at a slower pace than the population.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140207/dq140207-eng.pdf>

FAMILIES

Statistics Canada announced the release of the analytical paper "Parenting and Child Support After Separation or Divorce," available through the publication *Spotlight on Canadians: Results from the General Social Survey*. The report used data from the 2011 General Social Survey on Families and examined parenting decisions in the wake of a marital or common-law breakup, including child residency, time-sharing, and decision-making. It also explored financial support arrangements for the child, including payment amounts and schedules. The paper focused on individuals who had separated from a legal marriage, separated from a common-law relationship or divorced in the 20 years prior to the survey, and who also had children aged 18 or younger at the time of the survey.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140212/dq140212-eng.pdf>

GOVERNANCE

Parliamentary Budget Office publishes *Supplementary Estimates (C) 2013-14*. The report includes details of delays in implementing key government priorities: "More than \$37 million planned to clean up Contaminated Sites, \$33 million to build schools for First Nations and \$32 million to maintain the seaworthiness of Coast Guard ships will be pushed to future years – rather than invested in the current fiscal year – as originally planned and approved by Parliament."

[Link](#)

HEALTH

Veterans Affairs Canada will invest \$2 million over 10 years to move and expand the Operational Stress Injury Clinic in Winnipeg from 5,000 to 10,000 square feet to meet the growing demand for mental health services.

[Link](#)

\$6.5 million in funding to McMaster University for a project to study the use of team-based care as a way to achieve better health outcomes for patients and make the system more cost effective. Teams Advancing Patient Experience: Strengthening Quality – TAPESTRY – will examine how changing the way a primary healthcare team operates and interacts



with its patients can improve the quality and efficiency of primary health-care services. By integrating resources such as community volunteers, eHealth technologies and system navigation, TAPESTRY will support patient-centred care and stronger connections to community services. http://fhs.mcmaster.ca/main/news/news_2014/tapestry_project_announcement.html

INCOME SECURITY

The federal government announced changes to the Employment Insurance (EI) program to align the administration of the program in the North with the rest of Canada. Since the 1970s, the unemployment rate used for EI in the Territories has been fixed at 25 percent. According to Statistics Canada, the January 2014 unemployment rate was 6.3 percent in Yukon, 8.0 percent in the Northwest Territories and 13.1 percent in Nunavut. These rates are all well below the current administratively-set 25 percent unemployment rate used in the territories for EI purposes. Accordingly, as of October 2014, the federal government will remove the 25 percent unemployment rate and will use the actual unemployment rate in the Territories for calculating benefits under the EI program, as is in the rest of the country.

[Link](#)

Changes announced to the Employment Insurance program to ensure it better reflects Prince Edward Island's local economy. Beginning October 2014, Prince Edward Island will be divided into two EI regions – a capital region and a non-capital region. This reflects the fact that job opportunities for Islanders differ significantly between Charlottetown and non-urban areas of Prince Edward Island.

[Link](#)

Statistics Canada released Employment Insurance (EI) figures for December 2013. That month, 514,200 people received EI benefits, little changed from November. The number of beneficiaries has been relatively stable since May 2013, following a long-term downward trend that began in the summer of 2009. Saskatchewan and Alberta posted an increase in the number of people receiving regular EI benefits in December, while there were fewer beneficiaries in New Brunswick. There was little change in the other provinces.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140220/dq140220-eng.pdf>

Statistics Canada's Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 1.5 percent in the 12 months to January, following a 1.2 percent increase in December. The year-over-year increase in the CPI was led by higher shelter costs, which rose 2.1 percent in January. This followed a 1.9 percent gain in December. Electricity prices increased 4.7 percent in the 12 months to January, after rising 4.1 percent the previous month. Consumers also paid more for rent (+1.6 percent) and for homeowners home and mortgage insurance (+5.4 percent) in January compared with the same month a year earlier. The mortgage interest cost index decreased 0.6 percent on a year-over-year basis in January, the smallest decline since May 2012.

On a monthly basis, the index posted its third consecutive increase, rising 0.2 percent. Of the eight major components, seven recorded gains in the 12 months to January. In addition to higher shelter costs, price increases for transportation and for food contributed the most to the rise in the CPI. The health and personal care index was the only component to decline on a year-over-year basis in January.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140221/dq140221-eng.pdf>

Statistics Canada released payroll employment, earnings and hours report to December 2013. Average weekly earnings of non-farm payroll employees were \$933 in December, up 0.9 percent from the previous month. On a year-over-year basis, weekly earnings increased 2.9 percent.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140227/dq140227-eng.pdf>

WOMEN

Statistics Canada released findings of the Transition Home Survey (THS), a national biennial survey of residential facilities providing shelter to abused women and their children. The objective of the THS is to collect data that present a profile of residential services for abused women and their children during the previous 12 months, as well as provide information on the clientele being served. On April 18, 2012, the THS identified 601 shelters for abused women operating across Canada. On that snapshot date, there were 4,566 women and 3,570 dependent children residing in these facilities. Almost three-quarters of these women (74 percent) were at the shelters primarily because of abuse, representing a rate of 23 women per 100,000 women ages 15 and older in Canada.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140227/dq140227-eng.pdf>

YOUTH

\$256,200 in funding to Partners for Youth to support a career development program specifically for youth in custody.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=817479>