



Canada Social Report

# Federal Policy Monitor

April 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

Introduction of Bill C-33, *First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act*. The proposed legislation will provide First Nations students with education standards, supports and opportunities. It will require that First Nations schools design curriculums that:

- ensure students can transfer seamlessly between schools on and off reserve
- students meet minimum attendance requirements
- teachers are properly certified
- First Nations schools award widely-recognized diplomas or certificates.

The legislation recognizes the responsibility of First Nations in the administration of their own education systems on reserve. To support First Nations control of First Nations education, the government has committed to providing for stable, more predictable statutory funding that will increase annually at a rate of 4.5 percent.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=837329>

The federal government announced the *Royal Assent of the First Nations Elections Act*. It addresses long-standing issues with the current electoral system under the Indian Act. First Nations that opt in will have access to modern electoral provisions including:

- longer terms of office
- more robust nomination processes
- defined penalties
- a common election day for interested First Nations
- removal of the Minister's role in election appeals.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=838899>

#### COMMUNITIES

Digital Canada 150 (DC150) is the federal government's plan to allow Canadians to make full use of digital opportunities. DC150 is based on five pillars: Connecting Canadians, Protecting Canadians, Economic Opportunities, Digital Government and Canadian Content. As part of the DC150 vision:

- more than 98 percent of all Canadians will have access to high-speed Internet at 5 megabits per second – a rate that enables e-commerce, high-resolution video, employment opportunities and distance education
- online transactions will be more secure, privacy will be protected and there will be more safeguards against cyberbullying and other online threats
- new investments will be made to help small- and medium-sized



businesses adopt digital technologies and to provide digital companies with access to venture capital

- Canada will be a leader in the use of digital technologies and open data, making it easier for Canadians to access government services online.

[Link](#)

Announcement of \$2,088,176 in federal funding for the crime prevention project CeaseFire that will help 120 male youth, ages 16 to 25, who are involved in, or at high risk of involvement with criminal activity in the Halifax Regional Municipality. The project, run by Nova Scotia's Community Justice Society, is based on the premise that violence is a behavior that is acquired or learned. The initiative aims to detect and interrupt violence related to gang activity by providing violence reduction services in the form of individualized therapy, academic and employability supports, and recreational activities to participants and their families.

[Link](#)

## EDUCATION

The Financial Consumer Agency of Canada, in partnership with The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education at Ryerson University, launched a series of e learning videos to help Canadians make better financial decisions. The free, online videos complement a program of learning modules and workshops called Financial Basics. The series can be used by educators, community groups and employers to provide objective information to improve the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to be financially literate. Topics cover budgeting, living within your means, managing credit and debt, fraud prevention, and investing and saving for the future.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8hXmCmXUgxWZdKyqxEjCFwI-Y90d6CxqT>

## EMPLOYMENT

Statistics Canada released two studies in *Insights on Canadian Society*. The reports present highlights on the evolution of the occupational characteristics of young men and women in Canada between 1991 and 2011, a period during which educational attainment rose substantially. The first study examines whether today's young graduates and non-graduates ages 25 to 34 are working in the same occupations as their counterparts were 20 years ago. The second study examines changes in the proportion of those who are 'overqualified' for their job, with a focus on university graduates.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140402/dq140402-eng.pdf>

Statistics Canada reported that, in January, there were 193,000 job vacancies among Canadian businesses, little changed compared with January 2013. There were 6.7 unemployed people for every job vacancy, compared with 6.4 one year earlier. The national job vacancy rate was 1.3 percent in January, compared with 1.4 percent recorded 12 months

earlier. For 2013 as a whole, there were an average 219,000 job vacancies per month among Canadian businesses, down from 252,000 in 2012 and 236,000 in 2011. For every job vacancy, there were 6.2 unemployed people in 2013, up from 5.4 in 2012. The increase in the unemployment-to-job vacancies ratio was the result of fewer job vacancies, as the number of unemployed people was little changed. In 2011, the ratio was 5.9 unemployed people for every job vacancy.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140415/dq140415-eng.pdf>

Ottawa announced the appointment of Jane Rooney as Canada's first-ever Financial Literacy Leader, building on government's initiatives to protect consumers.

<http://www.fin.gc.ca/n14/14-058-eng.asp>

Statistics Canada reports that, following a decline in January, the number of people receiving regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits was little changed in February at 506,500. Compared with 12 months earlier, the number of beneficiaries was down 4.9 percent. Provincially, Quebec and Saskatchewan had more beneficiaries in February, while Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador posted slight declines. There was little or no change in the other provinces.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140417/dq140417-eng.pdf>

The federal government is partnering with the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME) on four initiatives aimed at supporting the manufacturing sector:

- they will connect internationally-trained engineers, technicians and technologists with Canadian employers facing labour shortages in manufacturing. The CME will also work with internationally-trained workers to find alternate careers that match their skills set
- the CME will develop occupational standards for the manufacturing sector. This will help colleges and other educators develop curriculum that graduating students have the skills the manufacturing sector is looking for today and in future
- the CME will create a regional network for employers, colleges and trainers to share labour market information to address common challenges in the manufacturing sector
- the government and CME are creating a new Manufacturing Skills Lab to provide employers, policy makers and academics with a forum to discuss solutions to the skills challenge in the manufacturing sector.

[Link](#)

A Statistics Canada study shows that the oil boom of the 2000s, increases in real minimum wages and strong growth in the relative number of those earning bachelor's degrees helped narrow wage differences between young high school graduates and bachelor's degree holders over the last decade. Study findings focused on graduates between the



2000-02 and the 2010-12 period. Over that time, average real hourly wages of male high school graduates ages 20 to 34 employed full-time increased by 9 percent, while women in the same demographic had an 11 percent rise. By contrast, the average real hourly wages of young male bachelor's degree holders was unchanged, while those of young female bachelor's degree holders increased by 5 percent. Wage differentials between young high school graduates and bachelor's degree holders narrowed as a result.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140428/dq140428-eng.pdf>

## GOVERNANCE

Release of the Parliamentary Budget Office's *Expenditure Monitor: 2013-14 Q3*. It reports that total expenditures in the first nine months of 2013-14 amounted to \$177.9 billion, an increase of \$3.8 billion year-over-year or 2.2 percent compared with the same nine months of 2012-13. These aggregate results are consistent with the spending growth forecast in Budget 2014.

[http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/files/files/Expenditure\\_Monitor\\_2013\\_14Q3\\_EN.pdf](http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/files/files/Expenditure_Monitor_2013_14Q3_EN.pdf)

Release of the Parliamentary Budget Officer's *Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2014*. Compared to PBO's previous economic and fiscal projection published in the October 2013 *Economic and Fiscal Outlook Update*, prospects for the Canadian economy are generally more positive, as a result of buoyant international economic growth and sustained domestic demand.

[http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/files/files/EF02014\\_EN.pdf](http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/files/files/EF02014_EN.pdf)

## HEALTH

Statistics Canada announced that the Canadian Community Health Survey – Mental Health: Public Use Microdata File, 2012, is now available. Data are based on interviews with an estimated 25,000 respondents ages 15 and older residing in households in all provinces. The file includes information on a wide range of topics, such as mental health status and access to and perceived need for formal and informal services and supports.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140403/dq140403-eng.pdf>

The Mental Health Commission of Canada will lead a three-year national case study on psychological health and safety, an important factor in safer and more productive workplaces. The study will look at best practices and identify areas of improvement regarding the implementation of the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20140415004>

Statistics Canada report on health care spending between found that, regardless of the level of their household income, Canadians' out-of-pocket health care spending rose between 1997 and 2009. However, the increase was greatest for households in the lowest income quintile. According to a new study in Health Reports, out-of-pocket spending on

health care rose 63 percent for households in the lowest-income quintile over this period. The increase for households in the higher-income quintiles ranged from 36 percent to 48 percent. In 2009, out-of-pocket health care spending by households in the top fifth of the income distribution averaged almost \$3,000, compared with about \$1,000 for households in the lowest fifth of the distribution. Throughout the 1997-2009 period, the three largest components of out-of-pocket health care expenditures were dental services, prescription medications and insurance premiums.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140416/dq140416-eng.pdf>

## INCOME SECURITY

Statistics Canada reports that average weekly earnings of non-farm payroll employees were \$925 in February, little changed from \$922 the previous month. On a year-over-year basis, weekly earnings increased 2.3 percent.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140429/dq140429-eng.pdf>

## SENIORS

The federal government introduced the *Digital Privacy Act* to address rising concerns about financial abuse of seniors. The new legislation will allow banks and other organizations to notify officials or next of kin if they suspect that an elderly individual has been the victim of financial abuse.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&ctrl.page=2&nid=836829&ctrl.tp1D=1>

## YOUTH

\$604,372 in funding to Toronto's Child Development Institute's Centre for Children Committing Offences. The funding is supporting their Stop Now and Plan (SNAP®) for Youth in Custody project. SNAP® is a cognitive-behavioural strategy developed over the past 25 years that helps children and parents regulate angry feelings by getting them to stop, think and plan positive alternatives before they act impulsively. This project has adapted the SNAP® model for young offenders in custody.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=index&ctrl.page=1&nid=842039>