



Canada Social Report

Federal Policy Monitor

September 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

The federal government announced a regulatory development process for a *First Nations Elections Act*. The Act will help First Nations create the political stability necessary for solid business investments, long-term planning and relationship building that will lead to increased economic development and job creation for First Nations communities. First Nations that opt in will have access to modern electoral provisions including:

- longer terms of office
- more robust nomination processes
- defined offences and penalties
- a common election day for interested First Nations
- no role for the Minister in election appeals.

Following this collaborative development process, the regulations will be finalized and made public at which point the new *First Nations Elections Act* electoral system will be available to interested First Nations that can choose to opt in.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=887359>

CAREGIVING

Statistics Canada released a study on the unmet needs of people in care. In 2012, 792,000 Canadians ages 15 and older reported that their needs for care in the home for a long-term illness, aging or disability condition were only partly met or not met at all.

In its most recent cycle on caregiving and care receiving, the *General Social Survey* asked respondents 15 years of age and older about their home care needs. The survey did not cover those living in institutions or in long-term care facilities.

The 792,000 people can be divided into two groups. The first group, some 461,000 in all, needed care at home to deal with a long-term illness, aging or disability condition but did not receive any care. The second group – about 331,000 – received care at home for a long-term illness, aging or disability condition but reported not receiving all the care they needed.

These numbers compare with 1.8 million Canadians who were care recipients in 2012 and received all the care they needed.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140909/dq140909-eng.pdf>

According to Statistics Canada's 2012 *General Social Survey*, 1.9 million (27 percent) of young Canadians between the ages of 15 and 29 provided some form of care to a family member or friend with a long-term health condition, disability or aging needs. Survey data showed that ailing grandparents were the most frequent recipients of young caregivers' help, with four in ten young caregivers reporting primarily helping their grandparent over the previous year. Parents were the next most



common group, with 27 percent of young caregivers looking after the needs of their mother or father.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140924/dq140924-eng.pdf>

DEMOGRAPHICS

A Statistics Canada release details recent demographic data. Population estimates indicate that on July 1, 2014, Canada's population was estimated at 35,540,400, up 386,100 or 1.1 percent over the last year (2013-14). This increase was slightly lower than that of the previous year (+1.2 percent in 2012-13) but similar to the average annual population increase for the last 30 years (+1.1 percent).

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140926/dq140926-eng.pdf>

DISABILITY

TEAM Work Cooperative in Halifax is receiving \$455,000 from the Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities and the Enabling Accessibility Fund to help people with varying abilities get jobs and to increase accessibility of its facility and equipment.

[Link](#)

The federal government will contribute \$2 million over four years to the launch of Canadian Business SenseAbility. Headquartered in Toronto, SenseAbility is a national, non-profit organization run by business, for business, to accelerate private sector success in the hiring and retention of Canadians with disabilities through education, training and sharing of resources and best practices. There are an estimated 800,000 unemployed people with disabilities who are willing to work.

[Link](#)

EDUCATION

Statistics Canada released information about postsecondary tuition fees. Data presented in this release are from the survey of *Tuition and Living Accommodation Costs for Full-time Students at Canadian Degree-granting Institutions*. The survey was administered from April to July 2014 and the data cover the 2014-15 academic year. Canadian full-time students in undergraduate programs paid 3.3 percent more on average in tuition fees for the 2014-15 academic year this fall than they did the previous year. A similar increase was observed in 2013-14. By contrast, inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index was 2.1 percent between July 2013 and July 2014 and 1.3 percent between July 2012 and July 2013. On average, undergraduate students paid \$5,959 in tuition fees in 2014-15 compared with \$5,767 a year earlier. Tuition fees rose in all but one province, Newfoundland and Labrador, where fees for undergraduate and graduate students have been frozen since 2003-04.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140911/dq140911-eng.pdf>

EMPLOYMENT

Statistics Canada reported that employment was little changed in August. The unemployment rate remained at 7.0 percent. Compared with 12 months earlier, employment increased by 81,000 (+0.5 percent), mostly

in part-time work. Over the same period, the total number of hours worked was virtually unchanged.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140905/dq140905-eng.pdf>

The Canada Employment Insurance Commission announced that the EI Maximum Insurable Earnings (MIE) for 2015 will increase to \$49,500 from \$48,600 in 2014. The MIE is indexed on an annual basis and represents the ceiling up to which EI premiums are collected and the maximum amount considered in applications for EI benefits. For residents of Quebec covered under the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan, premiums will be reduced by \$0.34 per \$100 of insurable earnings. They will pay \$1.54 per \$100 of insurable earnings.

There will also be reductions for the employers registered under the Premium Reduction Program. The reductions for these employers will range from \$0.19 to \$0.36 per \$100 of insurable earnings, providing \$855 million in premium relief for 2015. Registered employers will be notified individually, as individual reductions may vary.

For self-employed Canadians who have opted into the EI program, the annual earnings required to qualify for special benefits will increase to \$6,645 on January 1, 2015, up from \$6,515 for 2014. The level of earnings required by self-employed Canadians to be eligible for EI special benefits is indexed annually to growth in the MIE.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&crtr.page=2&nid=884339&crtr.tp1D=1>

GOVERNANCE

The Finance Department released *The Fiscal Monitor* for July 2014. There was a budgetary deficit of \$1.2 billion in July 2014, compared to a deficit of \$2.0 billion in July 2013. Revenues increased by \$1.9 billion, or 9.5 percent, due mainly to higher personal and corporate income tax revenues. Program expenses increased by \$1.1 billion, or 5.8 percent, largely reflecting increases in major transfers to other levels of government and direct program expenses. Public debt charges increased by \$14 million, or 0.6 percent.

<http://www.fin.gc.ca/n14/14-126-eng.asp>

The Parliamentary Budget Officer released *Expenditure Monitor: 2014-15 Q1*. In brief:

- on April 1, 2014, planned federal spending restraint jumped \$3.8 billion to \$14.6 billion per year in 2014-15
- spending levels across most programs reflect this restraint. The broadest measure of government operating spending – Direct Program Spending – is 1.6 percent lower in the first quarter of 2014-15 compared to last year
- the government indicates that its restraint initiatives are ahead of schedule and generally on track to be implemented as planned



- in contrast with broad spending declines, expenditure on “well managed and efficient government operations” has increased by 2 percent in 2014-15, consistent with budget plans.

http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/files/files/Expenditure_Monitor_2014_15Q1_EN.pdf

The Parliamentary Budget Officer released *Fiscal Sustainability Report 2014*. It assesses the long-term sustainability of Canada’s federal government, subnational governments and public pension plans. The purpose is to determine whether policy changes are required to address the fiscal consequences of demographic trends in the economy and age-sensitive government spending programs. The results suggest:

- the federal government has fiscal room to meet all the challenges of aging demographics under current policy. It could increase spending or reduce taxes while maintaining sustainable public debt.
- Canada’s subnational governments (provincial, territorial, local and aboriginal) cannot meet the challenges of aging demographics. They must make significant policy changes to put public debt on a sustainable path.
- the Canada Pension Plan and Quebec Pension Plan can finance the projected increase in beneficiaries while remaining sustainable as a share of the economy.

http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/files/files/FSR_2014.pdf

HEALTH

Statistics Canada released highlights of “Positive mental health and mental illness,” now available in the September 2014 online issue of *Health Reports*, 25(9). Based on results of the *2012 Canadian Community Health Survey – Mental Health*, 76.9 percent of Canadians ages 15 or older were categorized as having flourishing mental health. They generally felt good about and functioned well in daily life. A further 1.5 percent were classified as languishing (low positive emotions, low positive functioning), while 21.6 percent were in moderate mental health (neither flourishing nor languishing).

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140917/dq140917-eng.pdf>

Statistics Canada released the results of a study that examines the link between cancer and employment. It draws on data from a number of sources including the *1991 Census*, *Canadian Cancer Registry*, *Vital Statistics Registry* and personal income tax records.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140930/dq140930-eng.pdf>

INCOME SECURITY

Old Age Security (OAS) benefits – basic OAS pension, the Guaranteed Income Supplement and the Allowance – will increase by 0.9 percent on October 1, 2014. The maximum basic OAS pension paid to people age 65 years and older will increase by \$5.03 – from \$558.71 to \$563.74

per month. OAS benefits are reviewed quarterly (in January, April, July and October) and revised as required to reflect increases in the cost of living, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) set by Statistics Canada. The Old Age Security Act guarantees that OAS benefits do not go down, even when there is a decrease in the CPI. If the average CPI surpasses the previous level in future, OAS benefits will go up again.

[Link](#)

RECREATION

Build Our Kids’ Success (BOKS), a before-school physical activity, was launched through a five-year partnership between the Public Health Agency of Canada, Reebok Canada, the Reebok Canada Fitness Foundation, the Canadian Football League (CFL) and the Propel Centre for Population Health Impact. In its first year, BOKS will be implemented in 90 schools in Toronto, Winnipeg, Vancouver and Ottawa. The program will roll out over the following four years in all nine Canadian cities with a CFL team, and is expected to reach an estimated 45,000 children in 450 elementary schools across the country.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=887089>

SENIORS

Release of the *Government of Canada Action for Seniors* report, a resource highlighting federal programs and services that can be accessed by seniors, their families and caregivers. It provides an overview of the many programs and resources available for seniors, ranging from help to combat elder abuse to government support, such as financial security. More than 22 federal departments and agencies collaborated to create the report, reflecting the cross-cutting nature of seniors’ issues.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&ctr.page=2&nid=883119&ctr.tp1D=1>