



Canada Social Report

# Federal Policy Monitor

January 2015



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.

#### COMMUNITIES

Statistics Canada released General Social Survey: Giving, volunteering and participating, 2013. It reported that in 2013, 44 percent of Canadians volunteered their time and almost twice as many (82 percent) gave money to a charitable or non-profit organization. While the proportion of Canadians who volunteered their time declined by 3 percentage points between 2010 and 2013, the total number of hours volunteered remained virtually unchanged.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150130/dq150130-eng.pdf>

#### GOVERNANCE

The Parliamentary Budget Officer released Fiscal Impacts of Lower Oil Prices. The report was designed to answer two questions: i) What is the impact of lower oil prices on projected federal surpluses? ii) What is the impact of lower revenues resulting from lower oil prices on the fiscal gap of the total government sector? PBO constructed two hypothetical oil price scenarios. In scenario 1, lower oil prices would more than exhaust the Government's set-aside for contingencies over 2015-16 to 2019-20. Based on the underlying balance projected in the November 2014 Update of Economic and Fiscal Projections, a small budget deficit (\$0.4 billion) would be realized in 2015-16, with budgetary surpluses maintained in 2016-17 through 2019-20. Under scenario 2, temporarily lower oil prices would only exhaust the set-aside for contingencies in 2015-16, and budgetary surpluses would be somewhat larger compared to scenario 1. PBO will provide its complete analysis of fiscal sustainability later this year

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

The Finance Department released The Fiscal Monitor for November 2014. There was a budgetary surplus of \$0.6 billion in November 2014, compared with a deficit of \$0.6 billion in November 2013. Revenues increased by \$1.0 billion, or 4.5 percent, as increases in personal income tax revenues and other revenues were partially offset by a decrease in corporate income tax revenues. Program expenses decreased by \$0.1 billion, or 0.4 percent, as a decrease in direct program expenses was largely offset by increases in major transfers to persons and other levels of government. Public debt charges decreased by \$0.1 billion, or 5.5 percent.

<http://www.fin.gc.ca/n15/15-006-eng.asp>

The Parliamentary Budget Officer released Expenditure Monitor: 2014-15 Q2. In brief:

- ongoing federal spending cuts jumped \$3.8 billion to \$14.6 billion
- spending levels for the first six months of the year reflect this restraint. The broadest measure of government operating spending – Direct Program Spending – is 2.3 percent lower in the first half of 2014-15 compared to last year
- notwithstanding ongoing spending restraint, the overall program per-



formance is slightly improved following the Budget 2012 cuts, with 46 percent of performance targets being met in 2013-14, compared with 42 percent in 2011-12

- due to the government's refusal to share essential data, the PBO is unable to determine if these short-term results are sustainable over the longer term
- almost 30 percent of the government's targets, representing \$80 billion of spending, could not be evaluated, due to a lack of quantifiable data/evidence to evaluate against the stated objective
- the government reported the greatest change in the first half spending in the area of "International Affairs," attributable to lower spending on "Global Poverty Reduction," as a result of delays in transferring money to aid groups.

[http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/files/files/Expenditure\\_Monitor\\_2014\\_15Q2\\_EN.pdf](http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/files/files/Expenditure_Monitor_2014_15Q2_EN.pdf)

## HEALTH

The Mental Health Commission of Canada released a data indicators report, Informing the Future: Mental Health Indicators for Canada. Document link: [http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/system/files/private/document/MHCC\\_MentalHealthIndicators\\_Jan2015\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/system/files/private/document/MHCC_MentalHealthIndicators_Jan2015_ENG.pdf)  
<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=924609>

The government announced funding for Healthy Weights Connection: Working Together to Promote the Health of First Nations and Métis Children in our Communities. The project is one of 11 Innovation Strategy projects aimed at helping families and communities achieve healthier weights. This Ontario-based project, led by the University of Western Ontario in partnership with the Métis Nation of Ontario, N'Amerind Friendship Centre (London) and the PROPEL Centre for Population Health Impact, promotes healthier weights among First Nations and Métis children and youth by improving opportunities for local health and wellness providers to work together.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=index&ctr:page=1&nid=918489>

Funding was announced for Working Together to Achieve Healthier Lifestyles in Yukon and Northwest Territories Communities. One of 11 Innovation Strategy projects aimed at helping families and communities achieve healthier weights and led by the Arctic Institute of Community-Based Research, it will promote healthier weights and lifestyles by focusing on active living, healthy eating and literacy through a partnership network in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. The project will support local communities to: lead various initiatives such as cooking classes; make improvements to food access, availability, and community gardening; and, identify, implement and evaluate community-based activities

aimed at reducing health inequalities and promoting healthy weights. <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=index&ctr:page=1&nid=918449>

## INCOME SECURITY

The federal government announced a new initiative to work with community organizations to ensure seniors receive their retirement benefits. Seniors can now receive Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security benefits through an appropriate community organization, including non-profit or charitable organizations and municipalities.

[Link](#)