



Canada Social Report

Federal Policy Monitor

June 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.

CHILDREN

The government announced Royal Assent of the *Tougher Penalties for Child Predators Act* – comprehensive legislation that better protects children from sexual predators at home and abroad.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=index&ctrl.page=1&nid=989149>

COMMUNITIES

According to Statistics Canada's *Volunteering in Canada, 2004 to 2013* report, the proportion of Canadians who volunteered has remained relatively unchanged at 44 percent, but volunteer involvement has fallen in certain sectors. While still among the most common areas of contribution, volunteer participation in the education and research sector declined from 25 percent in 2004 to 20 percent in 2013; participation in religious organizations fell from 22 percent to 19 percent. The decrease in the education and research sector was partly explained by the decline in volunteering among Canadians aged 35 to 44 – the group most likely to help out at schools. Meanwhile, the drop in the religious sector mirrors a decline in volunteering among weekly religious attendees, from 65 percent in 2004 to 59 percent in 2013. Involvement in most other sectors has held steady over time, with the exception of a significant increase in volunteering at universities and colleges; the proportion has grown from 2 percent in 2004 to 5 percent in 2013.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150618/dq150618-eng.pdf>

DEMOGRAPHICS

According to preliminary estimates from Statistics Canada, the country's population was estimated at 35,749,600 on April 1, 2015, up 46,900 from January 1, 2015. The population growth rate in Canada for the first quarter was 0.1 percent, which was lower than the growth observed for the same period in 2014 (+0.2 percent). Population growth for the first quarter was above the national average in Western Canada, Yukon and Nunavut. For jurisdictions with stronger population growth in the first quarter of 2014, the growth has slowed down, especially in Alberta (from +0.7 percent to +0.4 percent), Saskatchewan (from +0.4 percent to +0.2 percent) and Nunavut (from +0.8 percent to +0.5 percent).

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150617/dq150617-eng.pdf>

EMPLOYMENT

Statistics Canada reported that employment increased by 59,000 in May, driven by gains in the number of private sector employees. The number of people participating in the labour market also rose in May, leaving the unemployment rate unchanged at 6.8 percent for the fourth consecutive month.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150605/dq150605-eng.pdf>

Statistics Canada reported that there were 521,300 people receiving regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits in April, little changed from March (+0.5 percent) and compared with 12 months earlier (-0.4 percent). For the fourth month in a row, Alberta led all provinces in terms



of growth in the number of beneficiaries, with a 10.7 percent increase in April. British Columbia also posted a notable increase (+2.4 percent), while the number of beneficiaries in Saskatchewan rose slightly. By contrast, the number of beneficiaries fell in PEI (-3.5 percent), and also declined slightly in Newfoundland and Labrador, Manitoba and New Brunswick.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150618/dq150618-eng.pdf>

A Statistics Canada report on interprovincial employment, 2002 to 2011, found that, in 2011, 420,000 individuals aged 18 or older worked as interprovincial employees in Canada – i.e., they had paid employment in one province or territory, but maintained their permanent residence in another. This accounted for 3.1 percent of the paid workforce in 2011. From 2002 to 2004, about 340,000 individuals were interprovincial employees, accounting for 2.7 percent of the paid workforce.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150629/dq150629-eng.pdf>

FAMILIES

Statistics Canada released a study on the employment patterns of families with children between 1976 and 2014. Among its findings:

- in 2014, 69 percent of couple families with at least one child under 16 had two working parents, up from 36 percent in 1976. This proportion increased in every province, but not equally among provinces.
- there were 2.8 million couple families with at least one child under 16 in 2014 – the same number as in 1976. However, the number of such families with two earning parents rose from 1.0 million in 1976 to 1.9 million in 2014.
- three-quarters of dual-earner families had two parents working on a full-time basis in 2014. This compared with two-thirds of dual-earner families in 1976.
- the share of couple families with one working parent – single-earner families – declined from 59 percent in 1976 to 27 percent of couple families with children in 2014.
- the proportion of couple families with no working parents was 4 percent in 2014. This figure compared with less than 6 percent in 1976.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150624/dq150624-eng.pdf>

Statistics Canada reported details of family income and income of individuals using sub-provincial data gathered in 2013.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150626/dq150626-eng.pdf>

GOVERNANCE

The federal government introduced legislation aimed preventing the misuse of genetic information in Canada. The legislation proposes amendments to three federal laws – i.e., the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*, and the *Privacy Act*, to provide greater legal clarity on the protection offered

by these laws with respect to genetic test results.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&crtr.page=1&nid=984009&crtr.tp1D=1>

HEALTH

New data from the 2014 Canadian Community Health Survey show that smoking rates continued to fall in Canada, reaching their lowest level since 2001. The survey results also show important shifts in the health and behaviour of the Canadian population. For example, one in five Canadians, 18 years of age or older – roughly 5.3 million people – reported height and weight that classified them as obese.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150617/dq150617-eng.pdf>

HOUSING

According to the spring Rental Market Survey released today by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the average vacancy rate for primary purpose-built apartments in Canada's 35 major centres was 2.9 per cent in April 2015, compared to 2.7 percent in April 2014. This difference is not statistically significant, indicating stability in the overall vacancy rate. Average rent for a two-bedroom unit in Canada, including new and existing structures, was \$949 in April 2015. Highest average monthly rent for a two-bedroom apartment was recorded in Vancouver (\$1,345), followed by Calgary (\$1,319) and Toronto (\$1,269). Lowest average monthly rent for a two-bedroom apartment was recorded in Trois-Rivières (\$571), followed by Saguenay (\$583) and Sherbrooke (\$607).

<http://www.schl.ca/en/corp/nero/nere/2015/2015-06-15-0816.cfm>

INCOME SECURITY

Statistics Canada's report, *Changes in wealth across the income distribution, 1999 to 2012*, concluded that between 1999 and 2012, the average wealth (or net worth) of Canadian families rose from \$319,800 to \$554,100, or 73 percent (in 2012 constant dollars). Average wealth increased faster among higher-income families during this time period. Although closely related, income and wealth are two distinct and different concepts of economic well-being. Income is a flow, defined in this study as total income earned by the family over the course of a year (before tax). Wealth (or net worth) is a stock figure, defined as the total value of family assets minus outstanding debt. Among the 20 percent of family units with the highest incomes, or top income quintile families, average wealth grew by 80 percent between 1999 and 2012, rising from \$721,900 to \$1,300,100. At the other end of the income spectrum, the 20 percent of families with the lowest incomes – or bottom-income quintile families – increased their average wealth by 38 percent, from \$79,500 to \$109,300. Over the same period, the 20 percent of families that were in the middle of the income distribution – also called middle-income quintile families – increased their average wealth by 73 percent, from \$261,800 to \$453,300.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150603/dq150603-eng.pdf>



Statistics Canada reported that the market value of Canadian employer-sponsored pension funds grew by 3.0 percent to \$1.5 trillion in the fourth quarter of 2014, marking a sixth consecutive quarterly increase. More than 6.2 million Canadian workers are members of employer-sponsored pension plans. Of this group, 5.2 million (83.6 percent) workers belong to pension plans with assets managed by trustee funds. The remaining members have assets managed by insurance company contracts.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150611/dq150611-eng.pdf>

The maximum basic OAS pension benefit paid to people 65 years of age and older will increase by \$1.13 from \$563.74 to \$564.87 per month from July 1 to September 30, 2015. Payments under the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), the Allowance and the Allowance for the Survivor will also increase by the same 0.2 percent for the quarter. OAS benefit amounts 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 can never be reduced, even when there is a decrease in the CPI. If the average CPI surpasses the previous level in the future, OAS benefits will go up again.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&crtr.page=9&nid=991639&crtr.tp1D=1>

Statistics Canada's *Canadian Megatrends*, June 2015 edition reported on Minimum Wages in Canada since 1975. Among its conclusions:

- The minimum wage and the average hourly wage have been in virtual lockstep in Canada since the end of the 1970s.
- Although the minimum wage and the average hourly wage went through many fluctuations over this 40-year period, in 2014 their level was essentially unchanged compared with the end of the 1970s, when adjusting for inflation.
- In 2014, the minimum wage had an average value of \$10.39 per hour, compared with just over \$11 in 1976. Meanwhile, average hourly earnings were around \$23 in 2014, compared with close to \$24 in 1977.

The publication also looks at the proportion of employees earning minimum wage by province and demographic characteristics.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150629/dq150629-eng.pdf>

RECREATION

Statistics Canada reported that culture activities accounted for 3.0 percent of Canada's total gross domestic product (GDP) and 642,486 jobs in 2010. Across the provinces and territories, culture GDP varied in importance from 1.4 percent of provincial GDP in Newfoundland and Labrador to 3.7 percent in Ontario. Culture jobs as a share of the total economy ranged from 2.2 percent to 4.1 percent among the provinces and territories. The data come from the first ever Provincial and Territorial Culture

Satellite Account, which measures the economic importance of culture and sport in terms of output, GDP and employment (number of jobs) for every province and territory.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150609/dq150609-eng.pdf>

SENIORS

The federal government and Alzheimer Society of Canada launched Dementia Friends Canada, a national public engagement initiative, to support the growing number of Canadians living with dementia. Through a website, video and social media, Dementia Friends Canada will promote understanding, respect and dignity for those living with dementia, while helping Canadians become more aware of the small things they can do to help in their community. Simple actions such as being patient, speaking slowly and calmly, and asking short, simple questions, can help someone living with this disease to feel connected and supported. Over the next two years, the initiative will focus on two complementary streams – workplaces and individuals – with the goal of engaging one million Canadians in a dialogue that will shed light on this disease.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&crtr.page=4&nid=984669&crtr.tp1D=1>

The vacancy rate for seniors' residences decreased over the past year, reaching 8.1 percent in 2015, compared to 8.7 percent in 2014, according to the Seniors' Housing Report – Canada Highlights released by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

<http://www.schl.ca/en/corp/hero/here/2015/2015-06-17-0816.cfm>

SOCIAL ECONOMY

The government issued a Request for Proposals to solicit bids to establish up to three separate contracts to tackle persistent social problems. Through the Social Finance Accelerator announced in Budget 2015, successful bidders will work with organizations such as charities and not-for-profit organizations, to deliver enhanced assistance to more people in need. This new partnership will attract private investments to tackle issues including unemployment, poverty and homelessness. Project proposals could also include initiatives to address the social isolation of seniors, and services targeting vulnerable youth to support their transition from education to work.

[Link](#)

WOMEN

Sexual Assault Services of Saskatchewan (SASS) is receiving \$166,484 in Government of Canada funding for its two-year project to establish a coordinated community response to prevent and address sexual violence in rural and remote Saskatchewan communities. SASS will work with local organizations to develop and implement a strategy that will improve how they respond to this issue. It will also share knowledge and good practices with organizations from Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia to improve responses to sexual assault across western Canada.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=984549>