



Canada Social Report

Federal Policy Monitor

July 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.

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

The federal government announced a Whole-of-Government Approach to treaties management. Measures will include:

- establishing of a Deputy Ministers' Oversight Committee to provide ongoing, executive level oversight and accountability for modern treaty obligations and implementation
- creating a Modern Treaty Implementation Office within the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada to strengthen coordination and oversight across the federal government
- adopting a Cabinet Directive on the Federal Approach to Modern Treaty Implementation to define the roles and responsibilities of federal departments
- the Directive will require departments to assess all program, policy, regulatory and legislative proposals to ensure that the treaties are respected
- adopting a Statement of Principles on the Federal Approach to Modern Treaty Implementation to strengthen policy guidance to federal departments and agencies in accordance with the shared values and objectives of treaty partners
- developing new tools, training and guidance for federal officials to better equip them to fulfill Canada's responsibilities under the agreements

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1000209&tp=1>

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Release of the *Fiscal Monitor* for April and May 2015. In summary:

- For the first two months of the 2015-16 fiscal year (April and May), there was a budgetary surplus of \$3.9 billion, compared with a deficit of \$1.1 billion reported in the same period last year. By month, there was a surplus of \$2.5 billion in April and a surplus of \$1.4 billion in May.
- For the two months combined, revenues increased by \$5.5 billion, or 12.8 percent, largely reflecting increases in income taxes, excise taxes and duties, and the gain realized on the sale of the Government's remaining holdings of General Motors common shares in April 2015.
- Program expenses were up \$0.6 billion, or 1.5 percent, reflecting increases in major transfers to persons and other levels of government, offset in part by a decrease in direct program expenses. Public debt charges decreased by \$0.1 billion, or 2.3 percent.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&ctr.page=1&nid=1004739&ctr.tp1D=1>



The Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) released *Fiscal Sustainability Report 2015*. Its main conclusions:

- Federal net debt is eliminated over the next 35 years under the baseline scenario. To maintain the debt-to-GDP ratio at its current level over the long term, the federal government could permanently increase spending or reduce taxes by up to 1.4 percent of GDP. This action would require setting aside its balanced budget law.
- Recent federal policy changes have little effect on fiscal room. The long-term costs of expanding the Universal Child Care Benefit are small, as monthly cash transfers are not indexed to inflation under current policy. While the expansion of Tax Free Savings Accounts reduces long-term revenues, the fiscal gap estimate assumes that foregone revenues are offset by increases elsewhere.
- Health care spending has slowed. Spending growth in 2014 is estimated to have reached its lowest level in two decades. Nonetheless, subnational governments cannot meet the challenges of population aging under current policy. PBO estimates that permanent policy actions amounting to 1.4 percent of GDP are required to put subnational government debt on a sustainable path.
- The Canada Pension Plan and Quebec Pension Plan can finance the projected increase in retirees while remaining sustainable as a share of the economy.
- The total general government sector in Canada (i.e., the combined federal and subnational governments and public pension plans) is fiscally sustainable. This sustainability results from the fiscal room of the federal government, which offsets the fiscal gap of subnational governments.

http://pbo-dpb.gc.ca/files/files/FSR_2015_EN.pdf

The Parliamentary Budget Officer released a report entitled *Updated Analysis of Performance Budgeting During Recent Fiscal Consolidation*. Its main conclusions:

- For fiscal years 2010-11 through 2013-14, no consistent statistically significant relationship exists between a department's performance and its budget growth in the subsequent year(s).
- The performance data for 108 organizations does not suggest that financial resources have been reallocated from low-performing to high-performing programs. Rather, low-performing programs were somewhat more likely, on average, to receive budget increases in the subsequent year than programs that met targets or did not present measurable performance data.

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

The Parliamentary Budget Officer released *An update of the Budget 2015 fiscal outlook*. Its conclusion: "In total, the Government's fiscal sensitivities suggest that after accounting for the combined revisions to real GDP growth, GDP inflation and interest rates, the Budget 2015 outlook would show a deficit of \$1.0 billion in 2015-16 and surpluses of \$0.6 billion in 2016-17 and \$2.2 billion in 2017-18. This outlook does not account for the operating budget wage freeze that would be implemented as a result of the *Federal Balanced Budget Act*."

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

CHILDREN

The government announced the formation of the Autism Spectrum Disorder Working Group, a first step towards fulfilling the Government of Canada's 2015 *Economic Action Plan* commitment to develop a plan for a Canadian Autism Partnership.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=997679&tp=1>

COMMUNITIES

Statistics Canada reported that the Crime Severity Index (CSI), which measures the volume and severity of police-reported crime, decreased 3 percent in 2013-14. The decrease was primarily the result of fewer incidents of breaking and entering, and robbery. The decline in the CSI in 2014 represented the 11th consecutive decrease. This was the lowest index level recorded since 1998 (the first year for which CSI data are available).

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150722/dq150722-eng.pdf>

DISABILITY

Data from the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability revealed that 2.3 percent (628,200) of Canadians ages 15 years and older reported having a memory disability that limited their daily activity. The most commonly reported underlying memory conditions were Alzheimer's, dementia and amnesia. The occurrence of memory disability increases notably with age. Among those ages 75 and older, the prevalence of a memory disability was more than twice that of Canadians ages 65 to 74 (7.6 percent versus 3.2 percent). By contrast, for younger Canadians ages 15 to 24, 0.9 percent reported a memory disability. More than 9 in 10 of those with a memory disability also reported at least one other type of disability.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150727/dq150727-eng.pdf>

EDUCATION

Total expenditures on research and experimental development (R&D) in Canada's higher education sector fell by 1.8 percent, from \$13.0 billion in 2012-13 to \$12.7 billion in 2013-14. Overall, four of the six funding sources reduced their R&D funding in 2013-14. The largest decrease in funding was posted by the provincial government sector, down \$182.6 million or 13.4 percent to \$1.2 billion, followed by the business enterprise sector, which declined by \$83.1 million or 8.4 percent to \$911 million in 2013-14. Counterbalancing these declines was increased funding



by the higher education sector itself, up 1.5 percent to \$6.2 billion, and the foreign sector, up 16.0 percent to \$149.7 million.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150729/dq150729-eng.pdf>

EMPLOYMENT

Provincial and territorial Premiers signed a new Apprentice Mobility Protocol, providing apprentices with a national certification to work across Canada. The Protocol articulates the agreements jurisdictions have reached to achieve a provincial/territorial approach to mobility for apprentices. It includes the recognition that work experience and technical training may occur in any jurisdiction; provinces and territories will facilitate mobile apprentices progressing through their apprenticeship programs; and the mutual recognition of apprenticeship training and pre-apprenticeship training between jurisdictions. Jurisdictions will continue to discuss implementation details, with the Protocol expected to take effect in all jurisdictions in January 2016.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/premiers-sign-provincial-territorial-apprentice-mobility-protocol/>

The federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for labour market agreed to continue to take measures to improve economic opportunities for Canadians, including:

- the creation of a Council of information on the labour market
- accelerating the harmonization of apprenticeship training for Red Seal trades
- working with regulatory agencies to speed up the process of recognition of qualifications acquired abroad.

[Link](#)

Statistics Canada's Economic Insights series includes "Full-Time Employment, 1976 to 2014." It concludes that proportionately more people were employed full time in 2014 than in the mid-1970s. However, data shows that the increase in full-time employment was not uniform across gender, age groups and regions. Of all individuals ages 17 to 64 who were not attending school full time, 66 percent were employed full time as employees or self-employed workers in 2014, up from 62 percent in 1976. This increase conceals divergent trends among women and men. Over the study period, the share of women employed full time increased from 40 percent to 57 percent, while the share of men employed full time declined from 84 percent to 74 percent. The decline in full-time employment was evident among men in every age group.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150709/dq150709-eng.pdf>

Statistics Canada reported that employment was virtually unchanged in June (-6,400 or 0.0 percent), as gains in full-time work were offset by losses in part time. The unemployment rate held steady at 6.8 percent for the fifth consecutive month.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150710/dq150710-eng.pdf>

There were 527,100 people receiving regular Employment Insurance benefits in May, edging up 0.9 percent or 4,800 from April. Compared with 12 months earlier, the number of beneficiaries increased by 15,400 (+3.0 percent). However, excluding Alberta, the number of beneficiaries in Canada decreased 0.7 percent (-3,200) on a year-over-year basis.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150723/dq150723-eng.pdf>

HEALTH

The federal government will invest \$2.4 million over five years on an initiative that will support parents and caregivers of seriously ill children. In partnership with the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and the Champlain Complex Care Program, the investment will help families manage and overcome the challenges associated with complex medical conditions.

[Link](#)

The Minister of Health announced *Run to Quit*, a program to help smokers quit by incorporating running into their daily lives. The project will be instituted by 100 Running Room locations over five years. It is expected that approximately 4,500 Canadians will participate in *Run to Quit* through in-person clinics and online training.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1008569&tp=1>

The Government of Canada is partnering with the Government of British Columbia, Social Change Rewards (a global social venture company), the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Canadian Diabetes Association and YMCA Canada to create the *National Healthy Living Platform: Carrot Rewards* app. The program will be launched first in BC this fall, and later expanded to other provinces and territories. Social Change Rewards will develop Carrot Rewards, an online app, which will use incentives to reward Canadians for making healthy lifestyle decisions.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1010069&tp=1>

The federal government announced it would spend \$24 million over two years to develop innovative approaches that strengthen and improve substance abuse treatment systems across Canada. Part of the National Anti-Drug Strategy, the funding will support 14 treatment initiatives to be delivered through provinces, territories and other key stakeholders. Initiatives will encourage collaboration and information sharing among treatment providers. Some projects will also address the treatment of prescription drug abuse, a leading public health and safety concern.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&ctrlr:page=3&nid=1009739&ctrlr:tp1D=1>

INCOME SECURITY

The Canadian Income Survey 2013 found that the median after-tax income of Canadian economic families and persons not in an economic family was \$53,500 in 2013, virtually unchanged from 2012. The median after-tax income of economic families of two or more people was



\$72,200, while for persons not in an economic family, the median was \$28,200 in 2013.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150708/dq150708-eng.pdf>

Statistics Canada's Pension Plans in Canada Survey showed that, as of January 1, 2014, membership in registered pension plans totalled 6,185,000 in 2013, virtually unchanged from 2012. Membership in public sector pension plans rose 0.2 percent to 3,184,300, while the number of members in private sector plans declined 0.2 percent to 3,000,900. The public sector accounted for 51.5 percent of total membership in RPPs.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150722/dq150722-eng.pdf>

Statistics Canada reported that average weekly earnings of non-farm payroll employees were \$948 in May, down 0.6 percent from the previous month. Compared with 12 months earlier, weekly earnings increased by 1.4 percent, the lowest growth rate since October 2013.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150730/dq150730-eng.pdf>

SENIORS

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>

The federal government announced a partnership with Shoppers Drug Mart and the Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health (CCSMH) that will deliver mental health resources and supports for seniors and their families. Through the Seniors' Mental Health Initiative, seniors and their families will have access to mental health information and to frontline health professionals. Two brochures have been designed to promote awareness of the signs, symptoms and factors that can lead to mental health issues. In addition, the CCSMH developed continuing education modules on depression and suicide prevention to help pharmacists guide seniors or their families to appropriate resources.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1007449&tp=1>

The federal government announced the first in a series of New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHSP) pan-Canadian project clusters that aim to address social isolation among seniors in targeted populations across Canada. This group of six interconnected projects is being funded through the 2015-16 NHSP Call for Proposals for Pan-Canadian Projects.

[Link](#)

WOMEN

Statistics Canada's Transition Home Survey identified that, on April 16, 2014, 627 shelters for abused women operating across Canada. On that snapshot date, there were 7,969 women and children residing in these facilities. Almost three-quarters of these women (73 percent) were there primarily because of abuse, representing a rate of 22 per 100,000 women age 15 and older in Canada. Women and children residing in shelter facilities on the snapshot date were staying at transition homes (37 percent), second-stage housing (23 percent), emergency shelters (21 percent) and women's emergency centres (13 percent). The remaining 6 percent were staying at other types of facilities, such as family resource centres. Of the women reporting abuse as their primary reason for seeking shelter on the snapshot date, 69 percent identified a current intimate partner as their abuser, while 17 percent reported their abuser was a former intimate partner.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150706/dq150706-eng.pdf>