



Canada Social Report

# Federal Policy Monitor

November 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 the public use microdata file for the 2013 General Social Survey (GSS). The main objective of the GSS on giving, volunteering and participating is to provide an overall picture of unpaid volunteer activities, charitable giving and participation.  
<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/151112/dq151112d-eng.pdf>

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

Statistics Canada's monthly *Canadian Megatrends* release noted that Canadian households are downsizing. Seven decades ago, there were 2.6 million households in the country, with an average of 4.3 people per household. Almost 40 percent of households in 1941 were classified as large – households with five people or more. The trend of large households continued in the 1950s and 1960s as Canada's population grew significantly with the post-war baby boom. By 2011, the number of households had increased nearly fivefold from 1941 to 13.3 million, but the average size had dropped to 2.5 people per household. Moreover, the percentage of large households fell to 8.4 percent. Large households remained the most common household size until 1976, when two-person households became most prevalent. The two-person household nearly doubled its share from 1941 to 2011, rising from 18.4 percent to 34.1 percent.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/151123/dq151123d-eng.htm>

Statistics Canada released Canadian population estimates, by marital status or legal marital status, age and sex for July 1, 2015. Estimates for 2012 and 2014 were revised.

<http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a26?lang=eng&retr-Lang=eng&id=0510042&&pattern=&stByVal=1&p1=1&p2=31&tab-Mode=dataTable&csid=>

#### EMPLOYMENT

Statistics Canada reported that after four months of little change, employment increased by 44,000 (+0.2 percent) in October, bringing the number of people employed in Canada to more than 18 million for the first time. The unemployment rate declined by 0.1 percentage points to 7.0 percent. Compared with 12 months earlier, employment was up 143,000 (+0.8 percent), with all of the gains in full-time work. During the same period, the total number of hours worked grew by 0.7 percent.  
<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/151106/dq151106a-eng.htm>

Statistics Canada released the results of an Employment Insurance Coverage Survey. Among its findings: The rate of eligibility for receiving regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits was 83.1 percent in 2014, down from 85.8 percent in 2013, but in line with the 83.0 percent average seen over the previous 10 years. The decline in 2014 was most notable among youth ages 15 to 24 and men of all ages. From 2013 to 2014, declines in eligibility rates for regular EI benefits were observed among all age groups: 15 to 24 (54.5 percent to 44.0 percent), 25 to 44



(89.7 percent to 86.9 percent), and 45 and older (90.8 percent to 88.8 percent).

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/151123/dq151123b-eng.htm>

Statistics Canada released its second quarter Job Vacancy and Wage Survey results. It reported 437,000 job vacancies in Canada in the second quarter and a job vacancy rate of 2.8 percent. The territories had the highest job vacancy rates in Canada, led by Yukon at 5.1 percent. The provinces with the highest rates were Alberta and New Brunswick (both at 3.4 percent). Québec, at 2.1 percent, had the lowest job vacancy rate, followed by Newfoundland and Labrador (2.4 percent) and Manitoba (2.5 percent). The job vacancy rate refers to the share of jobs that are unfilled out of all payroll jobs available. It represents the number of job vacancies expressed as a percentage of labour demand – i.e., the sum of all occupied and vacant jobs.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/151127/dq151127a-eng.htm>

## GOVERNANCE

The Finance Department released the *Update of Economic and Fiscal Projections* (the *Update*).

<http://www.fin.gc.ca/n15/15-084-eng.asp>

Statistics Canada released “Canadian Government Finance Statistics, 2013,” concluding: “After several consecutive years of negative gross operating balances, the federal government returned to a positive balance in 2013.”

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/151117/dq151117a-eng.htm>

The Parliamentary Budget Officer released “Why Does the Government Lapse Money and Why Does It Matter?” The article notes an increased trend toward spending less money than is budgeted and suggests that this trend is not likely to be reversed in the near future.

<http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/en/blog/news/Lapse%20Analysis>

The Parliamentary Budget Officer released the *November 2015 Economic and Fiscal Outlook*. It projects a sluggish recovery for the Canadian economy as it adjusts to lower commodity prices and rebalances, shifting away from consumer spending and housing toward exports and business investment. Based on Budget 2015 measures only, PBO projects annual deficits averaging \$4.3 billion (0.2 percent of GDP) over 2016-17 to 2020-21. Federal debt is projected to fall from 31 percent of GDP in 2014-15 to 26.2 percent by 2020-21.

[http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/en/blog/news/EFO\\_NOV2015](http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/en/blog/news/EFO_NOV2015)

Statistics Canada released *Provincial and territorial economic accounts, 2014*. It reported that real gross domestic product (GDP) increased for all provinces and territories in 2014 except Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick and Yukon. The Northwest Territories (+5.8 percent) had the largest increase, followed by Alberta (+4.8 percent) and Nunavut (+3.3 percent). Nationally, real GDP rose 2.5 percent in 2014, compared

with a 2.2 percent gain in 2013.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/151110/dq151110a-eng.htm>

The Prime Minister released a series of mandate letters to his Ministers. Details of the specific priorities for the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development include:

- working with the Minister of Finance to design and implement the Canada Child Benefit, which will build on the existing Canada Child Tax Benefit and the National Child Benefit Supplement and will replace the Universal Child Care Benefit
- working with the Minister of Finance to improve the income security of lower income seniors living alone by increasing the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) by ten percent, indexing Old Age Security (OAS) and GIS payments to a new Senior's Price Index, cancelling the increase in age of eligibility for OAS (65 to 67), and working with provinces and territories to ensure adequate and coordinated support programs to address seniors' poverty
- working with the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs to launch consultations with provinces and territories and Indigenous Peoples on a National Early Learning and Childcare Framework as a first step towards delivering affordable, high-quality, flexible and fully inclusive child care
- leading the development of a Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy that would set targets to reduce poverty and measure and publicly report on our progress, in collaboration with the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour. The government's strategy will align with and support existing provincial and municipal poverty reduction strategies
- working with the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour to fulfill the commitment to provide more generous and flexible leave for caregivers and more flexible parental leave
- as Minister responsible for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, work with the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities to develop a strategy to re-establish the federal government's role in supporting affordable housing.

<http://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-families-children-and-social-development-mandate-letter>

## INCOME SECURITY

Statistics Canada reported that, in September, 6,100 more people received regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits compared with August, up 1.1 percent to 543,800. On a year-over-year basis, the number of EI beneficiaries rose by 41,600 or 8.3 percent. Most of the increase in September came from Alberta, where the number of beneficiaries increased 9.1 percent. Smaller increases were recorded in Newfoundland and Labrador (+2.2 percent) as well as Nova Scotia (+2.1 percent).



Over the same period, the number of beneficiaries declined in Prince Edward Island (-1.1 percent), while the remaining provinces reported little change.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/151119/dq151119b-eng.htm>

#### INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Statistics Canada released “Aboriginal Peoples: Fact sheet for Canada,” which is based on data from the 2011 National Household Survey and the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-656-x/89-656-x2015001-eng.htm>

Statistics Canada released “The Social Determinants of Higher Mental Distress among Inuit.” It reported that Inuit who reported an experience in the 12 months preceding the survey where health care was needed but not received were more likely to be in higher mental distress than Inuit who did not have an unmet healthcare need, even after controlling for other factors. More than one-quarter (27 percent) of Inuit men who reported an unmet health care need were estimated to be in higher mental distress. This figure compares with 17 percent with no such experience. For Inuit women with an unmet health care need, close to half (47 percent) were estimated to be in higher mental distress, while the probability for those without an unmet health care need was just less than one-quarter (23 percent).

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/151117/dq151117b-eng.htm>

#### WOMEN

Most women ages 15 and older lived in a census family in 2011, primarily as part of a couple. Data from the third chapter of the publication *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report*, now available online, show that of the 56 percent of women in couples, most are married spouses. But there has been a shift over the last several decades toward an increased proportion of common-law partners.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/151110/dq151110b-eng.htm>