



Canada Social Report

Federal Policy Monitor

February 2016



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.

CAREGIVING

In 2014, 11.2 percent of Canadians ages 12 and older, or about 3.4 million people, reported that they did not receive health care when they felt they needed it. One-third of that group cited wait times as the reason. A fact sheet on unmet health care needs in 2014 is now available from the “Canadian Community Health Survey – Annual Component.” This fact sheet includes information on unmet health care needs reported in 2014, by sex, province or territory, income and reasons for having an unmet health care need.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160209/dq160209d-eng.htm>

COMMUNITIES

Representatives of the federal government, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the City of Vancouver announced Green Municipal Fund (GMF) grants and loans for 20 communities across Canada. The \$31.5 million in GMF funding supports plans, studies, field tests and capital projects to help make these communities more sustainable while taking into account environmental, social and economic considerations.

Many of the announced projects assist municipalities in reaching higher standards of air, water and soil quality. Examples include the country’s first net-zero municipal library produces as much energy as it spends. Halifax’s ground-breaking Solar City project is installing solar hot water systems and efficient water fixtures in homes. These projects provide concrete examples of how local communities contribute to climate protection.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&crtr.page=1&nid=1032819&crtr.tp1D=1>

DEMOGRAPHICS

On July 1, 2015, 7 in 10 Canadians, or 25,164,100 people, were living in a census metropolitan area (CMA). More than 1 in 3 Canadians (35.4 percent) made their home in Canada’s three largest CMAs – Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver. Between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015 (2014-15), the population growth rate was higher in CMAs (+1.2 percent) than in non-CMAs (+0.1 percent), although the CMA growth rate slowed somewhat during this period compared with 2013-14 (+1.4 percent). This decrease in CMA population growth was comparable with that observed for Canada as a whole, as the rate fell from 1.1 percent in 2013-14 to 0.9 percent in 2014-15.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160210/dq160210a-eng.htm>

DISABILITY

Statistics Canada released the “Canadian Survey on Disability: Seeing and hearing disabilities, 2012” (CSD). Some 3.8 million Canadians aged 15 years and older reported having a disability. CSD data showed that close to 3 percent of Canadians ages 15 years and older, or about 750,000 people, reported having a seeing disability that limited their daily activities; 5.8 percent of people in this group reported being legally blind. More than 3 percent of Canadians ages 15 years and older, or 874,600 peo-



ple, reported having a hearing disability that limited their daily activities. According to 2012 CSD data, 75.2 percent of this group reported some difficulty hearing, 22.5 percent reported a lot of difficulty and 2.3 percent were deaf or could not hear at all.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160229/dq160229c-eng.htm>

EDUCATION

Statistics Canada released “The association between skills and low income.” The article uses data from the first cohort of the Longitudinal and International Study of Adults, which includes scores obtained in the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies. It found that lower levels of literacy are associated with a higher likelihood of low income, even after accounting for other factors that are known to increase the incidence of low income.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160224/dq160224a-eng.htm>

EMPLOYMENT

Statistics Canada’s Labour Force Survey reported that employment was virtually unchanged in January (-5,700 or 0.0 percent) and the unemployment rate edged up to 7.2 percent. In the 12 months to January, employment increased by 0.7 percent (+126,000). Over the same period, the unemployment rate rose from 6.6 percent to 7.2 percent, as the labour force grew at a faster pace than employment. There was little change in both full-time and part-time employment in January. However, compared with 12 months earlier, full-time work increased by 172,000 (+1.2 percent) while part time was little changed. Over the same period, the number of hours worked rose by 1.2 percent.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160205/dq160205a-eng.htm>

The number of people receiving regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits totalled 539,800 in December, little changed (-0.5 percent) from the previous month. There were more EI beneficiaries in Alberta (+2.2 percent) and Saskatchewan (+1.6 percent) in December, extending the upward trend for these provinces that began in September 2014. There were also more beneficiaries in Newfoundland and Labrador (+1.3 percent). Conversely, there were fewer people receiving benefits in Nova Scotia (-1.7 percent), Québec (-1.7 percent) and Ontario (-1.1 percent). There was little change in the remaining provinces. On a year-over-year basis, the total number of EI beneficiaries was up 36,800 or 7.3 percent, with Alberta accounting for most of the increase.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160218/dq160218b-eng.htm>

GOVERNANCE

The federal government will introduce legislative amendments to improve the stability and predictability of federal Territorial Formula Financing payments and address the impact of a recent Statistics Canada data revision. This will provide an additional \$67 million to the territories compared to the amounts calculated in December 2015. The proposed changes will enable the Ottawa to recalculate 2016-17 Territorial Formula Financing payments on the basis of the proposed legislative amendments, and help

better support the territories in their financial planning by providing more predictability and stability.

<http://www.fin.gc.ca/n16/16-024-eng.asp>

HEALTH

Starting April 1, 2016, the Interim Federal Health Program will provide full health-care coverage – basic, supplemental and prescription drug coverage – for all eligible beneficiaries, including all refugees and asylum seekers. Similar to provincial/territorial health care insurance, the coverage will include hospital and physician services. Coverage for supplemental health care services, such as vision and urgent dental care, and for prescription drugs, will be similar to what the provinces and territories provide to Canadians who receive social assistance.

By April 1, 2017, the Interim Federal Health Program will expand to cover certain services for refugees who have been identified for resettlement before they come to Canada. These services will include coverage of the immigration medical examination, pre-departure vaccinations, services to manage disease outbreaks in refugee camps and medical supports during travel to Canada.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1034619>

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The Auditor General’s report reviewed efforts by Health Canada to work with First Nations in BC to establish the First Nations Health Authority. The report noted the importance of the sustained commitment of leaders from BC First Nations, the federal government, the BC government as well as the identification of a single First Nations point of contact to negotiate with the federal and provincial governments. The Tripartite Framework Agreement on First Nation Health Governance and the Canada Funding Agreement addressed challenges related to:

- service levels
- legislation to guide activities and the need to explore how legislation may change as circumstances evolve
- a long-term funding mechanism
- support for local capacity for program delivery in communities.

As the Authority shifts from a period of transition to the delivery of programs and services, its success will depend on its ability to demonstrate that it has in place the accountability and governance framework and on its compliance with its policies.

http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag-_201602_07_e_41064.html#hd2d

A First Nation-led school facility project, supported by the Innovation Fund component of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada’s Education Infrastructure Fund, will build nine school facilities for First Nation students on reserves. Innovative construction approaches – such as



bundling projects and contracts, employing modular and pre-fabricated construction and using alternative financing measures – will be defining features of the initiative.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1035759&tp=1>

INCOME SECURITY

The Auditor General released a report on the Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPPD) Benefit. While applications were assessed in a timely manner, Employment and Social Development Canada did not respect its guidelines for making faster decisions for applicants with terminal illnesses or grave conditions. Second, applications were not assessed in a consistent manner, because the department did not have a quality assurance framework in place. The report concluded that the Social Security Tribunal of Canada, which was supported by the department until November 2014 and afterwards by the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada, did not decide CPPD appeals in a timely manner.

http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/par_oag-_201602_06_e_41063.html#hd2c

The federal and Ontario governments announced they have reached an agreement to work together to achieve their mutual goal of improving pensions for Canadians. To provide more time for discussion among provinces and the federal government, Ontario is proposing to phase in the launch of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan by starting enrollment in January 2017, one year later than the original start date, and by starting the first phase of contributions in January 2018. This extension will give businesses more time to enroll, and provide about 400 businesses with additional time.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&crtr.page=1&nid=1034409&crtr.tp1D=1>

WOMEN

Statistics Canada released the seventh edition of Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report. A new chapter, "First Nations, Métis and Inuit Women," examines some of the demographic, cultural and socioeconomic characteristics of the Aboriginal female population. Where possible, information is provided separately for First Nations, Métis and Inuit women.

Among its findings is the conclusion that Aboriginal women with higher levels of education had slightly higher employment rates than non-Aboriginal women in 2011. Specifically, 81.8 percent of Aboriginal women with a certificate, diploma or degree at the bachelor level or above were employed, compared with 79.5 percent of their non-Aboriginal counterparts. The same pattern held for all three Aboriginal identity groups: First Nations, Métis and Inuit women.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160223/dq160223a-eng.htm>