



Canada Social Report

Federal Policy Monitor

April 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.

CHILDREN

Statistics Canada's new study Living arrangements of Aboriginal children aged 14 and under found that, while Aboriginal children represented 7 percent of all children in Canada in 2011, they accounted for almost half (48 percent) of all foster children in the country. Among Aboriginal foster children, 44 percent lived with at least one Aboriginal foster parent. The study also includes more detailed information about the living arrangements of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160413/dq160413a-eng.htm>

COMMUNITIES

The federal government announced a new partnership with stakeholders through the Social Partnership Initiative in Official Language Minority Communities (OLMCs). As part of the Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018: Education, Immigration, Communities, and funded through the Social Development Partnerships Program, the Fédération des aînées et aînés francophones du Canada will receive \$3.4 million to pool expertise and resources to fund innovative projects in OLMCs that address community priorities. This initiative will create stronger partnerships at the national, regional and local level to help both French- and English-speaking minority groups create opportunities to keep youth in their communities, meet the needs of seniors and assist vulnerable populations.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&crtr.page=1&nid=1053179&crtr.tp1D=1>

EDUCATION

The government is launching the application process for a \$2 billion fund that will improve research and innovation infrastructure at universities and colleges across the country. Announced in Budget 2016, the Post-Secondary Institutions Strategic Investment Fund will enhance and modernize research facilities on Canadian campuses and improve the environmental sustainability of these facilities. Consultation with the provinces and territories are under way.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&crtr.page=1&nid=1046709&crtr.tp1D=1>

EMPLOYMENT

In February, 548,700 people received regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits, up slightly from January (+4,200 or +0.8 percent). Provincially, the number of EI beneficiaries increased in Saskatchewan (+3.5 percent) and Alberta (+2.4 percent). There were also more EI recipients in Ontario (+1.1 percent) and Quebec (+1.1 percent). By contrast, fewer people received benefits in Nova Scotia (-1.7 percent). There was little change in the remaining provinces. On a year-over-year basis, the total number of EI beneficiaries in Canada was up 34,700 or 6.7 percent. Despite this increase, the number of beneficiaries has been relatively stable since the summer of 2015.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160421/dq160421a-eng.htm>



GOVERNANCE

The Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) released "Budget 2016: Key Issues for Parliamentarians." It stated: "The Government has made changes to the presentation of its fiscal plan that have made it more difficult for parliamentarians to scrutinize public finances.

- The Government did not provide detailed tables that identify the impact of changes to its adjustment to the private sector forecast and the effect of policy measures.
- Budget 2016 shortened the time horizon of cost estimates from 5 years to 2 years.
- Key fiscal information is being released outside of the budget and Fall Update with no reconciliation between the main documents."

The PBO had requested the data necessary to compile standard fiscal planning tables for Budget 2016.

<http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/en/blog/news/BUD2016KEY>

The Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) released *Expenditure Monitor 2015-16 Q3*. Its findings include:

- government expenditures for the first nine months of 2015-16 were \$187.7 billion, an increase of 4.8 percent over the same period last year (\$179.1 billion). This increase results from increased transfer payments for the unemployed and higher capital spending
- Employment Insurance (EI) benefits increased almost \$1 billion (7.4 percent) over the same period in 2014-15. According to Statistics Canada, the number of EI beneficiaries increased by 35,900 (7.1 percent) between January 2015 and January 2016, largely attributable to increases in Alberta, and other energy dependent regions. Concomitant with this, the national unemployment rate has risen to a three year high of 7.3 percent in February
- growth in capital spending is consistent with the \$393 million in federal infrastructure investment promised in Budget 2015 for 2015-16. Budget 2016 also committed to spending a further \$3.4 billion on federal assets over the next five years
- overall, the spending pattern in this fiscal year is similar to the previous two fiscal years. The PBO estimates that the government will lapse \$8.8 billion, including frozen allotments. This amount is higher than the most recent Department of Finance projection of \$6.5 billion.

http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/en/blog/news/EM_2015-16Q3

The Supreme Court of Canada announced the Daniels Decision, declaring that Métis and non-Status Indians are "Indians" for the purpose of federal Parliament's law-making jurisdiction under subsection 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867. The federal government stated that it would work

in genuine partnership with Métis and non-Status Indians – based on recognition of rights, respect and partnership – in order to meaningfully advance the work of reconciliation. The ruling does not impact on Métis and non-Status Indian eligibility for programs and services currently targeted to Status Indians.

<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1460635873455/1460635946946>

HEALTH

Children and youth in remote communities in Alberta, Manitoba and the Northwest Territories will participate in a program aimed at improving physical activity, nutrition and mental health. APPLE Schools has been operating successfully in northern Alberta since 2008, reaching more than 16,500 children to date. Results from show that children in the program eat more fruits and vegetables, are 35 percent more active and are 40 percent less likely to be obese than other students in Alberta.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&crtr.page=2&nid=1047059&crtr.tp1D=1>

The government announced that proposed legislation has been introduced that would give dying patients, who are suffering intolerably from a serious medical condition, the choice of a medically-assisted death.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1051809&tp=1>

Ottawa introduced funding for five projects that will improve surveillance of chronic disease risk factors, such as unhealthy eating and physical inactivity. Monitoring behavioural changes and their outcomes plays an important part in identifying interventions that prevent chronic diseases. The projects announced will help in the development of new resources to collect, analyze and share timely information on behaviours that reduce injury, promote safe physical activity and prevent unhealthy eating. The data collected from these initiatives will support public health professionals to inform patients, tailor prevention programs to specific populations, encourage positive behaviour change and identify emerging areas that require public health attention.

[Link](#)

HOUSING

Overvaluation is detected in nine Census Metropolitan Areas and overbuilding in seven, according to the latest Housing Market Assessment (HMA) released today by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). Nationally, CMHC detects moderate evidence of overvaluation. The HMA serves as an early warning system, alerting Canadians to areas of concern developing in local housing markets so that they may take action in a way that promotes market stability.

<http://www.schl.ca/en/corp/nero/nere/2016/2016-04-27-1200.cfm>

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Ten new data tables are available from Statistics Canada's 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey. The new material provide data on education,



employment and Aboriginal languages spoken and understood, by age group, sex and Aboriginal identity. Data are available at the national, provincial/territorial and Inuit region levels.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160401/dq160401d-eng.htm>

Statistics Canada released “Social determinants of health for the off-reserve First Nations population, 15 years of age and older, 2012,” one of the series Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2012.

<http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/olc-cel/olc.action?ObjId=89-653-X2016010&ObjType=46&lang=en&limit=0>

The Canadian Centre of Public Safety Excellence and Holland College is working with the Cree First Nation and Kiamauga Corporation to develop a new Aboriginal Community Safety Officer training program to be delivered at the Atlantic Police Academy. The program, to be housed at the Academy in Slemon Park, will be the first of its kind in Canada, offering a post-secondary educational option for young people considering a career in policing in Indigenous communities.

The Aboriginal Community Safety Officer training program is being developed in consultation with an advisory council consisting of members and elders from Nelson House First Nation in northern Manitoba to ensure that the curriculum is responsive to cultural sensitivities and the realities of law enforcement in Indigenous communities. The program will incorporate several subject areas including cultural issues, control tactics, use of force, law, sociology, psychology, communications, security issues, community leadership and occupational health.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&ctr.page=2&nid=1046869&ctr.tp1D=1>

The federal government released details of the \$4.6 billion in infrastructure spending it will make in First Nation and Inuit communities. Specifically, Budget 2016 includes:

- \$1.8 billion over five years to support clean drinking water and the treatment of wastewater on reserve
- \$969.4 million over five years for First Nation education facilities
- \$732 million over two years to address housing needs on reserve and in Inuit and northern communities
- \$255 million over two years for other First Nation community infrastructure – including roads, bridges, energy systems, connectivity, disaster mitigation and fire protection
- \$409 million over five years to improve waste management on reserve
- \$270.2 million over five years to expand and enhance health facilities in First Nations communities
- \$29.4 million over one year for repairs and renovations of Indigenous early learning and child care facilities

- \$76.9 million over two years to support the construction of cultural and recreational facilities on reserve
- \$10.4 million over three years for renovations and the construction of new shelters for victims of family violence in First Nations communities.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1056809&tp=980>

The federal government announced \$2,544,057 in funding for five projects through Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada’s Strategic Partnerships Initiative (SPI) to support educational and economic opportunities for First Nation communities in British Columbia. SPI is designed to increase Aboriginal participation in complex economic development opportunities, particularly in the natural resource sectors where projects are emerging at an unprecedented rate across the country. Prior to SPI, funding decisions typically were made individually by federal departments and agencies and in isolation of a broader strategy.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&ctr.page=3&nid=1057089&ctr.tp1D=1>

INCOME SECURITY

The government announced \$5.3 million in funding to Prosper Canada for its Financial Empowerment Champions project for vulnerable Canadians. Funded through the Children and Families component of the Social Development and Partnerships Program, the project sets out to help more than one million vulnerable Canadians over the next four and a half years by developing the partnerships, tools and community supports they need to build their financial capability and health.

Prosper Canada will recruit, train and support five not-for-profit organizations across Canada to:

- deliver a suite of proven financial empowerment programs to Canadians with low incomes
- train other community organizations to deliver these services
- mobilize local partners and resources
- work with municipal and provincial governments to build financial empowerment solutions into existing services for people with low incomes where this can help improve program effectiveness and financial outcomes for participants.

Vulnerable Canadians will benefit from access to quality financial education and counselling and help tax filing, accessing income benefits, opening bank accounts, and setting up RESPs and RDSPs – supports that have been shown to improve their incomes, savings, debt levels and credit scores, when delivered effectively with other community programs. [Link](#)



LABOUR MARKET

Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey, March 2016 reported that, after three months of little change, employment increased by 41,000 (+0.2 percent) in March, lowering the unemployment rate by 0.2 percentage points to 7.1 percent. With the gains in March, employment grew by 0.2 percent in the first quarter (+33,000). This was the fourth consecutive quarter with 0.2 percent employment growth. In the 12 months to March, employment increased by 130,000 (+0.7 percent), the result of growth in full-time work. Over the same period, the number of hours worked increased by 1.2 percent.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160408/dq160408a-eng.htm>

The government announced 198 new training projects aimed at helping individuals acquire the skills needed to overcome barriers to employment. Funding, which totals \$65 million, will be provided to organizations across the country for projects to help under-represented groups, such as Indigenous peoples, youth and persons with disabilities, build their skills and prepare for the workforce of the future. Many of the projects will provide instruction in order to develop or enhance skills, such as workplace safety. They also offer hands on experience in a job category of interest, such as a skilled trade, retail, hospitality, the food industry or business services.

[Link](#)

SENIORS

The following projects are a new set of initiatives offered through the "New Horizons for Seniors Program." For an entire list of projects, please link to the following website: [Link](#)

A four-member collaborative initiative is being implemented in Vancouver to help prevent and reduce social isolation among seniors. Local seniors will have a range of supports, including increased access to transportation, Welcoming Spaces sites for social activities and connection to services in their native language. Community Senior Hubs Training events will help volunteers and service providers to better identify, understand and connect socially isolated seniors with resources.

To achieve success, each organization will bring together a mix of community partners to carry out activities, measure results, leverage resources and implement improvements. The federal government partnered with Innoweave (an initiative of the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation) to join forces with these organizations to reduce social isolation among seniors by investing \$2.5 million in these projects through its New Horizons for Seniors Program.

[Link](#)

Seven projects that make up the Pan-Edmonton Group Addressing Social Isolation (PEGASIS) Impact Plan will increase community participation among seniors while connecting them to essential social services and support. Seniors in Edmonton, including immigrant seniors and seniors

with mental and physical disabilities, will benefit from services that include assisted transportation, community resource guides, nutritional assessments, door-to-door visits and community-based English as an alternate language classes. The federal government partnered with Innoweave (an initiative of the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation) to join forces with these organizations to reduce social isolation among seniors by investing more than \$3.7 million in these projects through its New Horizons for Seniors Program.

[Link](#)

The government announced \$700,000 funding for New Horizons for Seniors Program funding of a pan-Canadian action-research project against elder abuse. The funding recipient, the Université de Sherbrooke's Research Chair on Mistreatment of Older Adults, has worked with the Service de Police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM) to develop the model called L'intervention policière auprès des aînés maltraités. This project will enable the SPVM to standardize its police practice model for combatting elder abuse incidents in partnership with workers from the Centres d'aide aux victimes d'actes criminels, the Centres intégrés universitaires de santé et de services sociaux and other workers in the field.

[Link](#)