



Canada Social Report

Federal Policy Monitor

May 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

Statistics Canada's *Health Reports*, May 16 found that, in 2011-12, about half of the estimated 228,000 Canadians ages 45 or older who had been diagnosed with dementia lived in private households, while the other half lived in long-term residential care facilities.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160518/dq160518c-eng.htm>

DEMOGRAPHICS

The federal government is updating the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and Criminal Code to include gender identity and gender expression. The objectives of the Bill are to recognize and reduce the vulnerability of trans and other gender-diverse persons to discrimination, hate propaganda and hate crimes, and to affirm their equal status in Canadian society.

[Link](#)

Life tables, published by Statistics Canada for the period 2010-12, show that life expectancy at birth was 79.4 years among Canadian males and 83.6 years among Canadian females during the 2010-2012 period, up 0.3 years for males and up 0.2 years for females compared with 2009-2011. Canada is among the countries where life expectancy at birth is the highest for both males and females.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160519/dq160519c-eng.htm>

Statistics Canada's monthly "Megatrends" report focused on the growing trend in the number of women joining the workforce. The number of Canadian families with at least one child under 16 years at home and two employed parents almost doubled in the last 40 years – from 1.0 million families in 1976 to 1.9 million in 2015. Today, dual-income families account for nearly 7 in 10 families with children, whereas in 1976, they accounted for 4 in 10. A variety of factors played into this new reality, including changes in cultural attitudes, improved female education, general market conditions, more flexible working arrangements and greater family supports.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160530/dq160530c-eng.htm>

EDUCATION

The Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) released *Federal Spending on Postsecondary Education*, which offers an analysis of federal spending on postsecondary education in Canada over the past 10 years. Where possible, it analyzes the distributional impacts of federal programs. It also provides forward projections to 2020-21 taking into account recent Budget 2016 announcements.

In 2013-14, total federal spending on postsecondary education reached an estimated \$12.3 billion. This amount represents a decline from its peak of \$12.8 billion in 2010-11. Over the past ten years, the greatest growth occurred in spending that supports human capital formation and the Canada Social Transfer. PBO estimates that roughly 60 percent of postsecondary students belonged to higher-income families (i.e., the two highest after-tax or disposable income quintiles).

http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/en/blog/news/PSE_2016



GOVERNANCE

Released by the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO), the first Supplementary Estimates for the 2016-17 fiscal year outline \$1.3 billion in additional net budgetary spending. The Estimates request \$7.0 billion from Parliament in “voted” authorities (the largest such amount in a decade), and partially offset that with a decrease of \$5.7 billion in “statutory” authorities related to the cessation of the Universal Child Care Benefit. These Supplementary Estimates are historically large because, for the first time since the 2007 renewal of the Expenditure Management System, the Government has incorporated a significant number of new measures from the recent Budget.

As was originally intended almost one decade ago, presenting “Budget implementation” supplementary estimates will ensure parliamentarians are more easily able to scrutinize major legislative aspects of Budget 2016 in concert (including Bills C-2 and C-15, currently before the Senate and House of Commons, respectively). These Estimates have also returned to the practice of providing reconciliation tables between the Estimates and the Budget, granting Parliament with additional ability to scrutinize the Government’s finances.

The PBO is encouraged by the Government’s continued progress on addressing the recommendations for Estimates renewal presented in the *Seventh Report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates*.

[Link](#)

HEALTH

The federal government has committed \$16 million over five years to support eight new research teams that will find new ways to prevent or treat chronic conditions affecting millions of Canadians. It is commonly understood that both environmental and genetic factors play a role in the development of chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes and inflammatory bowel disease. But how exactly genes interact with the environment to contribute to these health conditions is not well understood.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&ctr.page=2&nid=1060029&ctr.tp1D=1>

The federal government announced an investment of \$4.95 million in the global fight against the Zika virus.

[Link](#)

Health Canada announced that the department will propose a regulatory amendment to allow access to diacetylmorphine under Health Canada’s Special Access Programme. A significant body of scientific evidence supports the medical use of diacetylmorphine, also known as pharmaceutical-grade heroin, for the treatment of chronic relapsing opioid dependence.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1065009&tp=1>

Statistics Canada announced the release of *Health Indicators*, a publication that includes updated health region level estimates on premature and potentially avoidable mortality and potential years of life lost. Health Indicators includes more than 80 indicators that measure the health of the Canadian population and the effectiveness of the health care system. Designed to provide comparable information at the health region and provincial/territorial levels, these data are produced from a wide range of the most recently available sources, including unemployment rates for 2015 by health region.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160524/dq160524e-eng.htm>

HOMELESSNESS

With funds announced in Budget 2017, the Homelessness Partnering Strategy will pay the Human Development Council (HDC) in Saint John, New Brunswick, \$1.2 million over five years to support projects that prevent and reduce homelessness. HDC will administer funds for local organizations and coordinate their roles. As part of this funding, Housing Alternatives Inc. is receiving more than \$85,000 this year to help up to ten people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness find and maintain stable housing. Housing Alternatives will hire a staff member to act as the hub of a team of service providers, who will connect clients to housing options as well as to other services and support they may need.

[Link](#)

HOUSING

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation released its 2015 Annual Report titled *Why Housing Matters*.

<http://www.schl.ca/en/corp/hero/here/2016/2016-05-09-1000.cfm>

INCOME SECURITY

The federal government launched the Employment Insurance Service Quality Review, a nationwide consultation process with key stakeholders and the public to seek input on ways to improve services to Employment Insurance claimants.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&ctr.page=2&nid=1064209&ctr.tp1D=1>

The Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) released Fiscal Analysis of a Targeted Tax Credit for Taxpayers in the Second Bracket. PBO estimated the average benefit to taxpayers in the second tax bracket, if the estimated projected \$1.8 billion in revenues from introducing a 33.0 percent tax rate on income over \$200,000 were redistributed to them.

http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/en/blog/news/Targeted_Tax_Credit

The federal government is deferring provincial loan payments for Newfoundland and Labrador on the federal Repayable Floor Loan of \$266,668,300, until April 1, 2022. Recognizing that the province is going through a period of extraordinary challenges, it will also receive an advance fiscal stabilization payment of \$31.7 million in 2015-16.



Support will include the designation of the Employment Insurance (EI) economic region of Newfoundland and Labrador as an eligible region for extended EI regular benefits of five weeks for all eligible claimants, and up to an additional 20 weeks for long-tenured workers.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&ctr:page=3&nid=1072419&crtr:tp1D=1>

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

The federal government announced that Canada is now a full supporter, without qualification, of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This announcement also reaffirms Canada's commitment to adopt and implement the Declaration in accordance with the Canadian Constitution. This action confirms Canada's commitment to a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples – a relationship based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership. Canada will engage with Indigenous groups on how to implement the principles of the Declaration. This engagement will include provinces and territories whose cooperation and support are essential to this work and to advancing the vital task of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1063339&tp=1>

Currently, the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) provides project funding for programs and services that increase the participation of urban Indigenous peoples in the economy. Budget 2016 provided a \$23.7 million renewal of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy for 2016-17, bringing the total funding for this year to \$53.1 million. Through Budget 2016, the Government also committed to strengthening the UAS by working with Indigenous partners to renew the program. Roundtable discussions will focus on finding ways to improve the program.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1059189&tp=1>

The Government of Canada and survivors of five Newfoundland and Labrador residential schools have reached an agreement on the proposed settlement of the Newfoundland and Labrador class actions. Until September 2016, former students will have an opportunity to review the proposed settlement and provide their comments to the Court. At that time, the Court will make a decision on the settlement.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1063349&tp=980>

The government is providing more support to Indigenous employment and training organizations serving Indigenous people across Canada. The goal is to increase opportunities for Indigenous people to develop their skills and access support services they require to get jobs and succeed in the labour market. Some measures supported by this targeted funding to at-risk Indigenous communities could include: flexible supports for costs associated with obtaining child care, transportation needs and services, and driver education and licensing. The government also announced a new call for proposals for the Skills and Partnership Fund, with a total value of \$50 million per year. The Fund encourages Indigenous

organizations to create partnerships with governments, businesses and community organizations to improve skills training. The call for proposals closes on July 5, 2016.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&ctr:page=2&nid=1072449&crtr:tp1D=1>

LABOUR MARKET

Statistics Canada reported that, following an increase in March, employment was virtually unchanged in April (-2,100 or 0.0 percent), and the unemployment rate remained at 7.1 percent. Compared with 12 months earlier, employment increased by 144,000 or 0.8 percent, with gains in both full-time and part-time work. Over the same period, the number of hours worked rose by 0.9 percent.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160506/dq160506a-eng.htm>

According to Statistics Canada's Job Vacancy and Wage Survey, Canadian employers reported 353,000 job vacancies in the fourth quarter, and the job vacancy rate was 2.3 percent.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160512/dq160512a-eng.htm>

Statistics Canada reported that, in March, 545,700 people received regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits, essentially unchanged from the previous month (-2,400 or -0.4 percent). The number of EI beneficiaries has been little changed since the fall of 2015.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160519/dq160519b-eng.htm>

LITERACY

Statistics Canada released *Literacy and numeracy among off-reserve First Nations people and Métis: Do higher skill levels improve labour market outcomes?* The study is based on data from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies. The survey assessed individuals' level of proficiency in skills related to literacy, numeracy and problem-solving in technology-rich environments. Among the report's findings was the fact that Non-Aboriginal adults ages 25 to 54 with lower literacy skills were 12 percentage points more likely to be employed in 2012 than off-reserve First Nations adults with higher literacy skills. Once they had a job, however, off-reserve First Nations adults with higher skills were as likely as their non-Aboriginal counterparts to work as professionals or as managers.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160518/dq160518b-eng.htm>

MENTAL HEALTH

The government released a second report by the Joint Task Force on Mental Health in the Workplace. Building on the recommendations of the first report, the Joint Task Force's second report provides specific direction to federal public service organizations in key areas, such as guidance on the selection of a mental health champion and the development of organizational engagement.

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