



Canada Social Report

# Federal Policy Monitor

August 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.

#### DISABILITY

Youth with disabilities are being invited to take part in a National Youth Forum taking place in Ottawa in November. Their life, work and academic experiences will inform the development of planned accessibility legislation aimed at promoting equality of opportunity and increasing the inclusion and participation of Canadians who have disabilities or functional limitations.

[Link](#)

#### EDUCATION

In time for the 2016-17 school year, Canada Student Grant amounts increased by 50 percent on August 1. Beginning November 1, the federal government will ease the rules on its Repayment Assistance Plan by ensuring that no single borrower will be required to make any repayment until he or she is earning at least \$25,000 per year.

[Link](#)

#### EMPLOYMENT

Statistics Canada's *Job Vacancy and Wage Survey*, first quarter 2016 reported that from the first quarter of 2015 to the first quarter of 2016, the job vacancy rate declined in nine provinces and two territories, with the largest decreases occurring in Alberta and Saskatchewan. At the same time, the job vacancy rate increased in Nunavut, and was little changed in New Brunswick.

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.

[Link](#)

Statistics Canada reported that regular Employment Insurance (EI) beneficiaries in Canada totalled 545,900 in June – essentially unchanged from May. Compared with 12 months earlier, the number of people receiving regular EI benefits was up by 8,000 or 1.5 percent. In June, the number of EI beneficiaries increased in Prince Edward Island (+6.5 percent), New Brunswick (+5.5 percent) and Nova Scotia (+1.0 percent), while it fell in British Columbia (-2.1 percent) and Manitoba (-1.3 percent). There was little change in the remaining provinces.

[Link](#)

#### HEALTH

Canada is experiencing a growing number of opioid overdoses and deaths across the country. In response, Health Canada is moving forward with plans to restrict six chemicals used in the production of fentanyl, originally put forward by Senator Vern White's Senate Public Bill S-225, *An Act to Amend the Controlled Drugs and Substance Act (substances used*



in the production of fentanyl). This regulatory proposal would add these substances to the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* and the Precursor Control Regulations, meaning that their unauthorized importation and exportation would be illegal.

[Link](#)

### LABOUR MARKET

Statistics Canada reported that, after three months of little change, employment declined by 31,000 (-0.2 percent) in July. The unemployment rate increased 0.1 percentage point to 6.9 percent. Full-time employment fell by 71,000 from June to July, while part-time work was up by 40,000. Compared with 12 months earlier, total employment increased by 71,000 or 0.4 percent, with all of the growth in part-time work. Over the same period, the total number of hours worked rose by 0.4 percent.

[Link](#)

### WOMEN/LABOUR MARKET

According to Statistics Canada's report, *The Canada-US gap in women's labour market participation, 1997 to 2015*, the proportion of women ages 25 to 54 who participated in the labour market rose in Canada over the last two decades, while it fell in the United States. In 1997, female labour force participation rates in Canada and the United States were almost identical, with 76 percent of Canadian women ages 25 to 54 and 77 percent of American women in that age group participating in the labour force. By 2015, the female participation rate had increased to 81 percent in Canada, while it had declined to 74 percent in the United States.

[Link](#)