



Canada Social Report

Federal Policy Monitor

October 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/INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

As a first step in overhauling the country's child and family services, the government appointed Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux as the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs' Special Representative. She is responsible for leading a national engagement process and providing advice on the reform of the on-reserve First Nations Child and Family Services program.

[Link](#)

DISABILITY

Federal and BC provincial government representatives are challenging the rest of the provinces and territories to alert more Canadians to financial supports available to people with disabilities. The awareness campaign will focus on the Canada Disability Savings Bond and the Canada Disability Savings Grant. More than 33 percent of individuals in BC ages 0 to 49 who are eligible for the disability tax credit have an RDSP, making it the province with the highest per capita uptake in the country.

[Link](#)

EMPLOYMENT

Statistics Canada reported that employment rose by 67,000 (+0.4 percent) in September, with most of the increase in part-time work. The unemployment rate was unchanged at 7.0 percent, as more people participated in the labour market. In the third quarter of 2016, employment gains totalled 62,000 (+0.3 percent). This rise followed little change in employment in the second quarter and a slight increase of 33,000 (+0.2 percent) in the first quarter. Compared with 12 months earlier, employment rose by 139,000 (+0.8 percent), with most of the gains in part-time work. Over the same period, the total number of hours worked edged up 0.2 percent.

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GOVERNANCE

The Parliamentary Budget Officer released *Economic and Fiscal Outlook October 2016*.

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HEALTH/SOCIAL FINANCE

The federal government announced the launch of the Community Hypertension Prevention Initiative. Funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada and operating in Ontario and BC, the initiative marks the first time the government has used a Social Impact Bond in the area of public health.

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INCOME SECURITY

Statistics Canada announced the release of *Social Policy Simulation Database and Model (SPSD/M), version 22.2*. It can be used to study the impacts of changes to federal and provincial tax and benefit programs on families and governments from 1997 to 2021.



The SPSPD/M is designed to analyze the financial interactions of governments and individuals/families in Canada. It can be used to estimate the income redistributive effects or cost implications of changes in personal taxation (including the goods and services tax and other commodity taxes) and cash transfer systems. The SPSPD/M can help analysts examine the potential impacts of changes in taxes, earnings, demographic trends and a wide range of other factors.

[Link](#)

Regular Employment Insurance (EI) beneficiaries in Canada totalled 563,000 in August, down 3.0 percent from the previous month. This decrease followed a 5.0 percent increase in July, when legislative changes to the EI program came into effect. On a year-over-year basis, the number of beneficiaries was up 23,700 (+4.4 percent).

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The federal government introduced *Budget Implementation Act, 2016, No. 2* which includes a measure to ensure the new Canada Child Benefit will grow in line with inflation as of July 1, 2020.

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The government tabled the Chief Actuary's *28th Actuarial Report on the CPP* in Parliament. The report confirms that the contribution and benefit levels proposed under the CPP enhancement agreed upon by Canada's federal and provincial/territorial governments on June 20, 2016, will be sustainable over the long term.

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The federal government announced new Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPPD) service standards. Standards for applicants with terminal illness or grave medical conditions were created and revisions were made to two existing service standards:

- CPPD Benefit for Applicants with Terminal Illness – the goal is to make a decision for applicants with a terminal illness within five business days of receiving a complete terminal illness application and for this target to be met 95 percent of the time
- CPPD Benefit for Applicants with Grave Medical Conditions – the goal is to make a decision for applicants with a grave condition within 30 calendar days of receiving a complete application and for this target to be met 80 percent of the time
- Application for CPPD Benefit Standard – the goal is to make a decision on applications for a CPPD benefit within 120 calendar days of receiving a complete application and for this target to rise from 75 to 80 percent
- CPPD Benefit reconsiderations – the goal is to make a decision on a reconsideration request within 120 calendar days of receiving the

reconsideration request and for this target to rise from 70 percent to 80 percent.

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Improvements and expansions to the automatic enrolment system for Old Age Security (OAS) benefits will result in more than 50 percent of new OAS beneficiaries being automatically enrolled for the OAS basic pension.

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INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

A bill was introduced in the Senate intended to eliminate known sex-based inequities in the registration provisions of the *Indian Act*. Engagement sessions were held with First Nations and other Indigenous groups over the summer to discuss the proposed legislative approach on the amendments. In February 2017, a collaborative process with First Nations and other Indigenous groups will be launched to examine the broader issues relating to Indian registration, Band membership and citizenship.

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LABOUR MARKET

According to Statistics Canada's *Job Vacancy and Wage Survey*, second quarter 2016, Canadian employers reported 392,000 job vacancies in the second quarter, and the job vacancy rate was 2.5 percent. Compared with the second quarter of 2015, the number of job vacancies declined by 45,000 (-10.3 percent), and the job vacancy rate decreased by 0.3 percentage points. From the second quarter of 2015 to the second quarter of 2016, the number of job vacancies fell in 6 of the 10 broad occupational groups, with the largest decrease in trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations.

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MENTAL HEALTH/INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

A Statistics Canada released *Suicidal thoughts among off-reserve First Nations, Métis and Inuit adults aged 18 and older, 2012*. The study found that, in 2012, between 5 percent and 11 percent of off-reserve First Nations, Métis and Inuit ages 18 to 25 reported having had suicidal thoughts in the previous 12 months, and between 16 percent and 27 percent reported having had suicidal thoughts at least once during their lifetime. Aboriginal young adults were twice as likely as non-Aboriginal young adults to report having had suicidal thoughts.

[Link](#)

The federal government established a national toll-free First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line. The Help Line provides telephone crisis intervention counselling support and assists callers in identifying



appropriate follow-up services. Counselling is available in English and French and, upon request, in Cree, Ojibway and Inuktitut.

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POVERTY REDUCTION

Members of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA) were presented with a paper entitled *Towards a Poverty Reduction Strategy*. The paper is designed to open a dialogue on the subject of poverty reduction in Canada and provides context and background information on the issue.

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SOCIAL FINANCE

Ottawa announced a call for nominations to seek membership on a Steering Group that will embark on a collaborative initiative to co-develop a Social Innovation and Social Finance Strategy with federal government.

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YOUTH

The federal government is establishing an Expert Panel on Youth Employment. It will invite young people from across the country, as well as representatives from provincial and territorial governments, rural and remote communities, Indigenous groups, businesses/employers, labour unions, not for profits, think tanks and the academic community, to share their perspectives. Each year, the federal government invests more than \$300 million in Canada's young people through the Youth Employment Strategy (YES). As announced in Budget 2016, total funding for YES is increasing by \$278 million in 2016-17, representing the largest investment in YES since its launch in 1997.

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