



Canada Social Report

Federal Policy Monitor

November 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.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Department of Finance released the *Fall Economic Statement*, pledging to:

- invest an additional \$81 billion in public transit, green and social infrastructure, transportation infrastructure that supports trade and in rural and northern communities
- create a Global Skills Strategy, supported by improvements to Canada's immigration system, to help Canadian and international companies access the talent and skills they need
- create the Invest in Canada Hub, staffed with a dedicated high-impact sales force to promote Canada, and to work with global companies to increase investment
- strengthen the independence of Statistics Canada and the Parliamentary Budget Officer to provide fair and unbiased evidence and analysis, and make government more open and transparent.

[Link](#)

DEMOGRAPHICS

Statistics Canada released *Canadian population estimates: Census families* and *Canadian population estimates: Age, sex and marital status*.

The federal government is committed to building a diverse public service that reflects Canadian society and is a model of inclusion for employers across the country and around the world. The President of the Treasury Board announced the creation of a joint task force with both government and union representatives that will examine diversity and inclusion in the public service.

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EDUCATION

Enrolments in Canadian public postsecondary institutions (colleges and universities) totalled more than two million in the 2014-15 academic year, up 0.3 percent from the previous year. International student enrolments rose 11.4 percent in 2014-15 and accounted for more than 10 percent of total enrolments. The majority of international students attended postsecondary institutions in Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia. China was the main country of citizenship, accounting for three in 10 (30.4 percent) international postsecondary students in Canada. India ranked second (8.9 percent) followed by France (8.1 percent).

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EMPLOYMENT

Statistics Canada released a new study that focuses on the rising interest in local manufacturing data. The study analyzes manufacturing estimates by industry from 2007-12 for 11 Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) in Canada. Together, these CMAs accounted for more than 50 percent of



Canada's population and 59 percent of gross domestic product in 2009.
[Link](#)

Statistics Canada's *Employment Insurance Coverage Survey, 2015* reported that the eligibility rate for receiving regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits was 82.8 percent in 2015, little changed from 83.1 percent in 2014.

In all, 848,000 unemployed people contributed to the EI program in 2015, as they paid premiums in the 12 months preceding their unemployment spell. This figure represented 65.3 percent of all unemployed, the largest share since 2009. From 2014 to 2015, the proportion of unemployed people who contributed to the EI program rose by 4.3 percentage points, reflecting an increase in the number of unemployed people who had worked in the previous 12 months.

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Regular Employment Insurance (EI) beneficiaries totalled 571,800 in September, up slightly from August (+3,300 or +0.6 percent). On a year-over-year basis, the number of beneficiaries was up 27,800 (+5.1 percent). Legislative changes to the EI program came into effect in July 2016. While some of these changes affected all EI regions across Canada, eligible claimants in the 15 regions that posted notable increases in unemployment received additional weeks of regular benefits starting in July.

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GOVERNANCE

The Parliamentary Budget Officer released *Supplementary Estimates (B)*, which outlines \$4.3 billion in additional budgetary spending. The estimates request \$3.9 billion in "voted" authorities and an additional \$0.4 billion in "statutory" authorities.

- \$1.7 billion (44 percent) of the voted authorities in these Estimates are related to approximately 50 measures announced in Budget 2016, including an additional:
 - \$249 million for the Post-Secondary Institutions Strategic Investment Fund. Funding for federal capital spending at post-secondary institutions is projected to increase sharply in 2016-17, and would surpass spending during the years immediately following the 2009 economic downturn
 - \$283 million for the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada Education program. In Budget 2016, the Government committed to spend \$2.6 billion over five years on primary and secondary education on reserve, starting in 2016-17. Expected to Work Medical Condition (employable but with short-term medical issue)

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The Government of Canada introduced legislation that proposes seven changes to the Canadian electoral system. Bill C-33, *An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act* would repeal those elements of the *Fair Elections Act* that make it harder for Canadians to vote.

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The Auditor General's *Fall Reports* focused on the Beyond the Border Action Plan, income tax objections, Indigenous offenders, oversight of passenger vehicle safety, recruitment and retention in the Canadian Armed Forces, the resolution of First Nations' specific claims, and support for the operation and maintenance of military equipment.

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HOMELESSNESS

Statistics Canada released "[Hidden homelessness in Canada](#)." The study revealed that, in 2014, about 2.3 million Canadians ages 15 and over – 8 percent of the population – reported that sometime in their lives they had to temporarily live with family, friends, in their car or somewhere else because they had nowhere else to live. This situation is referred to as "hidden homelessness."

Of the Canadians who have experienced hidden homelessness at some point in their lives, 18 percent said that it had lasted for a year or more, 55 percent said that it lasted less than one year, but at least one month, and 27 percent for less than one month.

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INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs and the President of the Manitoba Metis Federation signed a historic Framework Agreement that sets out a process to begin formal reconciliation negotiations. These talks are about working together to address the outstanding issues raised in the 2013 Manitoba Metis Federation Inc. versus Canada decision of the Supreme Court of Canada.

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LABOUR MARKET

Statistics Canada reported that employment rose by 44,000 (+0.2 percent) in October as a result of more part-time work. The unemployment rate remained at 7.0 percent as more people participated in the labour market. Compared with 12 months earlier, employment increased by 140,000 (+0.8 percent), mainly in part-time work (+124,000 or +3.6 percent). At the same time, the total number of hours worked was little changed.

In October, employment increased among youth and edged up for men ages 25 to 54. There was little change among the other demographic groups in the month. Provincially, employment was up in Ontario and British Columbia, while it declined in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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MENTAL HEALTH

The federal government announced its support for the development of a national suicide prevention service. It will integrate and link existing regional distress and crisis line services across Canada. Once fully implemented in late 2017, it will ensure that individuals in crisis, regardless of where they live in Canada, have access to free and confidential support, on a 24/7 basis.

The Canadian Distress Line Network and its partners have begun testing the service in BC, Alberta and Ontario. The pilot phase includes testing the integration and compatibility of the various technological platforms used to link existing crisis call centres, developing standardized training for responders and setting national service standards.

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