



Canada Social Report

Federal Policy Monitor

December 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.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Statistics Canada published its third quarter 2016 Canadian population estimates. Its figures show that Canada's population was 36,443,632 on October 1, 2016, up 157,207 from July 1, 2016. In absolute numbers, this was the largest increase since the start of the period covered by the current system of demographic accounts (July 1971). This strong population growth was mainly attributable to a substantial increase in the number of non-permanent residents (+57,362). The number of new immigrants (68,241) also markedly contributed to Canada's population growth.

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DISABILITY

The Government of Canada has begun a consultation process on Canada's accession to the *United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (the Optional Protocol). The Optional Protocol gives people with disabilities a new safeguard for their rights by establishing two procedures aimed at strengthening the implementation and monitoring of the Convention. The first is a complaint procedure that allows individuals and groups to bring petitions to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities claiming that their rights under the convention have been violated. The second is an inquiry procedure that gives the Committee authority to investigate allegations of grave or systematic violations of the provisions of the convention by a state party. The Optional Protocol was adopted by the UN in 2006 and entered into force in 2008. As of November 2016, there are 92 states parties to the protocol.

Provinces and territories have an important role to play in considering Canada's possible accession to the Optional Protocol, and consultations are currently taking place with them on this matter. The process will also involve engagement with Indigenous governments that may be implicated as well as Indigenous organizations and civil society.

[Link](#)

EDUCATION

A new Statistics Canada study, "[Co-op participation of college and bachelor's graduates](#)," found that, from 1986 to 2010, the proportion of graduates from postsecondary institutions who participated in a co-op program rose from 7 percent to 22 percent among college graduates, and from 5 percent to 12 percent among bachelor's graduates.

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Statistics Canada released *Education indicators in Canada: An international perspective, 2015*.

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In total, universities and colleges throughout Québec will receive nearly \$1.1 billion from the federal and provincial governments, the institutions



themselves and private donors. Federal funding will be allocated through the [Post-Secondary Institutions Strategic Investment Fund](#), which will enhance and modernize research facilities on Canadian campuses, improve the environmental sustainability of these facilities and help youth join a strong and healthy middle class. The government of Québec announced the 2016-2026 Québec Infrastructure Plan that includes investments in all sectors of the economy, including those in higher education.

[Link](#)

EDUCATION/INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The Government of Canada and the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre announced the historic signing of an Education Governance Agreement for the creation of the Manitoba First Nations school board that will be fully operational for the 2017-18 school year. This Agreement is designed to support First Nations-led education transformation and reflects Canada's commitment to support a quality and culturally relevant First Nations education system, developed and controlled by First Nations.

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The Parliamentary Budget Officer released *Federal Spending on Primary and Secondary Education on First Nations Reserves*. It states: "In Canada, education is largely a provincial domain. The notable exception is education for First Nations students living on reserve. This responsibility falls squarely with the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs (INAC). After comparing and analyzing data on federal and provincial education spending, PBO found evidence that INAC funding mechanisms:

- do not adequately take into account important cost drivers for band-operated schools
- favour students living on reserves who attend provincial schools
- put band-operated schools in remote northern regions at significant disadvantage."

[Report Link](#)

[Release Link](#)

EMPLOYMENT

In October, 575,200 people received regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits, little changed (+2,700 or +0.5 percent) from the previous month. The number of EI beneficiaries increased in five provinces, notably Saskatchewan (+6.0 percent), Alberta (+3.0 percent) and British Columbia (+2.1 percent), but also Newfoundland and Labrador (+1.9 percent) and Nova Scotia (+1.9 percent). Conversely, the number of beneficiaries declined by 1.8 percent in Québec. Compared with 12 months earlier, the number of beneficiaries in Canada was up 31,400 (+5.8 percent).

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Starting January 2017, the Employment Insurance waiting period will be shortened from two weeks to one week.

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HEALTH

In support of achieving the global targets for HIV – known as the 90-90-90 targets – the government announced an investment of more than \$3.5 million to fund Canadian HIV/AIDS researchers doing cutting-edge biomedical and clinical research, as well as those working in the communities most vulnerable to HIV infection, including Indigenous communities. The 90-90-90 targets aim to ensure that 90 percent of HIV positive people will know their status, that 90 percent of people who know their status receive treatment and that 90 percent of those on treatment have suppressed viral loads. Achieving these global targets by 2020 will help to eliminate AIDS as a global public health threat by 2030.

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A record number of Canadians have died from drug overdoses this year, including those involving fentanyl. Building on actions taken earlier this year, the Government of Canada is updating its drug strategy to provide for a comprehensive approach that will reduce the harms currently being experienced by individuals and communities.

The new *Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy* will replace the existing *National Anti-Drug Strategy* with a more balanced approach. It restores harm reduction as a core pillar of Canada's drug policy, alongside prevention, treatment and enforcement and supports – all pillars with a strong evidence base.

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Over the next 10 years, the federal government will provide New Brunswick with \$229.4 million:

- \$125.1 million for better home care, including critical home care infrastructure requirements
- \$104.3 million in support of mental health initiatives.

[Link](#)

The federal government and the provincial governments of Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia agreed to new targeted federal funding over 10 years for investments in home care and mental health care.

Over the next 10 years, the federal government will support better home care, including addressing critical home care infrastructure requirements, by providing:

- Newfoundland and Labrador with \$87.7 million
- Nova Scotia with \$157.0 million.



Over the same period, it will support mental health initiatives with new funding of:

- \$73.0 million for Newfoundland and Labrador
- \$130.8 million for Nova Scotia.

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INCOME SECURITY

The Parliamentary Budget Officer published *The Fiscal Cost of Indexing the Canada Child Benefit*. PBO estimates that with indexation, the CCB will grow steadily over time. This is in contrast to the projected decline if the CCB continued to be not indexed to the consumer price index. The distribution of these benefits also changes with indexation. The number of recipients in the highest income threshold continues to grow under both scenarios of indexation and no indexation. As a result, the share of total CCB expenditures allocated to families with incomes above the highest-income threshold will continue to grow. Even so, the average benefits of the higher-income families would continue to be lower than that of families with lower incomes, as it was under projections of the non-indexed CCB.

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INDIGENOUS PEOPLES/HEALTH

Statistics Canada released *Health indicators by Aboriginal identity, 2011 to 2014* which uses combined data from the *Canadian Community Health Survey*. Tables provide data by Aboriginal identity (First Nations people living off reserve, Métis, Inuit and the non-Aboriginal population), age group and sex.

Data are available on more than 30 health indicators, including perceived health, smoking, exposure to second-hand smoke, physical activity during leisure time, obesity, high blood pressure, drinking, fruit and vegetable consumption, diabetes, asthma, arthritis and life stress.

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LABOUR MARKET

Statistics Canada reported that, after two consecutive months of notable increases, employment was little changed in November (+11,000 or +0.1 percent). With fewer people searching for work, the unemployment rate fell by 0.2 percentage points to 6.8 percent. Compared with November 2015, overall employment rose by 183,000 (+1.0 percent), with the number of people working part time increasing by 214,000 (+6.4 percent). Over the same period, the total number of hours worked was up 1.1 percent.

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Average weekly earnings of non-farm payroll employees were \$954 in October, little changed from the previous month (-0.1 percent) and unchanged compared with 12 months earlier (0.0 percent).

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LABOUR MARKET/YOUTH

Statistics Canada reported that, while youth unemployment in recent years stood at levels comparable to those of the mid-1970s, the proportion of youth employed in full-time or permanent jobs has fallen substantially over the last four decades, a trend also observed in many Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries.

The unemployment rate of youth – individuals ages 15 to 24 – averaged 13.2 percent in 2015, slightly higher than the rate of 12.4 percent observed in 1976. Canada's youth unemployment rate was slightly lower than the OECD average for this group at 14.0 percent in 2015.

In both 1976 and 2015, the youth unemployment rate was about 2.3 times higher than the rate among individuals ages 25 and older. Over the 1953 to 2015 period, the youth unemployment rate was 2.1 times higher on average.

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