



Canada Social Report

Federal Policy Monitor

February 2017



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 released a portion of the latest national statistical portrait with results of the 2016 Census count on population and dwellings. The count tallies 35,151,728 people who reported living in Canada on Census Day, May 10, 2016, and shows the patterns of population growth across the country. Over the coming year the agency will unveil the full range of census data.

[Link](#)

EMPLOYMENT

Statistics Canada reported that employment rose by 48,000 (+0.3 percent) in January, building on gains observed in the latter part of 2016. The unemployment rate fell by 0.1 percentage points to 6.8 percent. On a year-over-year basis, employment rose by 276,000 (+1.5 percent), with most of the increase occurring from August to January. Following a significant increase in December, full-time employment held steady in January. Compared with 12 months earlier, full-time employment was up 86,000 (+0.6 percent), with increases totalling 141,000 since August.

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FOOD SECURITY/INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

More than half (52 percent) of Inuit adults aged 25 and older who lived in Inuit Nunangat in 2012 – the Inuit homeland in Canada – reported that they had experienced food insecurity in the previous 12 months. This compared with 14 percent of Inuit living outside Inuit Nunangat. Inuit Nunangat includes the communities in the four Inuit regions: Nunatsiavut (northern coastal Labrador), Nunavik (northern Quebec), the territory of Nunavut, and the Inuvialuit region of the Northwest Territories. In Nunavut and in Nunavik, approximately 55 percent of Inuit adults reported that they had experienced food insecurity in the previous 12 months. This compared with 42 percent in Nunatsiavut and 33 percent in the Inuvialuit region.

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GOVERNANCE

The Parliamentary Budget Officer released a report entitled, *Canada's New Infrastructure Plan: 1st Report to Parliament – Following the Money*. It analyzes the government's New Infrastructure Plan (NIP) announced through the 2016 Federal Budget and its 2016 Fall Economic Statement. The analysis is designed to assist parliamentarians in understanding program outcomes and potential risks to those outcomes. The government plans to allocate \$186.7 billion in funding for the NIP over the next 10 years. Of this total, \$82.8 billion is new, incremental funding. The Government has provided no performance measurement framework with which to evaluate the NIP's performance, and only limited visibility on tracking how the money is being spent.

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The Parliamentary Budget Officer's *Supplementary Estimates (C) 2016-17* asks Parliament for \$2.5 billion to spend in the last weeks of the



fiscal year. This is partially offset by a \$1.0 billion reduction in statutory spending. This brings total planned budgetary spending for the current fiscal year to \$257.7 billion.

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HEALTH/INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Statistics Canada released the results of a study that reviewed smoking prevalence among Canada's Inuit. The percentage of Inuit ages 15 or older who were daily smokers declined significantly from 64 percent in 1991 to 52 percent in 2012, but remained well above the rate for the total population. The percentage of all Canadians ages 15 or older who were daily smokers decreased from 22 percent in 2001 to 16 percent in 2012.

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Health Canada issued a statement confirming its commitment to the wellbeing of First Nations children and families. Recognizing that there are situations where First Nations children are not receiving the full breadth of services they would be receiving if they lived in urban areas, or if they were not First Nations children, it promised full implementation of Jordan's Principle.

The government has expanded Jordan's Principle so that it applies to all First Nations children, and includes health and social services supports. The Government of Canada has allocated \$382.5 million over three years to Jordan's Principle. Funds are being allocated to support children as soon as they are identified and to ensure arrangements are in place to provide access to needed services. Expenditures will continue to grow as more children are identified across the country.

[Link](#)

The federal government announced an investment of \$1 million for two research projects that will bring new and culturally-adapted approaches to address the needs of Indigenous peoples living with or at risk of developing dementia. The research will take place at the Health Sciences North Research Institute and Laurentian University in Sudbury.

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HOMELESSNESS

The federal government announced \$3 million to support Homelessness Partnering Strategy in 61 designated communities that wish to participate in *Everyone Counts: the 2018 Coordinated Point-in-Time (PiT) count of Homelessness in Canadian Communities*.

The 2018 PiT count will help communities measure their progress in reducing homelessness and will contribute to the understanding of homelessness throughout Canada. The results of this initiative will also contribute to the Government of Canada's efforts to reduce poverty in Canada.

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INCOME SECURITY

The federal government released a review of how Service Canada delivers the Employment Insurance (EI) program. Key conclusions of the report indicate that Canadians want:

- clearer and easier communication between Canadians and Service Canada
- better support and guidance for those who need help navigating the EI program
- accessible call centres to support Canadians when they need it
- improved service standards that focus on positive claimant outcomes, rather than on speed of processing
- a citizen-centric approach that puts the needs and preferences of Canadians at the focal point of all key decisions.

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In December, 568,800 people received regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits, down slightly (-3,200 or -0.6 percent) from the previous month. Provincially, Saskatchewan recorded the largest decrease in beneficiaries (-3.6 percent) in December. Smaller declines occurred in Quebec (-1.7 percent), British Columbia (-1.6 percent) and Prince Edward Island (-1.3 percent). Conversely, the number of beneficiaries increased in Alberta (+1.7 percent), while it was little changed in the other provinces. In the 12 months to December, the number of EI beneficiaries in Canada was up by 23,100 or 4.2 percent, largely as a result of increases in Alberta.

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INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The federal government launched negotiations towards a national resolution to Sixties Scoop litigation. Beginning in the 1960s, Indigenous children were removed from their homes by child welfare authorities and many were placed in foster care or adopted out to non-Indigenous families. A number of Sixties Scoop class actions are now under way.

[Link](#)

The Government of Canada announced support for Comprehensive Community Planning (CCP). CCP is a mechanism for First Nations-led community engagement that promotes capacity building and long term priority-setting. It is designed to foster new approaches to community planning, highlight best practices and engagement with their membership to address areas such as infrastructure, health, culture and economic development.

In 2017, the Government of Canada invested \$6 million to support 75 communities participating in CCP. Over the next four years, 176 communities will join them for global investments of \$30 million in CCP for Indigenous communities across Canada.

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The Government of Canada, the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, and the Government of Ontario announced the signing of a Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding on Education which will:

- support the development of a community-based language strategy
- build relationships between educators in First Nation operated schools and provincial educators and schools through shared professional development and training opportunities
- support the transition of students between First Nation schools and provincially-funded schools.

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POVERTY REDUCTION

The federal government launched two initiatives to support the development of Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy: a nation-wide consultation process and a call for nominations for a ministerial advisory committee on poverty. Another initiative to support the Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy – the Tackling Poverty Together (TPT) research project – was announced in September 2016. Work is currently under way in Saint John, and will continue in Trois-Rivières, Regent Park (Toronto), Winnipeg, Tisdale, and Yellowknife. This analytical research project will involve case studies of six communities across Canada that are concerned about poverty issues. The project will assess the impact of federal poverty reduction programs locally in communities, based on the opinions of citizens including people with experience of poverty.

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WOMEN

There were about 3.4 million girls aged 17 and under in Canada on July 1, 2016, accounting for about one-fifth of Canada's female population. Statistics Canada released a new chapter, "The Girl Child," from the publication Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report. This chapter describes the demographic characteristics of girls in Canada, and presents several topics related to their well-being, such as their living arrangements, socioeconomic conditions, health and education.

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