



Canada Social Report

# Federal Policy Monitor

August 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.

#### CHILDREN

The federal and Prince Edward Island governments reached a three-year, \$10.5 million bilateral agreement reaffirming their commitment and support of the unique early learning and child care needs of the province. The Island's funding focus will be on early learning and child care access for vulnerable children including infants, preschoolers, children whose parents work seasonally or non-standard hours, and underserved populations, including newcomer families and Acadian- and French-speaking communities. Funding will also be directed towards professional training for early learning and care educators with the aim of improving the quality and richness of experiences for children.

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#### DEMOGRAPHICS

Statistics Canada released the third series of data from the 2016 Census, focusing on families, households, marital status and language. It showed that proportionally fewer households are composed of a mother, father and children family arrangement and more people are living alone, as part of a couple without children or as part of a multigenerational family. These changes are the result of demographic shifts, such as population aging and increasing ethnocultural diversity as well as social, economic and legislative changes.

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Statistics Canada Census 2016 data shows that linguistic diversity is on the rise in Canada. Close to 7.6 million Canadians reported speaking a language other than English or French at home in 2016, an increase of almost 1 million (+14.5 percent) people over 2011. Moreover, the proportion of the Canadian population who speak more than one language at home rose from 17.5 percent in 2011 to 19.4 percent in 2016. English and French remain the languages of convergence and integration into Canadian society: 93.4 percent of Canadians speak English or French at least on a regular basis at home.

The rate of English-French bilingualism in Canada was 17.9 percent in 2016, the highest proportion ever. The previous high was 17.7 percent in 2001.

Languages other than English and French are becoming more common in Canada. The proportion of the population who reported an "other" mother tongue (alone or with other languages) rose from 21.3 percent in 2011 to 22.9 percent in 2016. Similarly, 21.8 percent of Canadians reported speaking an "other" language at home in 2016, compared with 20.0 percent in 2011.

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The federal government will be working to implement an "X" gender designation in Canadian passports, as well as other documents issued by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). This action will



support LGBTQ2 rights and advance the government's agenda on gender equality, diversity and inclusion.

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## DISABILITY

Statistics Canada reported that people with disabilities accounted for approximately 20 percent of the Canadian population ages 25 to 64 in 2014, but for 41 percent of the low-income population in the same age group. Among low-income people ages 25 to 64 with disabilities, more than half were either unattached individuals (i.e., persons who were living alone or living with non-relatives) ages 45 to 64, or lone parents. These results come from a new study, *Low income among persons with a disability in Canada*, which examines the extent to which people with disabilities are at risk of low income.

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## EMPLOYMENT

The number of people receiving regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits totalled 517,200 in June, down 7,000 (-1.3 percent) from May. This rate was the eighth consecutive monthly decline in the number of beneficiaries. In the 12 months to June, 37,700 fewer people received benefits in Canada, down 6.8 percent. Most of the decline was accounted for by Québec, Ontario and Alberta.

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Fisheries and Oceans Canada and its provincial partners in Atlantic Canada announced that the \$400 million Atlantic Fisheries Fund (AFF) is now accepting proposals. The AFF will focus on growing opportunities and increasing market value for sustainably sourced, high quality fish and seafood products from Atlantic Canada.

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## EMPLOYMENT/EDUCATION/YOUTH

The Government of Canada announced a \$73-million investment in the Student Work-Integrated Learning Program to create 10,000 paid student work placements over the next four years, facilitating stronger partnerships between employers and partnering polytechnics, universities and colleges. Budget 2017 also announced \$221 million in funding over five years for Mitacs, a not-for-profit organization that provides research internships with a goal of creating 10,000 work placements per year.

BioTalent Canada, a national non-profit organization, is the human resources partner of Canada's bio-economy and focuses on building partnerships and skills for Canada's bio-economy to ensure the industry has access to job-ready people. BioTalent, which has taken a leadership role in providing student work placements, will receive close to \$5.6 million. It is expected that more than 1,000 student work placements will be made available to post-secondary students through this partnership.

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## GOVERNANCE

The Parliamentary Budget Officer released *Economic and Fiscal Monitor – August 2017*.

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## HEALTH

The federal government and the Government of Manitoba agreed to new targeted federal funding over 10 years for investments in home and community care, and mental health and addictions. Over the next 10 years, the federal government will provide Manitoba with its respective share of the \$11 billion investment in these areas, which amounts to an additional \$399.6 million:

- \$218.0 million for better home and community care
- \$181.6 million in support of initiatives to address mental health and addictions.

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Through \$21 million in new Canadian Institutes of Health Research funding, researchers will:

- undertake biomedical and clinical HIV vaccine research projects in new areas of investigation or take previous discoveries in new directions
- promote the development and testing of novel HIV vaccine research tools and methodologies
- support high-risk HIV vaccine research projects with the potential for high impact, breakthrough and/or transformative advances.

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## HOUSING

Statistics Canada released the June 2017 Housing Price Index. It reported that, in June, new house prices in southern Ontario paused from their recent upward climb, curbing the national increase at 0.2 percent. This was down from a 0.8 percent increase in April and a 0.7 percent gain in May. Overall, prices were up in eight CMAs, down in five and unchanged in 14.

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## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES/EDUCATION

The Governments of Canada and Québec are committed to working with Innu communities and organizations to promote retention and academic success among Innu students and to foster appreciation of culture and language among Indigenous youth. The federal government announced an investment of \$185,000 to implement an agreement with Institut Tshakapesh. This agreement will enable some 1,800 students living in seven Innu communities on Québec's North Shore to retain their culture and their language.



The agreement includes a framework for collaboration designed to promote continued school attendance and academic success by preserving, promoting and passing on Innu culture and language.

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Teach For Canada will help 158 youth in Thunder Bay and Toronto learn how to work in partnership with northern Indigenous communities, learn Indigenous languages and learn about Canadian history through an Indigenous lens. The federal government will provide \$1.6 million for this project through the Career Focus program of the Youth Employment Strategy for Teach For Canada's Youth Career Focus project. Through this project, Teach For Canada will also provide youth with teaching placements in elementary, middle or high schools in Indigenous communities in northern Ontario and give them the support they need to adjust to the environment and learn how to engage with Indigenous communities. In addition, Teach For Canada will provide two years of follow-up support to ensure the teachers hired in these communities have the necessary tools to keep good jobs.

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The Government of Canada and 23 Anishinabek Nation First Nations signed the historic Anishinabek Nation Education Agreement. It recognizes Anishinabek control over education on reserve from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 in 23 Participating First Nations in Ontario. The Agreement is the first of its kind in Ontario and is the largest education self-government agreement in Canada due to the number of First Nations involved. It supports the Anishinabek Nation's vision of a quality Anishinabek Education System that promotes Anishinabe culture and language and improves education outcomes for Anishinabek students.

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The federal government is investing \$4.6 million over three years and Ontario is investing \$5.5 million for the 2017-18 school year to address the immediate needs of Nishnawbe Aski Nation students attending school in Thunder Bay. This funding brings the total amount of new federal support for students who leave their communities to \$14.3 million. The goal of these investments is to ensure that students will have safe and healthy school choices in an environment that offers culturally relevant and appropriate learning in the immediate term.

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### INDIGENOUS PEOPLES/YOUTH

The federal government announced Budget 2017 investments of approximately \$100 million over three years towards the First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy to enrich opportunities for First Nations and Inuit youth.

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### LABOUR MARKET

Statistics Canada reported that, following two months of notable increases, employment was little changed in July (+11,000 or +0.1 percent). As the number of people searching for work edged down, the unemployment rate declined by 0.2 percentage points to 6.3 percent. This is the lowest rate since October 2008, just prior to the onset of the 2008-2009 labour market downturn.

In the 12 months to July, employment rose by 388,000 (+2.1 percent), mostly the result of increases in full-time work (+354,000 or +2.4 percent). Over this period, the number of hours worked increased by 1.9 percent.

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### MENTAL HEALTH

Statistics Canada released a study on the prevalence of concurrent disorders in Canada. The study is the first to use *2012 Canadian Community Health Survey – Mental Health* to examine the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, health status and health care service use of people with concurrent disorders. The study estimates that 282,000, or 1.2 percent of Canadians ages 15 to 64, experienced mental and substance use disorders concurrently in the previous year – i.e., at least one mood/anxiety disorder and at least one substance use disorder.

Almost all (91 percent) of those with concurrent disorders reported high psychological distress, significantly more than those with a mood/anxiety (79 percent) or a substance use (34 percent) disorder alone.

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Federal and provincial/territorial Ministers of Health have agreed to a *Common Statement of Principles on Shared Health Priorities (Common Statement of Principles)*, which focuses on improving Canadians' access to mental health and addiction services, as well as to home and community care.

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### WOMEN

The federal government announced \$2.5 million in funding for seven projects that will advance gender equality in Montréal and the province of Québec. These initiatives are part of a federal investment of over \$18 million. In addition to working on these local projects, women leaders will participate in a pan-Canadian network to support feminist action for gender equality at the national level. The network is being convened by the Canadian Women's Foundation. As a digital partner with Status of Women Canada, Instagram will offer participants a learning session on social media best practices to create communities and maximize audiences.

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