

This bulletin is a quick inventory of recent social research information. Its purpose is to promptly disseminate the most current external and internal research relevant to social policy.

A Basic Income for Canadians: What would Change? By John Stapleton, Metcalf Foundation, January 2017.

In late 2016, the Ontario government announced its intention to carry out a basic income pilot project in communities across the province. In response, a range of authors and experts have examined how variations of the model could benefit the one in eight Canadians who live in poverty. This report contributes to the current discussion by illustrating how a basic income would work in real-life situations.

- Approximately seven out of eight Canadians at any one time already live poverty free as their income levels are high enough to escape poverty
- It is understood that one out of eight people in Canada live in what is known as “income poverty”
- One in eight people in Canada who are living in poverty (about 4.5 million) need to be raised out of poverty through a transfer of income

For link to the report:

<http://metcalfoundation.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/A-Basic-Income-for-all-Canadians.pdf>

Toward a New Balance in Social Policy: The Future Role of Guaranteed Annual Income within the Safety Net, Peter Hicks, C.D. Howe Institute, January 2017.

Guaranteed Annual Incomes (GAI) proposals attracted much support in the 1960s and early 70s but, for a variety of reasons, they slipped off mainstream policy agendas in the following decades. They were too expensive given new budgetary priorities and implementation was difficult for jurisdictional reasons.

- Long-standing social goals, including antipoverty goals, can be met by a more multidimensional understanding of poverty and by developing a new generation of social programs
- Canada already makes effective use of targeted GAI programming by relatively simple extensions to existing supports to children, people with disabilities and the working poor
- Expansive GAI reforms face many of the same obstacles that existed in the past: lack of jurisdictional agreement, financial resources and the kind of public support that would be needed to sustain reform

For link to the report:

https://www.cdhowe.org/sites/default/files/attachments/research_papers/mixed/Commentary_465_0.pdf

Comparing Government and Private Sector Compensation in Ontario by Charles Lammam, Milagros Palacios, and Feixue Ren, Fraser Research Institute, February 2017.

Using data on individual workers from January to December 2015, this report estimates the wage differential between the government and private sectors in Ontario. It also evaluates four available non-wage benefits in an attempt to quantify compensation differences between the two sectors. The available data on non-wage benefits suggest that the government sector enjoys an advantage over the private sector.

- 82.1 percent of government workers in Ontario are covered by a registered pension plan, compared to 25.2 percent of private sector workers
- Of those covered by a registered pension plan, 97.0 percent of government workers enjoyed a defined benefit pension compared to just under half (45.1 percent) of private sector workers
- Ontario's government sector workers (from the federal, provincial, and local governments) were found to enjoy a 13.4 percent wage premium, on average, over their private sector counterparts
- Full-time workers in the government sector lost more work time in 2015 for personal reasons (10.9 days on average) than their private sector counterparts (6.8 days)

For link to the report:

https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/comparing-government-and-private-sector-compensation-in-ontario_0.pdf

LGBTI Homelessness: Preliminary Findings on Risks, Service Needs and Use, Ruth McNair; Cal Andrews; Sharon Parkinson; Deborah Dempsey Gay and Lesbian Foundation of Australia, January 2017.

Whilst there is mounting evidence that the risk of and potential consequences of homelessness among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people is heightened compared to the general population, there has been limited systematic research in Australia that can inform a more targeted response. This report documents the first stage of a mixed methods research study examining the experience of homelessness among LGBTI people.

- In Canada and the US, reports indicate that young LGBTQ2S (LGBT plus queer and 2 spirit) people make up 20-40% of the youth homeless population
- Survey in Australia recorded that 13.4% heterosexuals had ever been homeless compared with 20.8% bisexual people and 33.7% lesbian/gay people
- Studies that have been conducted in Australia to date suggest that discrimination – including experiences within services – has been a major contributing factor and obstacle to safe and appropriate service provision

For link to the report:

<http://www.lgbtihomeless.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/LGBTI-Homelessness-Stage-1-Report-Preliminary-findings-on-risks-service-needs-and-use.pdf>

Trends in RRSP Contributions and Pre-retirement Withdrawals, 2000 to 2013, by Derek Messacar, Statistics Canada, February 2017.

This article in the Economic Insights series presents an overview of recent trends in registered retirement savings plan (RRSP) use among Canadian taxfilers aged 25 to 54, from 2000 to 2013. The analysis centres on differences in RRSP contribution and withdrawal behaviour across income groups, and around the time that the tax-free savings account (TFSA) was introduced. Overall, the analysis shows that the flow of funds into RRSPs has declined in recent years.

- Contributors and withdrawers among 25- to 54-year-olds declined gradually by approximately 16% over this period, from 5.0 million in 2000 to 4.2 million in 2013
- The number of RRSP withdrawers (total withdrawers) increased over the period, from approximately 0.9 million in 2000 to 1.3 million in 2013
- The slight decline in RRSP use over the last few years coincided with an increase in the number of individuals aged 25 to 54 who contributed to a TFSA, from 2.0 million in 2009 to 3.0 million in 2013

For link to the article:

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-626-x/11-626-x2016064-eng.htm>

Previous issues of the SPAR Monitor can be viewed online at: <http://bit.ly/1ez7uDB>

Social Policy, Analysis and Research Information Resources:

Wellbeing Toronto: www.toronto.ca/wellbeing

Demographics & other resources: www.toronto.ca/demographics