

Timeline of Social Programs

The Social Safety Net in Canada–1900 to current

The “social safety net” is a federal, provincial, and federal-provincial program that includes the following:

- Old Age Security
- Guaranteed Income Supplement
- Canada Pension Plan
- Employment Insurance
- Canada Child Tax Benefit
- Education
- Health Care

1900

With the Industrial Revolution and the expansion of Canada, the lives of workers changed. Canada was no longer just an agricultural society. Trade unions began to seek support and defend the workers in all industry sectors. There was a need for support systems.



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1914

Workers' Compensation Act

The Workers' Compensation Act was first introduced in Ontario. The act ensured injured workers would receive a regular cash income. It became Canada's first source of compensation and for the first time workers were taken care of. Other provinces soon passed the act to protect their workers.



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1917

Federal Income Tax

Federal Income Tax was first introduced in Canada to pay for the mounting costs of World War I. It was considered a temporary wartime measure. To continue paying for the cost of social programs, however, the federal government continues to collect income tax.



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1927

Old Age Pension

Pensions for the elderly were first introduced in 1927. Following the agricultural age in which seniors did not retire, the Industrial Age saw the elderly living longer and retiring to live in extreme poverty. The pension provided the elderly with \$20 per month or \$240 per year. It was restricted, however, to British subjects who were 70 years of age and older and who had lived in Canada for more than 20 years.



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1930

Great Depression

The Great Depression was a time when no work was available for hundreds of thousands of Canadians. The government of Canada developed social programs to assist those who wanted to work when little was available. Single men were given work at unemployment relief camps. Other forms of assistance were provided in the form of grocery, fuel, and clothing tokens.



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1940

Unemployment Insurance Act

Unemployment Insurance (UI) was the first national social security and/or income maintenance program. It was begun to help blue-collar workers temporarily (for example, the working class) who were between jobs.



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1945

Family Allowance

Family allowance was a monthly allowance paid to all families with children. It was Canada's first universal social security program not based on need.

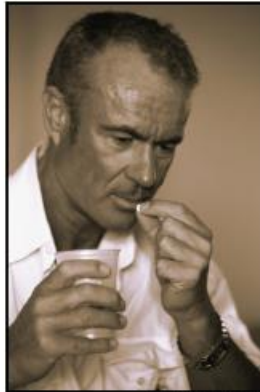


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1947

Provincial Hospital Insurance

Saskatchewan initiated a provincial universal public hospital insurance plan for all residents of the province of Saskatchewan. This plan was funded partly by government and partly by a special tax. Other provinces initiated similar plans within the next decade.



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1957

The federal government agreed to share 50% of the cost of provincial and territorial health insurance programs. The provinces and territories contributed the other 50% of the cost.



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1962

Medical Insurance Plan

Saskatchewan's provincial government created a universal, tax-supported, publicly-run medical insurance plan. Saskatchewan doctors closed their offices as a means of boycott. Medical care was provided by doctors from out-of-province.



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1965

Canada Pension Plan

Canada Pension Plan (CPP) was a major initiative to provide income for retirement, disability, and survivors' (or widows') benefits—a needed benefit for individuals who did not receive pension plans at their work. The maximum pension was \$40 month or \$480 per year. Canadian seniors over 70 years of age and who had lived in Canada for 20 years would benefit. This was the first pension for seniors that was universal and did not require a means test. Canada Pension and Old Age Security programs continued to evolve to help reduce poverty among seniors.



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1966

Medical Care Act

The Medical Care Act provided a 50/50 cost sharing for provincial and territorial medical insurance plans as long as health services ensured equal coverage for a wide range of services available to all people regardless of age, condition, or ability to pay. This act became the Canada Health Act.

Canada Assistance Plan (CAP)

Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) was introduced to provide cost-sharing with the federal government and the provinces for social services.



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1970

Unemployment Insurance

Canada's Unemployment Insurance (UI) program became an important income support program for workers. Unemployment insurance was intended to benefit individuals in all occupations.



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1984

Canada Health Act

Canada Health Act combined both the hospital and medical acts. It set the conditions and criteria on portability, accessibility, universality, comprehensiveness, and public administration. This act banned user fees and extra billing.



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1995

Federal Established Programs Financing Act (EPF) and Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) merged to support health care, post-secondary education, and social services.

Current

The government continues to work to meet the needs of all Canadians as it looks at means to maximize resources and provide cost-effective services and social programs.



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