

CSW

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OTTAWA 2015

We're at the heart of our communities

A New Canada
Community
Services Transfer—
Strengthened by
a New Canada
Community
Services Act





A. Divide the current Canada Social Transfer into two separate transfers

To get further clarity about what funds are for, the CST should be split into two distinct transfers:

- Canada Education Transfer (CET)—to cover the cost of providing post-secondary education in the provinces¹
- Canada Community Services Transfer (CCST)—to provide dedicated federal funding towards the cost of provinces providing social assistance programs and community services to support their citizens

1. NUPGE has had a long-standing policy of calling on the federal government to create a Post-secondary Education Transfer that would provide provinces with adequate and predictable funding. NUPGE has also called on the federal government to implement a *Post-secondary Education and Training Act* that is based upon the well-regarded model of the *Canada Health Act*, which would require provinces to provide post-secondary education that is publicly administered, comprehensive, universally available, portable, and accessible.

B. A new Canada Community Services Transfer dedicated solely to funding community services

NUPGE proposes that, at a minimum, the amount of the new community services designated CCST annual funding be equal to (in 2015 dollars) the amount that the federal government last transferred to the provinces and territories in 1995–96 under the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP).

- Taking this into account, we would see an immediate increase in the new Canada Community Services Transfer of \$2.6 billion annually, from the \$8.7 billion that the current CST nominally spends on social services to \$11.3 billion.
- Annual CCST increases should be identical to the annual increases scheduled for the Canada Health Transfer (CHT). For the next two fiscal years, the federal government has allocated an annual 6 per cent increase for the CHT.
- Beyond fiscal year 2016–17, the CCST should have a built-in escalator formula identical to the CHT to ensure stability and pre-



dictability in the amounts being transferred to the provinces and territories.

C. A Canada Community Services Act (CCSA)

A new CCST, dedicated solely to federal funding of provincial-based community services, should be accompanied by its own legislation, a Canada Community Services Act (CCSA). The CCSA would establish conditions attached to the new expanded CCST, as well as procedures and mechanisms for holding federal and provincial governments accountable for expenditures and adherence to national standards.

Objectives of a CCSA

The objectives a Canada Community Services Act would be to

- articulate the purposes of the CCST funds;
- designate the programs and services on which federal CCST funds are to be spent by provinces and territories;
- define standards for key programs, such as social assistance,

child care, and community, residential and home care services for seniors and persons with disabilities;

- establish stable funding formulas for the transfer, as outlined above; and
- create a monitoring and accountability mechanism that works for all levels of government and for Canadians who depend on community services to support them.

Purposes of a CCSA

The Canada Community Services Act should state that the purposes of the act are to ensure that the new Canada Community Services Transfer meets the following criteria by being

- compliant with section 36 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, by ensuring that the essential public services supported by the CCST promote equal opportunities and the well-being of all Canadians, especially those from Canada's most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, and are of reasonable quality and available in all jurisdictions;
- compliant with the rights set out in sections 7 and 15 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*;



- compliant with all social and economic rights contained in international treaties that Canada is a signatory to, including the UN's *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

Clear Expenditure Designations for CCST Funds

The Canada Community Services Act should designate specific types of community services eligible for CCST funding, such as

- social assistance programs;
- women's services, including shelters, transition houses, rape crisis and sexual assault centres, counselling services and other supports designed to help women escape poverty and violence;
- child welfare services, including child protection, adoption, foster care and counselling services;
- community services for seniors, including home support, home

care, transportation, day programs, Meals on Wheels, and other senior support services provided in the community;

- supports for persons with disabilities, including residential facilities, training and employment support programs, day programs, attendant care, respite care;
- support services for people living in poverty, including shelters for the homeless, food banks, and employment and life skills support;
- child care and other early childhood development services;
- community health services dealing with addictions, HIV/Aids, counseling, day programs and residential care; and
- legal aid.

To ensure that the designations are meaningful, provincial and territorial governments should have to verify that CCST funds are spent only on these types of social programs and services.



National Standards and Conditions

The proposed Canada Community Services Act would include the following national standards

- Accessibility
- Equality of opportunity
- Adequacy
- Universality
- Accountability
- Publicly Administered
- Right of appeal
- Right to refuse workfare

Accountability and Enforcement

To ensure CCST funds provided to the provinces and territories are spent on the provision of designated services outlined in the CCSA, and to ensure monitoring, compliance and enforcement of the objectives, purposes, national standards and conditions outlined in the CCSA, it is proposed that an independent body known as the Canadian Community Services Council be established.

Such a proposed Council should be composed of an equal number of government and non-government repre-

sentatives, with appointees chosen by all levels of government. The appointees should have expertise in the area of social programs, social rights, and intergovernmental fiscal arrangements.

It would have four major responsibilities: monitoring, reporting, overseeing a public complaints process, and enforcement.

Monitoring—This should be done on an ongoing basis to determine if

- provincial governments' use of CCST funds is directed to provision of designated community services outlined in the CCSA;
- the designated community services provided by the province meet the national standards set out in the CCSA.

Reporting—The Council would report regularly to Parliament and provincial and territorial legislatures on social assistance programs and community services funded through the CCST and on compliance with designations and national standards.

Public Complaints Process—The Council would also have the authority to receive and consider claims from individuals or groups that social assistance programs and community services are not being provided or delivered in a way that is compliant with the CCSA. The Council should also

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have the responsibility to make recommendations to governments flowing from these claims.

Enforcement—If the Council were to find that a provincial government was not in compliance in terms of using CCST funds to provide designated community services that meet the objectives and national standards set out in the CCSA, then it should have the authority to recommend to a provincial government changes necessary to comply with the CCSA. Ultimately, the Council should have the authority to recommend to Parliament the withdrawal of federal CCST funding in the case of provincial non-compliance with CCSA designations or standards.



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B. C. Government and Service Employees' Union
Health Sciences Association of British Columbia
Health Sciences Association of Alberta
Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union
Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union
Ontario Public Service Employees Union
Canadian Union of Brewery and General Workers
New Brunswick Union of Public and Private Employees
Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union
PEI Union of Public Sector Employees
Newfoundland & Labrador Association
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The National Union of Public and General Employees is an affiliate of the Canadian Labour Congress and a member of the Public Services International



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- Health Sciences Association of British Columbia (HSABC)
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- Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union (SGEU)
- Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union (MGEU)
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- Newfoundland & Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees (NAPE)

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