



## Youth Employment – Policy Solutions

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There are an estimated 6.8 million youth in Canada (aged 15 – 29). Thirty years of downward pressure on wages and working conditions mean that this generation is experiencing precarious, part-time, contract, temporary, low-wage, low-skill work at a scale like no generation before. Official youth unemployment rates hover around 13%, however, real underemployment (which counts those looking for work, those who have stopped looking for work, those who are involuntarily working part-time because they cannot find full-time jobs and those who have returned to school because they cannot find a job with the education they have) is 26% – over a quarter of young people are un(der)employed.

It is clear that government policy solutions must focus on both the creation of good jobs, and the conversion of precarious jobs into quality jobs. We need to address not only issues of youth employment, but must consider the future of work more broadly and what type of workforce is needed to build communities that are progressive, fair and sustainable for today's young Canadians and for generations to come.

We call for federal and provincial governments to:

1. **Develop and implement a Youth Job Guarantee** that ensures every young person has a good job, paid internship or quality training position within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed.
2. **Provide the broadest spectrum of employees with workplace standards** by expanding the scope of how employees are defined and eliminating most exclusions in federal and provincial labour law and employment standards.
3. **Turn precarious jobs into good jobs by enhancing and strengthening workplace standards.** Federal and provincial employment standards must be revised and strengthened in areas related to hours of work and overtime pay, predictable scheduling, vacation entitlements and other leaves, paid sick leave and the imposition of stricter regulations on the actions of temporary help agencies.
4. **Promote the full realization of the right to organize and bargain collectively.** Unions are the best way for workers to lead workplace change to create good jobs where only precarious ones now exist. Federal and provincial labour law must be reviewed and revised to introduce or protect card-based certification, ban replacement workers and pursue options for broader-based and sectoral bargaining.
5. **Implement a \$15/hour minimum wage.** Provincial minimum wages should be

raised and the federal government should reinstate a federal minimum wage to ensure all workers make a living wage. This will raise the floor for workers, thousands of who currently work for poverty wages.

6. **Legislate a ban on two-tier contracts and pensions.** A growing number of employers are seeking to impose two-tier terms and conditions in employment contracts and collective agreements. This disproportionately impacts young workers and new entrants to the workplace.
7. **Create targeted community benefit agreements** that tie infrastructure project funding with investment in training, skills building, and local job creation for youth and marginalized groups. Corporations should not receive infrastructure funding from the federal governments without a strategy to train and employ young Canadians.
8. **Address climate change and youth unemployment at the same time by adopting a green jobs strategy.** This strategy should focus on training and skills development for our future workforce, and must be paired with a just transition strategy that supports workers and employers. Priority areas of job training and creation should be: clean renewable energy, energy efficient buildings, public transit and high speed rail.
9. **Increase educational funding and expand access to job services for Indigenous peoples.** Indigenous youth are one of the fastest growing populations in Canada, and must have

access to quality education and local job opportunities.

10. **Analyze and track the level of diversity within the workforce, develop an equity plan and engage in annual progress reporting.** Canadian youth represent the most diverse generation in Canada's history. Governments and employers must do more to ensure equal opportunities for equity seeking groups, including women, racialized workers, LGBTQ workers, workers with disabilities, newcomers, Indigenous and young workers.
11. **Invest in a fully-funded public post-secondary system.** More than 70% of new jobs require post-secondary education and students are being forced to take on massive debts which affect them for the rest of their lives. It is time Canada invests in a post-secondary system that trains the future workforce, instead of saddling that workforce with thousands of dollars in debt.
12. **Engage unions, community partners, students, educational institutions, government and businesses into a regular multi-stakeholder workforce planning forum.** The world of work is changing quickly and the future of work is uncertain. The impacts of trade liberalization, new technologies, the platform economy, non-standard forms of employment and precarious work need to be addressed in an ongoing multi-stakeholder dialogue that will plan for how we move forward to make work better for young Canadians.