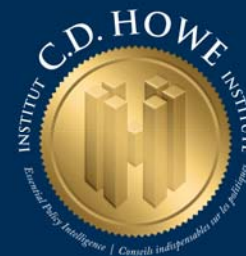


# MANDATE LETTERS



*As Canada forms its next government, the Prime Minister's Office will be preparing ministerial mandate letters. In this special Intelligence Memo series, policy experts highlight key challenges and priorities in each minister's portfolio.*

From: Miles Corak  
To: The Incoming Minister of Families, Children and Social Development  
Date: November 4, 2019

All Canadians have a right to live their lives with dignity. As Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, your actions should be governed by this principle, and directed to three concerns:

- promoting economic well-being and ensuring that those facing challenging circumstances are able to fully participate in our society with dignity;
- fostering equal opportunities and inclusion for all, regardless of family background, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation;
- enhancing economic and social resilience, whether Canadians live in families or on their own.

You will be guided by the *Poverty Reduction Act*, which mandates a 50-percent reduction in the poverty rate by 2030 from the rate prevailing in 2015.

You will set an intermediate target of lowering the poverty rate by at least 20 percent by the end of our mandate from the level prevailing in 2018.

In this context:

- Work with the National Advisory Council on Poverty to table annual reports to the Parliament that:
  - \* document progress in meeting our targets in a way that is positively reflected in the other dimensions of poverty outlined in the Poverty Reduction Strategy;
  - \* give voice to those with lived experience of poverty;
  - \* evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies, highlight emerging concerns, and offer recommendations for continual policy development; and
  - \* incorporate Statistics Canada's recommendations on appropriate updates and revisions to the official poverty line and other indicators.
- Work closely with your municipal and provincial counterparts to develop Canada's Homelessness Strategy using comprehensive and timely indicators. Your goal is to bring full freedom and dignity to Canada's homeless, reducing the rate of homelessness by half over the course our mandate.
- Work with the Minister of Finance to develop a Basic Income, expanding and revising our existing tax and social policy architecture in a way that fosters inclusion and employment. To this end, your role will be to:
  - \* enhance the Canada Child Benefit, ensuring that low income families receive sufficient resources to meet our intermediate poverty reduction targets while still preventing poverty among middle income families;
  - \* introduce a Guaranteed Paid Family Leave that is integrated with the Parental Leave provisions of Employment Insurance so that all working parents can spend the first year with their new child whether or not they qualify for Employment Insurance; and
  - \* promote in-work income support by enhancing the Canada Workers Benefit and integrating it with the Canada Child Benefit and the Working While on Claim provisions of Employment Insurance so as to enhance the incomes of the working poor, particularly those living on their own.
- Enhance the insurance role of regular Employment Insurance benefits to recognize the [changing](#) nature of work. You will:
  - \* significantly increase both the benefit rate and the maximum insurable earnings in order to offer more comprehensive insurance that is at the same time financially sound;
  - \* institute Career Insurance Benefits for workers permanently laid off from jobs they have held for at least five years. These benefits should offer wage-insurance for those experiencing lower incomes in their new jobs, and they should be seamlessly integrated with the work-while-on-claim provisions, continuing for at least two years after the worker has stopped collecting Regular Benefits;
  - \* enhance access to benefits
    - ◇ expand the coverage of eligible employment to reflect the contingent nature of work, significantly raising the fraction of the employed who are covered;
    - ◇ lower the minimum hours of work required to qualify
    - ◇ make entrance requirements more similar across regions by basing them on only three levels of the regional unemployment rate: less than 6 percent, 6 to 8 percent, and greater than 8 percent
- Enhance the financial capital of the next generation of Canadians by reforming the Canada Learning Bond:
  - \* enhance the program's scope and flexibility by permitting use of the bond not just for education but also the purchase of a first home or retirement;
  - \* make enrollment into the program automatic; and increase the maximum benefit.
- Work with the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour and provinces to ensure that workforce development policies and skills development programs including the Canada Training Benefit meet individual needs.

*Miles Corak is professor of economics with the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, and was economist in residence in 2017 at Employment and Social Development Canada.*

*To send a comment or leave feedback, email us at [blog@cdhowe.org](mailto:blog@cdhowe.org).*

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