



Alternative Federal Budget 2004

FACT SHEET:

Build Canada's capacity to meet future needs

The AFB sets out an explicit target of bringing down unemployment to six per cent – one of the foundations of a well-functioning society. If we can have targets for getting tax rates to competitive levels with the U.S. or getting the debt down to 25 per cent of the GDP, we believe we can set and achieve targets for unemployment. We also introduce a package of measures to launch a frontal assault on poverty, with the goal of cutting the rate in poverty in half.

The AFB builds Canada's capacity to address the future through training and education that will prepare us for the coming demographic wave of retirees that threatens to destabilize our economy and standard of living. It also strengthens the EI program for Canadians who find themselves out of work and provides training insurance to all workers.

The AFB will:

- Create a \$1.85 billion *Emergency Training and Adjustment Fund* to reposition the labour market, and establish a \$1.85 billion *National Student Needs-based Grants Fund* for post-secondary students.
- Introduce training insurance for all workers, to support joint employer-labour initiatives to raise the general level of skills, provide opportunities to recent immigrants to acquire Canadian credentials, and give workers the ability to pursue continuing education.
- Implement an investment program to create net new jobs in both the private and public sectors of the economy. Key job creating initiatives include the development of an early childhood education program and the expansion of health care services including home care.
- Balance the EI Fund, investing all of its revenue to make improvements to the program. Prohibit the use of EI revenues for federal debt reduction, tax cuts, or other government spending.
- Increase the federal minimum wage to \$10 an hour.
- Extend to all urban Aboriginal peoples the Aboriginal-specific programs they are now denied and target \$500 million of the new provincial health transfer to Aboriginal specific programs to help Aboriginals move towards economic independence.
- Develop a Labour Market Strategy for Canadians with disabilities, which will promote the development of inclusive Labour Market Agreements with the provinces and territories.

Find out more at www.policyalternatives.ca