

6.3.6 Emergency welfare services

The function of the Emergency Welfare Services Division of the Department of National Health and Welfare is to develop and maintain community capability to provide the basic survival and emergency social services in any emergency in Canada. This consists primarily of five emergency services — lodging, feeding, clothing, registration and inquiry, and personal services. A program has been developed and is being maintained so that, given an emergency situation, the Division can co-ordinate the efforts of welfare departments at all levels of government as well as organizations, private social agencies, related professional groups, businesses and individual volunteers to allow for recovery from the given situation and to promote rehabilitation.

6.3.7 International welfare

Canada is actively involved in the social development activities of the United Nations. The Department of National Health and Welfare sits on the Executive Board of UNICEF and participates in the work of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations, and in those UN seminars and conferences dealing with social policy. The Department also works with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development on the development of social indicators, income transfer policy and the role of women in the economy. The Department of National Health and Welfare, through the programs of the Canadian International Development Agency, provides advisers for service abroad and arranges for the training in Canada of foreign students and government officials when recommended by their governments.

The federal department and provincial departments and agencies participate in the work of several international voluntary organizations including the International Council on Social Welfare and the International Union of Family Organizations. Informal discussions on the possibility of bilateral agreements in the sphere of social security have been held with the United Kingdom, Italy and the United States. Canadian officials engaged in the field of social security participate in the work of the International Social Security Association and the social security program of the International Labour Organization. For some years, Canada has had observer status at meetings of the Inter-American Social Security Association.

6.4 Federal-provincial welfare programs

6.4.1 Canada Assistance Plan

The Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) was enacted in 1966 as a comprehensive public assistance measure to replace the Unemployment Assistance Act, 1956, and to complement other income security measures. Under agreements with the provinces and territories, it provides for federal contributions of 50% of the cost of assistance to persons in need and certain health and welfare services (Part I of the Act), and work activity projects that prepare persons in need for employment (Part III). CAP also provides for federal sharing in the cost of provincial welfare services to Indians on reserves, on Crown land, or in unorganized territories (Part II), but the Act does not limit federal contributions to 50%.

“Assistance” includes any form of aid to, or on behalf of, persons in need for the purpose of providing basic requirements such as: food, shelter and clothing, including maintenance of children in the care of provincially approved child welfare agencies; items necessary for the safety, well-being, or rehabilitation of a person in need, or for a handicapped person, such as special food or clothing, telephone, or rehabilitation allowance; maintenance in a home for special care such as a home for the aged, a nursing home or an institution for children; travel and transportation; funerals and burials; health care services; welfare services purchased by, or at the request of, provincially approved agencies; and comfort allowances for persons in institutions. “Health care services” may include medical, surgical, obstetrical, optical, dental, and nursing services, drugs, dressings, prosthetic appliances, and other items associated with the provision of such services. “Welfare services” include rehabilitation, casework, counselling and assessment, adoption, homemaker, day-care, and similar services supplied to persons in need or to persons to whom the service is essential if they are to remain self-supporting.

The only eligibility requirement specified under the Canada Assistance Plan for individuals or families applying for assistance under provincial programs is that of need,