The dashed red line shows the trend in the relationship between employment and caseloads using data from April 2005 to July 2016. Based on those eleven years of observations we would expect that employment growth after July 2016 would result in a movement down that trend line. Instead, since July 2016 we see an apparent upward shift in that trend. Although there has been a small improvement in employment, the number of social assistance caseloads has continued to climb rather than fall. This movement suggests there may have occurred significant changes in Alberta’s labour market compared to the past, and a different norm is being shaped with more social assistance support caseloads per working Albertan.

Source: CANSIM series v21581483 and v21581495; https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/income-support-caseload-alberta; and author’s calculations.