

# Financing The New Federalism: Revenue Sharing, Conditional Grants, And Taxation Papers

## Cities in Canadian Federalism

Enid Slack  
Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance, University of Toronto  
and  
Richard M. Bird  
International Tax Program, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto  
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### Abstract

We consider the place of cities, particularly large cities, in Canadian federalism from several perspectives. Although by most measures the current fiscal condition of Canadian cities seems fairly good, we argue that beneath this happy picture lies a less happy reality. Owing to the limited and relatively inelastic revenue base to which even the largest cities have access, the underlying basis of Canada's urban prosperity is being eroded, with potentially damaging implications for national well-being over the long run. In an important sense, the roots of this problem lie in the fact that cities do not have any real role or voice in Canada's federal structure. Since neither role nor voice is likely to be bestowed on them in the near future, however, we conclude by laying out a series of less fundamental actions that all levels of government have to undertake if they wish to maintain not only the present reputation of Canada's big cities as 'a nice place to live' but also, more fundamentally, the urban dynamic that evidence around the world suggests increasingly underpins economic growth.

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