



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

March 2009



CANADA SOCIAL REPORT



The [Caledon Institute of Social Policy](#) regularly scans provincial and territorial government websites in order to follow policy and program developments related to our core work and interests. A partial list includes: disability, education, health, housing, income security, poverty reduction, recreation, seniors and youth. This tracking is intended to inform our analysis of policy trends. Monitors can be searched on the Canada Social Report website by date, jurisdiction and category.

Newfoundland and Labrador

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

For individuals:

- \$132.2 million for 2009-10 to help individuals and families with low incomes
- effective for 2009 tax year, Low Income Tax Reduction income thresholds to be increased from \$13,511 to \$15,911 for individuals and from \$21,825 to \$26,625 for families
- \$492,300 to remove financial disincentives and barriers that make it difficult for people to work
- \$3 million to improve access to Early Childhood Development, including an increase in subsidy rates for regulated child care and to strengthen and expand family resource programs.

For communities:

- establishment of a Supportive Living Community Partnership Program. \$1.2 million to help individuals with complex needs overcome homelessness and \$1 million to establish a Provincial Homelessness Fund to complement the program's work
- \$13.1 million to build social infrastructure and capacity at the community level targeted at social housing and support for youth at risk of poverty. This includes \$5.6 million for renovations and energy retrofits for social housing, \$3 million for social housing units for low-income seniors, \$2.65 million for a new, affordable housing program to provide funding to both private and non-profit housing groups and \$1 million to fund engineering design and site preparation for new, smaller social housing units.

<http://www.budget.gov.nl.ca/budget2009/highlights/default.htm>

CHILDREN

New department created for provincial child, youth and family services. \$8.5 million from Budget 2009 for increased support and resources to the child, youth and family services system in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Increases in foster care rates from \$604.60 to \$760 per month for children 12 and older, followed by an increase to \$915 per month in 2010.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2009/health/0323n01.htm>

EMPLOYMENT

Targeted Initiative for Older Workers Extended to 2012

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2009/hrle/0318n06.htm>

\$155,000 to expand "Horizons" employment support program for workers 30 and over facing barriers (e.g., on social assistance, lack of work experience, or criminal history).

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2009/hrle/0313n05.htm>



SENIORS

\$35 million in Budget 2009 to improve long-term care and community supports across the province.

<http://www.budget.gov.nl.ca/budget2009/highlights/default.htm>

\$250,000 in funding to support research in priority areas related to aging and seniors issues through the new Health Aging Research Program.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2009/health/0320n04.htm>

WOMEN

\$30,000 for future renovations to a safe house for women and children experiencing family violence in Rigolet, Labrador.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2009/exec/0304n02.htm>

Five percent increase (\$110,000 each) for the province's eight status of women councils, seven percent (\$441,000) for the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and \$100,000 annually (up from \$20,000 in 2008) for the Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/index.html>

Québec

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

2009 Budget with three major themes: tackling the recession and preparing for the recovery, ensuring social development, and maintaining sound public finances. Social policy-related highlights include:

Family supports

- an improvement to the tax credit for child care expenses, which will benefit 100,000 families. The cost of child care services will be the same for subsidized day care centres and unsubsidized private day care centres, up to family income of \$125,000.
- an increase in the amount eligible for the tax credit for child care expenses from \$7,000 to \$9,000 for children under 7.
- attainment of the target of 220,000 \$7 a day child care spaces by 2010.

Affordable housing for families

- Construction of 3,000 social housing units, \$170 million in investments for home improvement and renovation.

Seniors

- new initiatives to counter abuse and break the cycle of isolation, and support for the "Age-Friendly Municipalities" program to fund local projects that improve the safety and quality of life of seniors.

Health and education

- 5.7 percent increase (\$1.5 billion), in health spending and to address various social issues

- 3.5 percent increase (\$490 million), in education spending to step up efforts to reduce the school drop-out rate

Culture

- \$5 million for Placements Culture to support 40 cultural organizations with private-sector fundraising objectives
- \$3 million a year to enable artists to showcase their talent.

Women

- The law that guarantees salary equality for women is in effect, but laggard employers will have until December 31, 2010 to bring salary payments into line.

Youth

- Creation of the Quebec World Youth (l'Office Québec-Monde) office to encourage young people to explore creativity, entrepreneurship and world view with other young people, nationally and internationally.
- http://www.budget.finances.gouv.qc.ca/budget/2009-2010/index_en.asp

Ontario

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

For individuals

- \$32.5 billion in proposed infrastructure spending, including \$5 billion from the federal government, over the next two years to build and repair roads, schools, hospitals and public transit in an effort to create 300,000 new jobs.
- one percent decrease in the personal income tax of those in the lowest income tax bracket who earn under \$36,848 a year.
- acceleration of the Ontario Child Benefit by two years to give low- and middle-income families a maximum level annual benefit of \$1,100 per child by July 2009.

Housing

- \$1.2 billion over two years, combined with federal funds, for additional social housing and renovation of existing units.

Business

- Emerging technologies fund of \$250 million over five years for clean technologies, and health and life sciences information and communication technologies.
- Corporate income tax rate cut from 14 per cent to 12 per cent by July 1, 2010, with the rate reduced to 10 per cent by 2013.
- Tax relief and funds for manufacturing sector and northern regional economies, including forestry and mining.

<http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/budget/ontariobudgets/2009/chpt1.html>



INCOME SECURITY

Additional protection for users of payday loan services. Beginning April 1, 2009, legislation will:

- require payday lenders and loan brokers to be licensed
- prohibit certain industry practices, including "rollover" loans
- give payday loan borrowers a two-day "cooling off" period to cancel a loan with no reason without penalty
- establish an Ontario Payday Lending Education Fund, paid for by licencees.
- set maximum total cost of borrowing cap for payday loan agreements of \$21 per \$100 borrowed

The legislation also provides for enforcement and prosecution of violations and the ability to revoke, subject to appeal, the licenses of payday lenders and loan brokers.

http://www.sse.gov.on.ca/mcs/en/Pages/News_13Mar2009.aspx

Plan to make permanent the \$5 million Ontario Rent Bank to help keep low-income Ontarians in their homes. Since 2004, the Rent Bank has prevented 18,700 evictions.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2009/03/helping-families-in-need.html>

HOUSING

Increased investment in affordable housing to create short-term jobs in construction and improve lives of people with low incomes. Working with the federal government, Ontario would renovate 50,000 social housing units and build 4,500 new affordable housing units through joint \$1.2 billion investment.

<http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/budget/ontariobudgets/2009/chpt1.html>

Saskatchewan

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

\$1.2 million for 12 renovated affordable housing units in Saskatoon. Available for low-income families and youth at risk. Project undertaken by Central Urban Métis Federation Inc., (a nonprofit corporation) in partnership with the province, federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (206,000) and the City (\$125,000).

<http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/deplist.cfm?d=17&c=3486>

\$10 million for affordable housing for seniors, low-income families. (\$1 million will be awarded to Habitat for Humanity for 20 homes, spread among Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Yorkton and Lloydminster).

http://www.qp.gov.sk.ca/Publications_Centre/SocialServices/From-Dependence-to-Independence-2012.pdf

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

For individuals

- Increase to provincial income tax credit for nationally registered Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations from 15 to 20 percent, with a maximum annual investment limit of \$5,000.

Education

- Increase of provincial government share of funding to school divisions.

Health

- \$4.075 billion health budget announced, increase of 8.8 percent from the previous fiscal year. Regional health authorities, which provide most of the health services in Saskatchewan, will receive \$2.4 billion, an increase of 13 percent over the last fiscal year.

Budget also provides \$75.8 million for municipal capital investment, \$2.9 million for Transit Assistance for the Disabled, \$13 million for Grants in Lieu of taxes, and \$59.7 million in the Federal Gas Tax Program (flow-through of federal gas tax funding for municipalities). Overall, Budget includes \$266 million for municipal financial assistance in 2009-10 – a 39 percent increase over the 2008-09 Budget.

\$284,000 in federal funding for a research project designed to keep registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses working in the province. Province to contribute \$103,000.

<http://finance.gov.sk.ca/budget2009-10/HighlightsCard>

DISABILITIES

\$100,000 to complete renovations to Yorkton branch of Saskatchewan Abilities Council Inc. Renovations will support another 15 people with intellectual disabilities (125 currently served). Funds are part of the government's \$76.9 million commitment (September 2008) to eliminate the wait list for specialized, residential and day program services for people with intellectual disabilities.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

GOVERNANCE

New Municipal Operating Grants (MOG) program to replace former revenue sharing formula. Fund will provide \$167 million with \$107 million to urban municipalities; \$48 million to rural municipalities and \$12 million to northern communities. In 2010-11 and subsequent years, the equivalent of 100 per cent of one point of PST will be provided.

<http://www.mnp.ca/media/documents/uploads/saskatchewan-budget-announcement-2009.pdf>



Alberta

COMMUNITY

\$820,000 over one year from Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Education Fund for 11 organizations to encourage equality, fairness and inclusion.

<http://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=25441EB-CE92F5-BECE-B84A-2570EF0DF28E3COE>

\$1.58 million for renovations to the Hospice Calgary Outreach and Education Centre. The centre provides compassionate support, educational workshops, school grief programs, seminars and professional consultation to more than 4,800 teens and adults each year. Matching funds are part of a two-year \$280-million Major Community Facilities Program (MCFP). Lottery-funded program started in 2007-08 which helps municipalities, not-for-profit organizations and Aboriginal communities plan, upgrade or build major public-use facilities that enhance community life.

http://albertalotteryfund.ca/pdf/alf/NR_HospiceCalgary_20090305.pdf

EDUCATION

\$2.1 million for literacy programming. 16 Community Learning Centre and Foundational Learning projects will deliver literacy programming in 37 communities.

<http://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=2559243586E0D-9B20-FAOF-CA79CAFAAAB034FB>

HOUSING

Announcement of a 10-year plan aimed at ending homelessness in Alberta by 2019. Developed by the Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness, the plan identifies actions and priorities to support the creation of permanent, safe housing for the homeless and outlines the associated services needed to break the cycle of homelessness. The plan supports municipal plans to end homelessness. It adopts a 'Housing First' approach of providing immediate housing along with client-centred supports such as mental health services, addictions counselling, employment training and other tailored supports as needed.

http://humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/2009_10_HUA_asah.pdf

This is the second year the province has provided funding through an RFP process and is part of a five-year strategy to create more than 11,000 affordable housing units across the province by 2012. This RFP funding is a component of the \$309 million in capital funding provided to municipalities, non-profit organizations and private developers. Examples: \$868,000 for affordable housing in Olds: 15 units, two of which will be barrier free and wheelchair accessible, \$1.2 million for affordable housing in Whitecourt: 24 two-bedroom units, of which six will be barrier free and wheelchair accessible.

http://humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/Annual_report_to_Minister_2010-11.pdf

INCOME SECURITY

Minimum wage increased to \$8.80 per hour. Average hourly wage in Alberta is \$23.90.

<http://brookschamber.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/AB-Minimum-Wage-Profile-Apr-2009-Mar-2010.pdf>

SENIORS

\$119 million to build and update more than 3,000 supportive living and lodge units for seniors and Albertans with disabilities. 60 organizations will share the funding under the Affordable Supportive Living Initiative and Lodge Modernization and Improvement program to build and modernize 1,153 supportive living spaces and update 1,992 lodge units in communities across the province.

<http://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=255111F3EC690-93E3-9611-1E682C03A18D984B>