



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

November 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

EMPLOYMENT

Under the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Labour Market Development Agreement, effective November 2009, the province assumes responsibility for the design and delivery of Employment Insurance-funded Employment Benefits and Support Measures. The federal government will provide \$133 million annually to the province to deliver these programs. Ottawa will also continue to support programming targeting youth, persons with disabilities, Aboriginal people and individuals with low literacy skills. As committed in Canada's Economic Action Plan, the province will receive an additional \$43 million for labour market programming. The federal government also transfers \$7.5 million per year to train people not eligible for Employment Insurance.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2009/hrle/1102n04.htm>

Launch of JobsinNL.ca, an online recruitment and job search resource. Employers can post job ads at no cost and manage resumés they receive online. Job seekers inside and outside NL will be able to search for jobs, apply directly and find out about new positions as these are posted.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2009/hrle/1104n08.htm>

HOUSING

\$1.6 million in provincial funding to build affordable housing for 18 low-income individuals in St. John's. A further \$454,000 will provide housing support services to individuals with complex service needs, and may include eviction prevention, tenant relations and outreach housing support.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2009/hrle/1103n07.htm>

YOUTH

Launch of *Creating a Province of Choice: A Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy for Newfoundland and Labrador* (www.youth.gov.nl.ca). Employment and affordable, quality education are youth's top priorities. Of the 41 strategy action items, more than half focus on these two areas.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2009/exec/1105n03.htm>

Nova Scotia

BUDGET

Independent financial review revealed in August that the province is on a path to a \$1.3-billion deficit. The premier appointed a four-member panel to define major policy challenges and identify options. Panel recommends waiting to balance the budget until 2012-13. It also suggests government consider a combination of the following options: tighter management of spending, program review, tax measures and renewed commitment to enhance the economy.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20091113007>

DISABILITIES

Department of Seniors and the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities signed an MOU to support communities working on making structures



and services more inclusive and accessible to Nova Scotians of all ages. MOU builds on the department's success with the Age-Friendly Community Grants launched in 2008. To date, participating municipalities have proposed and implemented 32 age-friendly projects.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20091106003>

HEALTH

Specialized mental health court opens with the goal of treating Nova Scotians with mental disorders who commit criminal offences, fairly and compassionately, and to help improve their mental health to reduce the risk to public safety.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20091102005>

HOUSING

Second year of Heating Assistance Rebate Program offers \$200 for families with net annual incomes under \$42,000 and single people under \$27,000.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20091117002>

INCOME SECURITY

Private defined-benefit pension plans will have longer to recover lost value under changes to the *Pension Benefits Act* regulations. Plan administrators now have 10 years to make a plan solvent instead of the usual five.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20091104008>

POVERTY REDUCTION

In December 2007, province passed Bill 94, *An Act to Establish a Poverty Reduction Working Group in Nova Scotia*. Based on the recommendations of the Working Group, the Government of Nova Scotia released on April 3, 2009 its Poverty Reduction Strategy entitled *Preventing Poverty, Promoting Prosperity*, a multi-year plan with four main goals: enable and reward work, invest in households in need, focus on children, and coordinate and collaborate. In November 2009, the Caledon Institute released a paper which describes the measures to achieve these goals.

<http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/832ENG.pdf>

SENIORS

\$220,000 for Positive Aging Fund (instituted in 2008), offering project grants of up to \$10,000 to non-profit organizations that propose new or extended activities for seniors in their area.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20091117004>

New Brunswick

COMMUNITIES

Municipalities and rural communities to receive \$68,030,169 in unconditional grant funding in 2010 (same level of funding as in 2009) in order to maintain social services and economic competitiveness initiatives.

<http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/gl/2009e1767gl.htm>

EDUCATION

Postsecondary students who finish their studies within the established timeline of their program and have combined federal and provincial government student loan borrowings associated with that credential exceeding \$26,000 now have 100 percent of their provincial student loan in excess of that amount forgiven.

<http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/pet/2009e1886pe.htm>

POVERTY REDUCTION

50 participants attending the Final Forum on Poverty adopted the first-ever poverty reduction plan for the province. *Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan* aims to reduce income poverty in the province by 25 percent and deep income poverty by 50 percent by 2015.

<http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/fcs/2009e1807sd.htm>

THRONE SPEECH

Central themes included: seizing opportunities to lower energy rates, reducing poverty while empowering and creating jobs for people, enhancing health and senior care, promoting literacy and positioning the province for significant economic growth.

<http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/leg/2009e1822la.htm>

Prince Edward Island

No updates this month.

Québec

INCOME SECURITY

\$10,400,000 in additional retirement benefits will be sent to 132,000 retirees who received income from employment in 2008. The amount (\$80 per person on average) is equivalent to 0.5 percent of revenue levels upon which contributions to the retirement funds are based. The increase was approved in June 2008 and will be indexed each January 1. *The internet link to this item is no longer operational.*

RURAL COMMUNITIES

Two northern partner issue tables announced. They will bring groups directly affected by the Northern Plan. The government will deploy a broad cooperative approach that will lay the foundation for a new partnership with northern communities. (The Northern Plan is a sustainable development project that will promote energy, forest, mining, tourism, and wildlife development supported by transportation and communication infrastructures). \$4.4 million over two years for preparation of an overall consolidation plan.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.



POVERTY REDUCTION

Québec Human Rights Commission urges Montréal to repeal two municipal by-laws that target the homeless, and recommends that the Montréal police force change its institutional standards and policies that have a discriminatory impact on people living on the streets. The Commission recommends increased funding to build social housing and for programs supporting the social reintegration of street people. It also urges the government to reinforce the Charter's economic and social rights as soon as possible to ensure the protection of society's most vulnerable groups, particularly the homeless.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

Ontario

EDUCATION

Financial literacy to be introduced into grade 4-12 curriculum in September 2011.

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/edu/en/2009/11/financial-literacy-essential-to-student-success-stronger-economy.html>

EMPLOYMENT

New legislation comes into force today that will ensure temporary help agency employees are treated fairly and have a better chance to move to sustainable employment. 16 new Bridge to Employment projects will receive more than \$20 million and help 5,000 newcomers get training and find work in their fields. Since 2003, \$145 million in bridge training has helped 30,000 newcomers.

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/mci/en/2009/11/ontario-helps-newcomers-get-job-ready.html>

HOUSING

\$4.6 million in federal and provincial funds for 66 affordable units for low-income families and singles in Waterloo Region. \$536,000 in municipal financial incentives was added by the City of Cambridge and \$342,000 by the Region of Waterloo.

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/mah/en/2009/11/celebrating-the-start-of-construction-of-heartwood-place.html>

\$1.4 million in federal, provincial and municipal funds for a 20-unit project in Williamsburg (near Cornwall). Homes will be occupied by low-income seniors and individuals with special needs.

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/mah/en/2009/11/williamsburg-celebrates-new-affordable-housing.html>

\$6.5 million for new affordable housing for 40 Aboriginal households living off-reserve in Ottawa. Funds are part of the \$60-million First Nation, Inuit, Métis Urban and Rural (FIMUR) Housing Program for Aboriginal families living off-reserve and outside of the Greater Toronto Area.

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/mah/en/2009/11/aboriginal-families-supported-through-new-affordable-housing.html>

Manitoba

COMMUNITY

Brandon's community revitalization efforts will receive \$165,738 for seven projects through Neighbourhoods Alive! New NA! Community Youth Recreation program also allocated \$15,438 to the City of Brandon for programming to provide more diverse and accessible recreational opportunities for children and youth.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?active=2009-11-01&item=7238>

HOMELESSNESS

\$357,000 to fund seven outreach mentors, who will work collaboratively on behalf of homeless individuals, helping them to connect to supports available in Winnipeg, Thompson, The Pas and Brandon. The mentors will work closely with the Canadian Mental Health Commission of Canada project on homelessness that is also supported by Manitoba. This project was developed under All Aboard, Manitoba's poverty-reduction strategy.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?active=2009-11-01&item=7235>

HOUSING

\$1.4 million for 10 new homes for low-to-moderate income Aboriginal families in Winnipeg.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?active=2009-11-01&item=7236>

POVERTY REDUCTION

The province is seeking advice on priorities for action as well as advice on the best key indicators to track annual progress. More than 50 organizations and hundreds of individuals will be engaged through a series of meetings and roundtables.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?active=2009-11-01&item=7237>

THRONE SPEECH

A framework designed to build on the priorities of Manitoba families such as jobs, health care, education and enhanced public safety was unveiled during the launch of the fourth session of the 39th legislative assembly. Plans include continued funding for "All Aboard" (provincial poverty reduction strategy) initiatives.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?active=2009-11-01&item=7261>

Saskatchewan

DISABILITIES

3,000 people with significant, long-term disabilities are eligible to apply for the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability program (SAID). Program has fewer reporting requirements and will be less intrusive than social assistance.

<http://www.gov.sk.ca/news?newsId=d438be68-abc4-44bb-99f8-9ee-2803a4c98>

New funding standard for the province's day programs for people with intellectual disabilities will provide better-funded, more personalized supports. Old funding model was based on cost-per-space, which did not take into account individual differences in the support needs of clients.



Standard will be tested over the next six months as part of a \$588,000 pilot project. (Project is part of four-year \$76.9 million commitment – announced October 2008 – to eliminate waitlist of 440 persons with intellectual disability who require residential, day and specialized programs that meet their assessed needs.)

<http://www.gov.sk.ca/news?newsId=f29470b2-bac5-451c-8bd7-eed4f-c70ef84>

\$5.4 million in capital funding for 21 new group homes in 15 communities across Saskatchewan (part of the 2008 waitlist initiative).

<http://www.gov.sk.ca/news?newsId=fc3428cc-2008-47da-9398-14c22564f475>

\$171,000 for a pilot project in the province's southeast region (Yorkton) to provide people with intellectual disabilities who live in approved private-service homes with access to enhanced services (respite, training and education, behavioural and after-hour crisis supports and networking opportunities).

<http://www.gov.sk.ca/news?newsId=aeb5a0bf-4b64-415c-918c-71e993a9202d>

INCOME SECURITY

Announcement of a comprehensive review of child welfare. Consultations will take place in spring 2010. The panel will make recommendations in Fall 2010.

<http://www.gov.sk.ca/news?newsId=b3455d93-79a5-4d9b-8cdc-d9c02988f973>

YOUTH

1.9 million assessment and stabilization service for up to 10 youth in North Battleford. \$868,000 from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy, \$1 million from the Ministry of Social Services and a donation of land from the City of North Battleford.

<http://www.gov.sk.ca/news?newsId=9fa7c29c-c925-47ba-99bd-a065f-ad817db>

Alberta

HEALTH

Mental Health Amendment Act 2009 introduced to provide clarity around community treatment orders. Issued by two physicians (one of whom is a psychiatrist), the act will enable individuals to maintain their mental health treatment in the community, reduce the need for hospitalization and help to keep more hospital beds available for individuals who need a greater level of care.

<http://alberta.ca/news.cfm>

British Columbia

DISABILITIES

\$23.2 million over three years to expand services for approximately 170 adults with developmental disabilities. Community Living BC criteria extended to include adults with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder or Pervasive Developmental Disorder, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder or Rett syndrome. Applications for new services start February 1, 2010.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2009HSD0065-000566.htm

Cross-Ministry Transition Planning Protocol for Youth with Special Needs for people aged 14 and 25 who require significant additional educational, medical/health and social/environmental support, beyond that required by youth in general. The protocol was developed to improve access to existing resources and supports, and ensure that a co-ordinated transition planning process occurs for youth with special needs and their families.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2009CFD0013-000575.htm

CHILDREN

StrongStart centres open in Penticton, Sparwood, Chetwynd, Penticton, Sooke, Abbotsford, Mission, Port Alberni, Williams Lake, Langford and Vancouver (9 centres). StrongStart BC is a free early learning program for preschool-aged children accompanied by a parent or caregiver.

<http://www.news.gov.bc.ca/>

EDUCATION

Opening of the first two Neighbourhood Learning Centres in Revelstoke. Educational services and community resources are brought together under one roof to better support families and learners, including theatrical facility and health services. All school districts are being encouraged to move towards this inclusive approach to planning in all new and replacement schools.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2009PREM0064-000577.htm

The province and the First Nations Education Steering Committee signed an MOU to allow First Nations to receive full per-pupil funding for eligible provincial students attending band-operated schools (original agreement signed July 2006).

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2009EDUC0028-000585.htm

EMPLOYMENT

\$15 million Workplace Training for Innovation pilot program for small business and not-for-profit employers supports employee training, helping improve skills and productivity. Financed through the federal Strategic



Training and Transition Fund, it offers up to \$1,500 per employee – to a maximum of \$5,000 per employer.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2009ALMD0038-000567.htm

HEALTH

\$915,000 for Produce Availability Initiative which will provide remote communities with improved access to fresh vegetables and fruits.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2009AL0019-000569.htm

HOUSING

\$12.2-million for 40 units of affordable housing and an onsite child-care facility in Vernon. Province allocated \$11.2 million through the Aboriginal Housing Initiative and a \$210,000 grant through the Ministry of Children and Family Development for a 16-space multi-age child-care centre. The City of Vernon provided a 60-year lease on the land, valued at \$900,000.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2009HSD0074-000650.htm

INCOME SECURITY

New regulations to protect consumers by prohibiting abusive lending practices and limiting fees and interest rates charged by payday lenders come into effect November 1, 2009.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2009PS SG0030-000550.htm

POVERTY REDUCTION

\$5.9-million emergency shelter and transitional housing development, officially opened for individuals at risk of homelessness in Terrace.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2009HSD0067-000590.htm

\$10.7-million, 39-unit supportive housing development for women in financial need in Kelowna.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2009HSD0068-000592.htm

SENIORS

\$1.6-million grant to renovate a 33-unit housing development in Vancouver with integrated support services for low-income seniors with mental health issues. Province will provide annual operating funding of \$129,000. Vancouver Coastal Health will provide \$93,000 annually for support services.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2009HSD0066-000589.htm

YOUTH

BladeRunners (an employment program that helps at-risk youth between ages 15-30 gain the skills and develop career opportunities) to double placements to a total of 600, expand services in communities and improve access to certificate programs and other skills.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2009ALMD0042-000622.htm

Yukon Territory

EMPLOYMENT

\$500,000 for new training program geared to improve First Nation workforce engagement.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/2009/09-262.html>

Northwest Territories

HEALTH

The implementation date for the Supplementary Health Benefits Program and the Catastrophic Drug Cost Program has been changed to September 30, 2010. A Supplementary Health Benefits reference group of community representatives of non-government organizations for seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income residents will provide program re-design input.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/>

Nunavut

No updates this month.