



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

March 2010



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

Employment Transitions program now includes single parents in the Labrador region. This program allows single parents to participate in a nine-week program that focuses on career planning, job readiness, job maintenance and life skills. Participants also receive access to individual counselling, an earned income supplement and job advancement supports following completion of the program.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2010/hrle/0323n03.htm>

HEALTH

\$362,000 among nine community groups that focus on mental health and addiction services throughout the province. \$70,000 granted to the Eating Disorders Association of Newfoundland and Labrador. These grants are part of Budget 2009's \$775,800 funding to address the prevention and treatment of substance use.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2010/health/0303n06.htm>

YOUTH

\$550,000 for Choices for Youth, a community agency in St. John's. Its Lilly Building project involved converting a former warehouse into a modern complex with independent living accommodations for 14 youth, as well as programming space for literacy and employment services. While living in the Lilly Building, residents will have access to counselling, educational support, job placement assistance, housing search support, mentorship opportunities and a range of other services.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2010/hrle/0330n01.htm>

Nova Scotia

HEALTH

Amendments to the *Pharmacy Act* will lead to an expanded role for pharmacists. The amendments will allow pharmacists to order and interpret lab tests to monitor drug therapy, administer drugs (including vaccines) and enable community pharmacies to act as possible locations for vaccine clinics, if a mass immunization was required.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20100329002>

THRONE SPEECH

Government's four priorities are: Better Health Care for You and Your Family; Creating Good Jobs and Growing the Economy; Making Life More Affordable; and Getting Back to Balance and Ensuring Government Lives within Its Means.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20100325002>

New Brunswick

CHILD CARE

The new *Early Learning and Childcare Act* consolidates all matters relating to early learning and child care. New to the act will be requirements of early learning and childcare facilities related to:



- use of an early learning and childcare curriculum framework approved by the province
- completion of prescribed training on the selected curriculum framework by staff working with children from infants to school entry
- increased regulatory authority to increase the training requirements of staff.

<http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/fcs/2010e0353sd.htm>

\$2,000 per new space starting next fiscal year for child care facilities that offer French services in predominantly English communities, and English services in predominantly francophone communities.

<http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/fcs/2010e0331sd.htm>

Five early childhood development centre demonstration sites are being set up as part of three-year pilot project to provide integrated services and support for young children and their parents.

<http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/fcs/2010e0342sd.htm>

EDUCATION

New resources are available to preschool children, their parents and child-care providers. English and French curricula focus on maximizing children's learning through their earliest experiences, their environments and their relationships, and they are based on worldwide best practices. New Brunswick is the only jurisdiction in Canada that is making the teaching of a curriculum mandatory in day cares.

<http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/fcs/2010e0333sd.htm>

HEALTH

New Brunswick intends to remove the three-month waiting period for medicare coverage for new immigrants and Canadians returning to the province after extended residence outside the country.

<http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/he/2010e0289he.htm>

A second Workplace Essential Skills site opens in Saint John for anglophone adults to improve literacy and promote continuing learning in the workplace.

<http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/pet/2010e0442pe.htm>

HOUSING

Province-wide education program launched by Efficiency NB and New Brunswick financial institutions will improve awareness of the agency's residential energy efficiency programs and encourage homeowners to include energy efficiency in their renovation projects.

<http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/eec/2010e0303ee.htm>

New property tax accountability mechanism has resulted in more than \$12 million in savings for property owners this year. Only five of 101 municipalities have adopted the rates under the new mechanism but 20

more set their 2010 tax rates lower than their 2009 rates and 41 others kept their 2010 rates unchanged from 2009.

<http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/fin/2010e0319fn.htm>

INCOME SECURITY

The low-income property tax allowance, last adjusted in 1995, will provide:

- a \$300 benefit to households with total taxable incomes up to \$22,000
- a \$200 benefit to households with total taxable incomes between \$22,000 and \$25,000
- a \$100 benefit to households with total taxable incomes between \$25,000 and \$30,000.

This measure will provide tax relief to homeowners in the amount of \$10 million and will assist about 40,000 homeowners. The province has already increased the low-income seniors benefit to \$400 for 2010, up from \$100 in 2006.

<http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/fin/2010e0351fn.htm>

YOUTH

\$500,000 over two years to strengthen partnerships among young people and organizations working on their behalf. The funding will go toward a series of initiatives and activities organized by New Brunswick youth and will be provided by eight departments that deal with youth. A 19-member steering committee with representatives from educational institutions and community organizations will design and implement a provincial Youth Strategy.

<http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/edu/2010e0311ed.htm>

\$186,375 from Population Growth Secretariat to encourage youth to be more engaged and stay in the province. The funds will be used by 15 organizations to increase awareness of opportunities for individuals ages 15-35.

<http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/pg/2010e0397pg.htm>

SENIORS

The low-income seniors' benefit will increase from \$300 to \$400 on April 1. More than 34,000 seniors across the province will receive the benefit in 2010, totalling nearly \$14 million in payments. In cases where both spouses received the Guaranteed Income Supplement and lived in the same household, only one payment will be provided.

<http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/fin/2010e0304fn.htm>

Prince Edward Island

No updates this month.



Québec

BUDGET

Four main areas outlined by the province aimed at stimulating job creation and economic recovery:

- create a more efficient and better funded health care system
- stay the course towards a balanced budget in 2013-2014
- pay down the provincial debt
- build the Québec of the next 20 years.

Item one includes the creation of a dedicated health fund to be financed by a general contribution that will be payable by all Québec adults, with the exception of low-income households.

http://www.budget.finances.gouv.qc.ca/budget/2010-2011/index_en.asp

HEALTH

The *Fonds de la recherche en santé du Québec* – in partnership with the *Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux* and Pfizer Canada – have created a \$5-million Chronic Disease Fund. Open to Québec-based researchers who work in collaboration with health professionals, the fund will support the implementation and evaluation of chronic disease prevention and management initiatives. Chronic diseases pose a major challenge that is growing with the aging population.

<http://archive.newswire.ca/en/story/616505/the-frsq-the-msss-and-pfizer-launch-research-grant-program-for-chronic-disease-research>

HOUSING

\$1.8 million for 14 affordable housing units for low-income families in Rigaud.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

\$5.8 million from private and public partners to build 52 affordable housing units for seniors in the Québec City region.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

Ontario

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Forecasting a deficit of \$21.3 billion for 2009-10, the government plans to cut the deficit in half in five years and eliminate it in eight years. It announced a five-year plan to “Open Ontario” to new jobs and growth. It will help 20,000 more students go to college or university in September 2010, create jobs and boost economic growth in northern Ontario, fully implement full-day learning for 4- and 5-year-olds by 2015-16, and invest \$63.5 million a year to preserve 8,500 child care spaces.

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/mof/en/2010/03/2010-ontario-budget-opens-ontario-to-job-creation-and-growth.html>

INCOME SECURITY

Ontario is raising the minimum wage to \$10.25 on March 31, 2010.

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/mol/en/2010/03/ontario-increases-minimum-wage-1.html>

POVERTY REDUCTION

Eradication of the OW/ODSP Special Diet Allowance, a social assistance benefit that helps people pay for extra food costs related to specific medical conditions. The government plans to create a new nutritional supplement program that would be administered by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care on behalf of the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational. Update: see Ministry website: http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcscs/programs/social/special_diet_apply.aspx

SENIORS

A proposed Retirement Homes Act, 2010 would:

- create a regulatory authority with the power to license homes and conduct regular inspections, investigations and enforcement, including issuing financial penalties or revoking licenses if necessary.
- establish mandatory care and safety standards, and require emergency plans and infection control and prevention programs, assessment of care needs and care planning, police background checks and training for staff.
- establish residents rights that include the right to know the true cost of care and accommodation and the right to live in an environment that promotes zero tolerance of abuse or neglect.

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/oss/en/2010/03/stronger-protections-for-seniors.html>

Manitoba

SENIORS

Pension Benefit Act undergoing a significant overhaul for the first time in 35 years. New regulations will respond to changes in the workforce, ensure greater accountability and security for pensions in the future (details: www.gov.mb.ca/labour/pension)

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2010-03-01&item=8064>

YOUTH

Following recommendations from a 2009 Youth Health Survey, \$33,000 for a new school-based drug abuse prevention program for elementary students, \$225,000 to support healthy eating through breakfast and healthy snack programs, increased fines and enhanced enforcement against those who supply tobacco to minors and a summer 2010 summit

aimed at cracking down on underage drinking.
<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2010-03-01&item=7814>

Saskatchewan

BUDGET

Budget balanced by reducing overall government spending by \$121.3 million or 1.2 percent from last year's Budget. The goal is to reach a 15 percent reduction in the size of the public service over four years primarily through attrition. The province will protect and enhance core services in health, education and social services and other priority areas.

<http://finance.gov.sk.ca/budget2010-11>

COMMUNITY

New cultural policy, Pride of Saskatchewan, aligns culture, community and commercial activities to maximize the social and economic benefits of culture. Collaboration around common goals and the synergy they create are seen as key to strengthening the sector.

<http://www.pcs.gov.sk.ca/Pride-of-Saskatchewan>

HEALTH

People with chronic health conditions now have access to Telehomecare, a remote patient monitoring system that allows a client's condition to be monitored by a health professional via computer. The pilot project is being conducted in the Kelsey Trail Health Region.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

HOUSING

\$2.3 million for seniors housing in Prince Albert. Funding will build an 18-unit single level garden apartment, with 16 two-bedroom units and two wheelchair accessible one-bedroom units.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

YOUTH

Health Canada to pay \$1.3 million over three years (administered through Saskatchewan Health) to provide outreach, early intervention and community linkages for youth ages 12 to 24 who have been or are at risk of developing consequences related to substance use. The centre will be in the Five Hills (Moose Jaw) Health Region.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

Alberta

COMMUNITY

Edmonton's Capital Region Board has developed a long-term growth plan to manage 600,000 new residents over the next 40 years. The Board's plan contains four mandatory elements: a regional land-use plan, plan for regional transit, regional geographic information system, and strategic plan for social and market-affordable housing.

http://capitalregionboard.ab.ca/-/reports/crb2011ar_web.pdf

\$12-million from the Alberta government to build 112 housing units for the homeless in Calgary and Edmonton. This measure is part of the provincial strategy to end homelessness in one decade.

The original internet link to this item is no longer operational.

<http://edmonton.ctvnews.ca/mustard-seed-gets-12-million-to-build-housing-for-homeless-1.492532>

HOUSING

Since adopting 10-year plan to end homelessness plan last year, the province has met or exceeded many of its first-year benchmark goals. Shelter use is down in all major cities; more than 900 homes for the homeless are in the works; and more than 1,300 formerly homeless people have been permanently housed and are receiving supports for independent living. For more information on *A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 Years*, visit <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/homelessness/14601.html>

The original internet link to this item is no longer operational.

\$5.6 million to Covenant Health in Lethbridge to create 40 barrier-free studio rental units that include a range of support services for homeless people with mental and physical health conditions.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

\$4.3 million to create 39 below-market rental units, which will house 80 tenants in Edson. Five of the units will be barrier free and will be targeted to people with special needs.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

INCOME SECURITY

Adjustments to some Alberta Works income support benefits will improve fairness and simplify administration. There are three categories of income support recipients: Expected to Work, Not Expected to Work, and Learners. The adjustments will affect some core Learner benefits and some supplementary benefits available to all three categories. Benefits vary by family size and are responsive to individual circumstances. Adjustments include:

- equalizing benefits of three categories of Learners: Employment Insurance Learners, non-Employment Insurance Learners and Apprentices
- aligning dental coverage for Expected to Work and Not Expected to Work clients
- amalgamating the Employment Maintenance Allowance with a similar benefit, the Employment, Training and Transition Supports
- extending benefits to victims of human trafficking.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.



British Columbia

CHILD CARE

New StrongStart BC outreach programs opens at École Franco-Nord, a Conseil Scolaire Francophone (CSF) school in Prince George. (hyperlink)

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2010EDUC0013-000261.htm

New StrongStart BC opens in Vanderhoof.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2010EDUC0017-000281.htm

New StrongStart BC opens in Sooke.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2010EDUC0022-000319.htm

\$750,000 for a new child care facility in Ladysmith has expanded into a community service centre that will include an expanded seniors' facility and space for community groups, events and activities.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2010CFD0005-000283.htm

EDUCATION

School districts will receive \$4.663 billion in operating grants next year, a \$112-million increase over this year. Average per-pupil funding is also expected to increase by an estimated \$105 from \$8,196 this year to \$8,301 in 2010-11. Funding includes \$54 million for the teachers' wage settlement and \$58 million for the implementation of full day Kindergarten (in 55 of 60 districts).

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2010EDUC0015-000269.htm

\$45 million for renovation and upgrade of Abbotsford Collegiate Secondary to convert it to a Neighbourhood Learning Centre.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2010EDUC0016-000278.htm

FAMILIES

Ministry of Children and Family Development's new Extended Family Program (EFP) will offer supports to families when children are temporarily unable to live with their parents. When required, EFP will offer supports over and above the financial assistance provided by the Child in the Home of a Relative program. These measures will include individual assessment and long-term planning and increased supports for children, parents and caregivers – e.g., counselling, respite and/or training.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2010CFD0003-000208.htm

HOMELESSNESS

The Homelessness Intervention Project has housed 2,400 formerly homeless people in five communities, including 512 in Victoria and 252 in Surrey. It will build on its success over the next year by working with

other vulnerable homeless groups including youth, children and families, people with brain injuries and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and Aboriginal people.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2010HSD0033-000367.htm

SENIORS

New [SeniorsBC.ca](http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2010HLS0021-000272.htm) website provides seniors and their families better access to information on available programs and services.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2010HLS0021-000272.htm

75 assisted living apartments with support services for independent seniors in Squamish; 20 are subsidized by the Province in the amount of \$150,000. Vancouver Coastal Health is investing an additional \$401,500 annually for support and hospitality services.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2010HSD0032-000316.htm

Yukon Territory

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

2010-11 Capital and Operations and Maintenance budget, totalling \$1 billion and \$75 million and includes investments in health care, green energy, resource and land development, housing, education, public and social infrastructure.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/2010/10-048.html>

SENIORS

An annual increase of \$527,000 to the home care budget for individuals requiring care at home. The additional funds support increased hours of home care service for five community liaison coordinators, home support workers and licensed practical nurses.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/2010/10-046.html>

Northwest Territories, Nunavut

No updates this month.