



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

April 2011



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

Social policy measures include: tax relief, child care, poverty reduction measures, measures related to disability, education, long-term care and mental health care.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2011/exec/0419n02.html>

HOMELESSNESS

\$1.74 million under the Provincial Homelessness Fund (PHF) for 15 nonprofit organizations working to curb homelessness.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2011/hrle/0413n01.htm>

Nova Scotia

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Social policy measures include: new programs to assist families and children and improve health care.

http://www.gov.ns.ca/finance/site-finance/media/finance/budget2011/Budget_Highlights.pdf

DISABILITY

A new \$5.5 million Autism Spectrum Disorder Action Plan includes \$4 million over two years to fund the Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention (EIBI) program. Currently 50 percent of children who need EIBI receive it, and children are selected by a random draw. Every preschool child with autism will soon have access to the program. The plan focuses on five main themes including intervention services for families with pre-school children, supports for school-aged children, supports for adults, training to raise skills and awareness, and partnerships to support programming and services.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20110412001>

HEALTH

The new *Fair Drug Pricing Act* will allow government to regulate the cost of generic drugs under the Pharmacare program, leading to better drug prices for those covered by Pharmacare and a better deal for taxpayers.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20110411006>

Poverty reduction

\$18 million over the next year to help low-income families. New investments include:

- 22 percent increase per child per month to the Nova Scotia Child Benefit, the first increase in a decade; the increase will help more than 23,000 families
- \$15 per month increase in the Income Assistance personal allowance will help more than 31,000 adults
- indexing the Affordable Living Tax Credit and the Poverty Reduction Credit to keep up with inflation, which will help almost 240,000 families



- 250 additional child care subsidies
- increasing foster care rates by 10 percent, or about \$50 per child, per month to help 800 foster families
- allowing working Income Assistance clients to keep more money each month. They currently keep 30 percent of earnings. They will now keep the first \$150 earned each month, plus 30 percent of the remaining amount. Disabled Income Assistance recipients in supportive employment will keep the first \$300, double the current rate, plus 30 percent of the remaining earnings.

For a single parent with two children receiving Income Assistance, the changes could add up to more than \$420 extra per year for those not working and almost \$1,700 more a year for those on Income Assistance with some extra employment income.

http://www.gov.ns.ca/finance/site-finance/media/finance/budget2011/Helping_People_Make_Ends_Meet.pdf

DISABILITIES

\$1.5 million increase in funding to three voluntary programs operated through Services for Persons with Disabilities Program:

- \$825,000 will expand the Independent Living Support and the Alternative Family Support programs with 50 new placements. The Independent Living Support program helps someone learn to live on their own by providing assistance for up to 21 hours a week. Alternative Family Support matches individuals with caring families who share their homes and provides a variety of supports to individuals with disabilities.
- \$500,000 will be invested to increase the number of spots available at day programs for individuals with disabilities.
- \$200,000 to launch a new outreach team to help families and service providers manage supports for individuals with disabilities. Instead of leaving it up to families to find experts, a team of specialists composed of people like social workers, psychologists and occupational therapists will be put together to help. The first team will work in the western region of the province.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20110411001>

New Brunswick

POVERTY REDUCTION

Highlights of the investments made in the 2011-12 Budget (see Caledon's March 2011 Policy Index) in the province's poverty reduction plan include:

- \$1.2 million for a vision and dental plan for children of low-income families
- \$250,000 more for homeless shelters

- \$2 million more for school supplies for low-income families
- \$1.1 million more to support affordable housing rent supplements
- \$900,000 more to continue the redesign of the child protection system
- \$400,000 more in operating funding for child residential facilities
- \$7.5 million more for nursing home renovations and replacement
- \$300,000 more for the disability supplement to help persons with disabilities offset their health- and disability-related expenses
- \$100,000 more for the New Brunswick Disability Executives' Network to improve services to people with disabilities.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2011.04.0476.html

EDUCATION

The \$1.052 billion education operating budget will invest less in administration and operations and more in classroom activities, including:

- \$1.4 million to fund an increased number of early learning and child-care spaces
- \$800,000 for the Daycare Assistance Program
- \$2 million to increase preschool autism funding
- \$1.4 million in Year Two of the Integrated Service Delivery demonstration project
- \$3.1 million to maintain the number of teachers in public schools despite the decrease in the number of students
- \$750,000 in the new School Supplies Fund for teachers
- increasing funding for support school support workers such as teachers' assistants and clerical staff
- investing in a review and updated action plan to continue implementing the MacKay Report (a 2006 inclusive education report).

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2011.04.0416.html

Prince Edward Island

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Education and health initiatives announced (see Early Years Centres announcement).

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/index.php3?number=1040326>



CHILD CARE

A new website will help parents find information and register for their choice of early learning and child care centres across the province. <http://www.gov.pe.ca/news/index.php3?number=news&dept=&newsnumber=7677&lang=E>

\$6.8 million for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (3 percent increase) to bring its budget to \$227.3 million, including \$11 million for Early Childhood. Originally anticipating that 20 Early Years Centres would be implemented in 2010, double that number was completed. Once all the centres finish their transition to Early Years Centres, there will be a total of 2,159 certified spaces distributed across Prince Edward Island. <http://www.gov.pe.ca/index.php3?number=news&newsnumber=7696&dept=&lang=E>

Québec

INCOME SECURITY

New minimum wage to take effect May 1, 2011. The overall rate will increase from \$9.50 to \$9.65, while the rate payable to employees who receive tips will rise from \$8.25 to \$8.35. Increases are also planned for agricultural workers by type of production to which they are assigned. Since 2003, the minimum wage has grown by more than 32 percent (from \$7.30 to \$9.65). During the same period, the consumer price index rose by about 15 percent.

The original internet link to this item is no longer operational.
<http://www.cnt.gouv.qc.ca/en/wages-pay-and-work/wages/history-of-the-minimum-wage/index.html>

Ontario

HOUSING

Passage of Strong Communities through *Affordable Housing Act* (a part of the province's Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy). It will:

- clarify the roles and responsibilities of municipalities and the province to create stronger partnerships and greater accountability
- expand affordable housing options by requiring municipalities to establish policies that would allow second units
- require the province and municipalities to measure and report on progress
- consolidate housing and homelessness programs to give municipalities the flexibility to use funding to better address local needs.

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/mah/en/2011/04/affordable-housing-boosted-by-new-legislation.html>

Manitoba

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Social policy measures announced on family supports, health care, education and training, and communities.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-04-01&item=11227>

CHILD CARE

Province will fund an extra 25 child care sites, raising its five-year commitment under Family Choices to 54 new centres. \$21.3 million will pay for 2,100 newly funded spaces, including infant spaces and improved pensions for child-care workers.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-04-01&item=11304>

EDUCATION

Nearly \$450 million in provincial support to Manitoba universities will ensure students can pursue a quality university education.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-04-01&item=11241>

\$4.15 million to create 1,200 new apprenticeship seats.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-04-01&item=11278>

HOUSING

Province is approaching 50 percent of its goal of creating 1,500 affordable housing, two years into a five-year plan.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-04-01&item=11279>

Saskatchewan

No updates this month.

Alberta

EDUCATION

Bill 18, the *Education Act*, was introduced in the Alberta Legislature on April 27. The proposed legislation will underpin the transformation of the education system to reflect expectations for high school completion, online and other flexible learning environments, and a wide range of supports to students.

http://www.assembly.ab.ca/ISYS/LADDAR_files/docs/bills/bill/legisla-ture_27/session_4/20110222_bill-018.pdf

Engaging the Mature Worker: An Action Plan for Alberta was released as a response to the aging population, current economic growth and declining labour force growth. The plan seeks to encourage more mature workers to remain in the workforce.

<http://work.alberta.ca/skills/matureworkers.html>



British Columbia

INCOME SECURITY

Changes to the provincial minimum wage, under the Employment Standards Act, come into effect on May 1, 2011:

- general minimum wage increases from \$8 per hour to \$8.75 per hour
- First Job Wage, also known as the “training wage,” is repealed
- new minimum wage rate for liquor servers is introduced – \$8.50 per hour, effective May 1
- non-hourly rates paid to camp leaders, live-in home support workers and resident caretakers and are being adjusted in proportion to the increase in minimum wage
- piece rates for hand-harvested crops listed in the employment standards regulation increase by 9.4 percent.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2011L-CITZ0007-000353.htm

COMMUNITIES

\$63.8 million to help local governments, create jobs, stimulate local economies and keep families safe. In the first Strategic Community Investment Fund instalment for 2011, communities are receiving \$30 million in Small Community and Regional District Grants to support investments in local government services. The province is also providing \$30 million in net traffic fine revenues to eligible municipalities. Local governments will be reimbursed for the carbon taxes they paid in 2010. This revenue amounts to \$3.8 million and reflects the province’s goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 33 percent by 2020 through partnerships with local government. Funding is provided through the Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2011CS-CD0013-000349.htm

Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut

No updates this month.