




Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

May 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

No updates this month.

Nova Scotia

HEALTH

The province will pay travel and accommodation expenses for a parent or escort to accompany a child who must travel out of province to receive necessary medical care.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20110520005>

INCOME SECURITY

The minimum wage will increase to \$10.00 per hour on October 1 (a 3.6 percent increase from the present rate of \$9.65). After April 2012, future increases will be made by indexing the minimum wage to the low income cut off. This will be done based on the national estimated Consumer Price Index from the previous calendar year. Increasing the rate annually based on inflation will directly affect more than 50,000 residents who make close to the minimum wage (about 16 percent of the workforce).

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20110510001>

New Brunswick

EMPLOYMENT

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose to 10 percent in April, up 0.4 of a percentage point compared to March, according to figures reported by Statistics Canada. The unemployment rate increased by 1.5 percentage points compared to the same month last year.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2011.05.0507.html

HEALTH

Action Plan for Mental Health in New Brunswick 2011-2018 puts patients at the centre of treatment, includes new targets and incorporates a plan to increase access to specialized services across the province.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2011.05.0487.html

Prince Edward Island

No updates this month.

Québec

DISABILITIES

The Quebec Association for Social Integration launched an educational program for students with profound intellectual disabilities, to be implemented in academic year 2011-12. The program will help students in Grade 4 and up to age 21 achieve autonomy (reduced dependency) by applying their learning in contexts which are personally meaningful. This



is the first formal educational program in the world designed by school personnel for students with profound disabilities.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

Ontario

HEALTH

Seniors and Ontario Drug Benefit recipients now have more access to free consultations with their pharmacists to ensure they are using medications safely and effectively (advice regarding dosage and adverse reactions), and are provided with appointment-based information regarding managing chronic disease, using medical devices and getting help to quit smoking.

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2011/05/providing-seniors-with-more-access-to-free-pharmacy-services.html>

SENIORS

The province is developing a program to help quickly find seniors with Alzheimer's and other cognitive impairments when they are missing. The program will establish a model that communities can use to alert the public when vulnerable seniors go missing. The program will be the first of its kind in Canada.

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2011/05/watching-out-for-ontarios-most-vulnerable-seniors.html>

Manitoba

COMMUNITIES

An expansion of the 10-year-old Neighbourhoods Alive! Program will extend funding to a further five Winnipeg communities. \$1.8 million will help make neighbourhoods safer and more attractive while offering more educational, recreational and social opportunities for families. A new program called the Localized Improvement Fund for Tomorrow will provide grant assistance totalling \$450,000 over the next four years. Each of the five neighbourhoods will receive \$90,000 annually. Since the program's inception in 2000, more than 919 NA! projects have received government support totalling more than \$78 million. NA! programs currently operate in Thompson, Brandon, Flin Flon, The Pas, Selkirk, Dauphin, Portage la Prairie and designated communities throughout Winnipeg.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-05-01&item=11484>

DISABILITIES

Manitoba is proposing a new adult abuse registry as well as tough new offences and penalties to better protect adults with intellectual disabilities. The new adult abuse registry, the first of its kind in Canada, would include the names of those who abuse or neglect vulnerable adults and would be used by employers to screen potential employees or volunteers. Employers providing services to persons with intellectual disabilities

would be required to conduct a search of the adult abuse registry before employing new workers or volunteers. The registry is expected to be operational in spring 2012.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-05-01&item=11459>

EDUCATION

The COACH program currently supports Winnipeg children ages 5 to 11 who have profound challenges coping at home, in school and in the community. COACH includes a year-round, interdisciplinary approach to supporting students and their families or guardians during the day, evenings and on the weekend. The goal is to get children back into a classroom setting at a neighbourhood school. Evaluation of the program has shown that students have significantly improved behaviour and academic performance. They attend school more regularly, gain social skills, learn to manage aggressive feelings and perform better in class. \$540,000 in increased investment will allow the program to triple its capacity.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-05-01&item=11549>

HOUSING

The province is proposing strong measures to better protect tenants from excessive rent increases and uncontrolled condo conversions. As of December 1, 2011, it is also increasing direct cash help to low income earners paying the rent under RentAid (formerly the Manitoba Shelter Benefit). The benefit will rise to \$720 from \$600 a year for those on Employment and Income Assistance. For low-income earners, there will also be an increase to RentAid (e.g., a low-income senior getting \$1,320 a year will now get \$1,452 a year and a working family of four getting \$1,464 a year will now get \$1,632 a year.) Under Budget 2011, the Education Property Tax Credit will go up by \$50 per year and up to \$150 for seniors.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-05-01&item=11525>

The province is building 150 new independent and supported-living seniors housing units across the province and creating a roundtable on the housing needs of seniors.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-05-01&item=11613>

INCOME SECURITY

The province is proposing *Civil Service Superannuation Act* amendments that would benefit pensioners and current public servants.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-05-01&item=11579>

Manitoba has introduced legislative changes that would strengthen the *Pension Benefits Act* by allowing the Pension Commission's Office of the Superintendent to take direct action against employers who have a pen-



sion plan in place and fail to make the required contributions to the plan.
<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-05-01&item=11614>

The provincial minimum wage will increase 50 cents to \$10 an hour on October 1. The rate last increased 50 cents to \$9.50 per hour on October 1, 2010. That followed a rise of 25 cents on May 1, 2009, and another rise of 25 cents on October 1, 2009.
<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-05-01&item=11578>

POVERTY REDUCTION

The new Neighbourhoods Alive! Tax Credit (NA!TC) will encourage corporations to support community groups with charitable status to establish new revenue-generating enterprises. It provides a credit to Manitoba corporations that make a minimum \$50,000 donation to an organization with charitable status for the purpose of starting a new revenue-generating enterprise or social enterprise that hires people facing barriers to employment. When the 30 percent NA!TC is combined with existing treatment of charitable donations by corporations, the total tax savings in 2012 for donating corporations will be 57 percent of their contribution.
<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-05-01&item=11458>

SENIORS

Legislation was introduced to establish a legislative framework to increase awareness and recognition of Manitoba's informal or family caregivers.
<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-05-01&item=11580>

Saskatchewan

EDUCATION

The province and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations have signed an historic agreement to establish a joint task force on education and employment. It will consult on and off reserve to help identify practical, grass-roots solutions for eliminating gaps in education and employment outcomes for First Nations and Métis people.
The original internet link to this item is no longer operational.
<http://www.jointtaskforce.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/agreement-fsin-joint-task-force-improving-education-employment-outcomes.pdf>

INCOME SECURITY

The minimum wage will increase from \$9.25 to \$9.50 per hour on September 1, 2011, which will also result in a corresponding increase to the minimum call-out pay to \$28.50.
The original internet link to this item is no longer operational.
<http://srv116.services.gc.ca/dimt-wid/sm-mw/rpt2.aspx?lang=eng&dec=5>

HEALTH

Foreign skilled workers nominated through the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program will now be able to maintain health coverage while waiting to be granted an extension to their temporary resident status by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, which may have expired during the federal immigration application processing period.
The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

Alberta

DISABILITIES

Release of a KPMG report on the administrative review of the Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) program. The review found that the Family Managed Services option, which allows families to hire their own staff or contract their own services, is both effective and efficient. Families reported that they liked the flexibility and choice this voluntary option offered them, and the review found that the administrative costs of this option are low. Other actions will focus on common processes, a single website for the PDD program, and the development of a new technology system to ensure the PDD program is delivered consistently.
The original internet link to this item is no longer operational.
<http://humanservices.alberta.ca/disability-services/pdd-ar-factsheet.html>

HEALTH

MyHealthAlberta's 2011 release is the first phase of the \$33 million personal health portal initiative. Once complete, the portal will give residents secure access to their personal health information through the province's electronic health record system. The new Alberta Wait Times Reporting website was also launched. It allows people to search wait times by procedure, by specialist and by facility and will also show wait times trends for many procedures over the most recent 13-month period.
<http://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=30328B-B9374C5-A81D-06B7-BF46C6FB5298F806>

British Columbia

DISABILITIES

The province is matching a \$1 million gift from the Giving in Action Society to create a \$2 million grant that will go to the Children and Youth with Special Needs Fund. Established in 2006, the fund helps families make home renovations (e.g., lifts, ramps, flooring upgrades or door-widening), and/or purchase a wheelchair-accessible vehicle, and/or make modifications to an existing family vehicle. Families with a child or youth with special needs (up to 19 years old), from any part of the province, can apply for one-time capital grants.
<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2011/05/children-and-youth-with-special-needs-benefit-from-2m-grant.html>

FAMILIES

The province has changed shelter allowance rules for income assistance to provide extra support to families trying to better their situations.



Families on income assistance whose children have been taken into the care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development or a delegated Aboriginal agency, will now continue to receive the same shelter allowance as long as they are actively working to reunify their families. The shelter rate will be reviewed every six months.

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

http://www.gov.bc.ca/meia/online_resource/verification_and_eligibility/payassist/policy.html

HEALTH

Launch of the most comprehensive health-promotion program anywhere in Canada – the \$68.7-million Healthy Families BC strategy, which will help families make healthy choices and introduce innovative approaches to challenges facing the health care system.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2011/05/premier-clark-launches-strategy-for-healthy-families.html>

POVERTY REDUCTION

\$3-million expansion of the BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program. Starting in September 2011 through the 2012-13 school year, the program will be available to all public schools and will expand from the current 1,172 schools to 1,402 schools, which includes most public and First Nations schools.

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

Yukon, Northwest Territories

No updates this month.

Nunavut

POVERTY REDUCTION

Enhancements announced for the Community Breakfast Program and Parenting Support Programming, increases to the Social Assistance Program's food and clothing allowances, and a new Country Food Distribution Program to improve the availability of country food in communities.

A Poverty Reduction Action Plan for Nunavut will be completed by the end of 2011.

<http://www.news.gov.nu.ca/2011/may/may9.pdf>