




Canada Social Report  
Provincial/Territorial  
Policy Monitor

January 2012



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

### EDUCATION

A three-year memorandum of understanding between the province and its 11 universities will ensure tuition remains at or below the national average, increases research and development opportunities, and invests \$25 million to help universities become more sustainable.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20120105003>

### INCOME SECURITY

The minimum wage in Nova Scotia will rise to \$10.15 on April 1, 2012, a 1.5 percent increase from the present rate of \$10.00 an hour. The rate for an inexperienced worker with less than three months' experience in the work for which they were hired will rise from \$9.50 to \$9.65.

The increase to \$10.15 is based on the low income cut-off adjusted for inflation. Future increases to the rate will occur annually in April based on increases to the national consumer price index for the previous year.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20120125001>

## New Brunswick

### DISABILITY

The public is invited to dialogue sessions to provide input into the development of a new employment action plan for persons with disabilities.

The aim of the plan is to encourage more persons with disabilities to take advantage of post-secondary education opportunities and to participate in the labour force.

[http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news\\_release.2012.01.0002.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2012.01.0002.html)

## Prince Edward Island

*No updates this month.*

## Québec

### CAREGIVING

\$1.37 million for launch 16 new projects that support caregivers. These will operate from one to three years and will focus mainly on instituting online and hearing supports, respite, housing and accompaniment options. Another \$14 million will be distributed among 13 support networks (called 'Appui') spread throughout the regions of the province.

Appui is part of the larger provincial partnership with the Chagnon Foundation, a \$200 million, 10-year arrangement aimed at supporting those who voluntarily seek to support persons incapacitated by age or disease to help them continue to live in their homes.

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



## DISABILITY

\$8 million in funding will permit health and social service centres to offer respite services, day programming and other daily living support options for families caring for family members with developmental disabilities. Some of the funding will be directed to rehabilitation centres to allow them to hire personnel. Though the province requires that monies be directed towards services that directly benefit families, it allows regions to invest in services according to local need. The funding decision accords with the goals and strategies set out in a 2009 policy document entitled *À part entière*.

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

## Ontario

### HEALTH

Announcement of a new Health Action Plan that aims to: establish funding priorities that favour best value, prevent illness through health promotion, provide same day/next day access to physicians and nurse practitioners, and establish more home and community care supports to allow seniors to live independently at home. Local Health Integration Networks will be responsible for planning for family health care.

Plan site: [http://health.gov.on.ca/en/ms/ecfa/healthy\\_change/](http://health.gov.on.ca/en/ms/ecfa/healthy_change/)  
<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2012/01/ontarios-action-plan-to-transform-health-care.html>

## Manitoba

### YOUTH

Ten organizations are receiving new Youth Making a Difference grants. The goal of the initiative is to empower students and youth 16 to 24 to develop and implement social justice and community development projects in their schools and communities. The grants complement other provincial youth programs including We Day, the We Schools in Action program and the social action component of the Grade 12 global issues course, which is being piloted this year.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2012/01/2012-01-10-102700-12943.html>

### EDUCATION

The province will increase funding for public schools by \$25.5 million or 2.2 percent in 2012-13 and expand successful new programs. A further \$4 million will help school divisions reduce class sizes to 20 students in kindergarten to Grade 3. Manitoba's Early Literacy Intervention programs will receive \$1 million in new funding and the Early Numeracy Initiative targeted towards students in kindergarten to Grade 4 will be expanded to include students up to Grade 8 with an approximate increase of \$780,000.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2012/01/2012-01-30-114300-13083.html>

## GOVERNANCE

The Premier will lead a newly-created committee of cabinet ministers to coordinate major economic and policy initiatives. Members include the Ministers of Finance, Health, Family Services and Labour, Conservation and Water Stewardship, Innovation, Energy and Mines, and Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, as well as a rotating member of the government caucus.

The committee will focus on:

- education and economic development for future job creation
- efficient delivery of strong services for families
- new opportunities for rural and northern communities
- future infrastructure and community development.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2012/01/2012-01-13-140300-12983.html>

## Saskatchewan

*No updates this month.*

## Alberta

### COMMUNITIES

Alberta communities most affected by gang activity, particularly those in rural, remote and Aboriginal communities, can apply for a one-time grant for programs to reduce gang crime and violence through effective prevention and intervention.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=318622F8CF-C5C-F5A6-F13C-8B3284B80775F317>

### EDUCATION

Province-wide consultations about education, conversations with parent councils and education stakeholders helped form the basis for future legislation and prompted the development of a 10-point plan for Alberta's education system. The plan includes:

- reducing travel time for students who spend more than one hour on a bus and enabling students to better use technology when they travel
- creating more opportunities for students to earn credits in high school and post-secondary at the same time
- updating school design specifications to better support communities.
- coordinating building playgrounds and new schools.
- reducing the administrative burden for charter schools
- supporting First Nations students by working more closely with the federal government
- creating a stronger voice for parents in the education system



- providing better information to increase the transparency, clarity and accountability of the education system
- reviewing provincial achievement tests
- examining the operational requirements of full-day kindergarten.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=31784C87E013F-07B2-09FF-E745E76F1B9DFC1F>

#### GOVERNANCE

The province is working on a single-access approach to providing information and delivering programs. Alberta Supports currently includes more than 30 programs and encompasses more than 120 benefits and services. Alberta Supports provides greater access and information on services related to seniors, employment and training, persons with disabilities, lower income, children and youth, abuse and bullying, homelessness and making life decisions.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=3183910676395-9319-A4D1-AF7E4786368F0918>

## British Columbia

#### DISABILITY

Release of a comprehensive plan to address issues and concerns around Community Living BC (CLBC) and the government-wide system of supports for those with developmental disabilities. \$40 million will be provided to increase capacity and improve services for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Immediate implementation measures include:

- ensuring that families play a greater role in planning, providing more flexibility in available supports and supporting ongoing innovation in communities
- improving planning and collaboration across government to ensure that individuals' needs are at the centre of all decisions
- improving transition planning and processes for youth turning 19
- maintaining CLBC as a crown corporation
- an increased focus on employment and training services for adults with developmental disabilities
- the creation of a permanent appeal mechanism to address service concerns (similar to the Client Support Team that has resolved more than 63 percent of the referrals it has received – 113/180 – since it began accepting requests in October 2011)
- an expansion of the representative for children and youth's mandate, allowing her to follow youth involved with her office after they transition to CLBC.

[http://www.sdsi.gov.bc.ca/pwd/docs/NR\\_2012PREM0009-000045\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.sdsi.gov.bc.ca/pwd/docs/NR_2012PREM0009-000045_FINAL.pdf)

#### DISABILITY

Through a \$15-million combined federal-provincial investment over the next three years, the Home Adaptations for Independence (HAFI) program will help low-income seniors and people with disabilities finance home modifications for accessible, safe and independent living. HAFI will provide eligible homeowners and landlords with financial assistance of up to \$20,000 per home in the form of a forgivable loan.

[http://www.bchousing.org/Media/NR/archive/2012/01/27/9590\\_1201270900-629?pageNumber=4&cmbYear=&cmbMonth=&bchProgram=](http://www.bchousing.org/Media/NR/archive/2012/01/27/9590_1201270900-629?pageNumber=4&cmbYear=&cmbMonth=&bchProgram=)

#### EDUCATION

Signing of a second Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA) for Delta, with partners committing to support Aboriginal student success and bring a greater awareness of Aboriginal culture and history to all students. AEEAs are a commitment by school districts, local Aboriginal communities and the Ministry of Education to work together to support Aboriginal students. Delta's first agreement was signed in 2005, and over the past ten years, six-year completion rates have risen for Aboriginal students in the district from 37 to 60 percent.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/01/aboriginal-culture-focus-of-second-agreement-in-delta.html>

#### EMPLOYMENT

Announcement of a \$1.5-million investment in essential skills training. As part of Canada Starts Here: The B.C. Jobs Plan, more than 450 residents will benefit from essential skills training through nine SkillsPlus training projects throughout the province. SkillsPlus is a unique program that brings essential skills training to the workplace, building them into everyday employee training and work practices. Essential skills are identified as reading text, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, working with others, continuous learning, thinking skills and computer use.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/01/essential-skills-for-employee-employer-success.html>

#### FAMILIES

\$100,000 to launch the new Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Line and e-mail support. Advocates will help people understand their rights, obligations and options prior to and after assuming responsibility for raising a family member's child. They will also inform callers of all benefits, supports and resources available to them and how they can be accessed.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/01/new-support-line-for-grandparents-raising-grandchildren.html>

## Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories, Nunavut

*No updates this month.*