



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

May 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

SchoolsPlus will add 48 schools in 2012-13 (46 schools are currently participating). The initiative allows teachers, students, families and volunteers to deliver programs that meet community needs. Programming includes 100 service and activity areas including: mentoring, anger management, adult literacy, employment support, parenting support, art and sport programs, entertainment and hobby clubs, and summer camps.

The province's goal is to have SchoolsPlus schools in every county, with 28 hub sites, by 2017-18. Eight sites are now in place.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20120508004>

HEALTH

Release of *Together We Can: The Plan to Improve Mental Health and Addictions Care for Nova Scotians*, a five-year strategy with 33 actions and a \$5.2 million investment in 2012-13.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20120516002>

New Brunswick

DISABILITIES

Release of two action plans containing a combined total of 79 recommendations designed to increase the participation, inclusion and employment of persons with disabilities.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2012.05.0460.html

ECONOMIC PLAN

Release of *Growing Together – An Economic Development Action Plan for New Brunswick*. The plan emphasizes measurable results, improved access to local services and programs, and focuses decisions at the community level. It includes strategic frameworks for six areas of economic activity: information and communications technology, biosciences, industrial fabrication, aerospace and defence, value-added wood and value-added food.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2012.05.0393.html

EMPLOYMENT

The federal-provincial/territorial Targeted Initiative for Older Workers agreement and funding has been extended to March 31, 2014. Since its inception in 2006, some 700 older workers, age 55 to 64, have been helped to reintegrate into the workforce through basic work skills training and employment experience opportunities.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2012.05.0400.html



INCOME SECURITY

Release of a new pension model developed by the Task Force on Protecting Pensions. The new system is meant to discourage risky investment practices as a means of recovering losses and has built-in flexibility to better absorb declines in the markets. It was developed collaboratively with union leadership by pension plan experts and is based on a successful Dutch model, which applies risk management methods to pension plans.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2012.05.0477.html

SOCIAL SERVICES

Social Development NB announces a \$41.8-million increase to the departmental budget for the fiscal year 2012-13 to cover:

- \$21.5 million for the ongoing support of poverty reduction
- \$10.3 million for the construction and renovation of affordable housing units
- \$1.1 million more to support affordable housing rent supplements
- \$2.6 million for school supplies for low-income families
- \$1.6 million to increase funding for services by private home care workers
- \$250,000 in additional funding for homeless shelters
- \$400,000 in additional funds to complete the redesign of the child protection system
- \$4.25 million for nursing home renovation and replacement
- \$4.47 million for specialized care beds
- \$3 million to increase per diem rates for special care homes. The per diem rate for special care homes will increase by \$1.50 to \$75.50, effective April 2012.
- \$305,000 to increase funding for the disability supplement, which assists persons with health- and disability-related expenses
- \$300,000 in additional funding for the New Brunswick Disability Executives' Network to improve services to people with disabilities
- \$400,000 for child care residential centres.

Funding for these changes will be realized by:

- finding \$1.5 million in efficiencies for nursing home operating costs
- eliminating the Energy Efficiency Retrofit Program

- increasing the per diem user fee for nursing home residents over the next three years.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2012.05.0401.html

Prince Edward Island

POVERTY REDUCTION

The province's *Social Action Plan to Reduce Poverty* describes how government will protect and support low-income Islanders over the next three years. As government implements a three-year plan to balance the budget, new investments of \$4 million will be made to prevent and reduce poverty. Programs and services, such as child care subsidies, social assistance benefits and eligibility levels, will be reviewed and enhanced where necessary.

Among the initiatives to be implemented are:

- 60 additional rent supplements through a new investment of \$800,000
- new grants of up to \$5,000 to help families renovate their homes to keep seniors at home longer
- two new Early Years Centres
- \$500 increase in the Seniors Home Repair program grant
- HST exemptions and rebates for low- and modest-income families
- lower drug costs through new generic drug programs
- an expert review of mental health and addictions services.

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?number=news&newsnumber=8398&dept=&lang=E>

Québec

INCOME SECURITY

On May 1, the general minimum wage rate increased \$0.25 per hour, from \$9.65 to \$9.90, on May 1. Minimum wage payable to employees receiving tips increased by \$0.20 to \$8.55 an hour. More than 255,000 workers will benefit from the increase, including approximately 155,000 women. In 2011, 91 percent of employees earning minimum wage were employed in the service sector, particularly in retail trade, accommodation and catering. Some 100,000 full- and part-time students are paid minimum wage.

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

<http://www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/statistiques/travail-remuneration/remuneration-horaire-hebdomadaire/evolution-salaire-minimum-2012.pdf>



SENIORS

Announcement of the province's first policy on aging, *Viellir et vivre ensemble* [Aging and Living Together]. Developed by 18 government departments and agencies, it provides \$1.16 billion over five years to strengthen the care and services that promote healthy aging. This includes the promotion of healthy lifestyles, interventions to increase immunization coverage and prevent falls and inappropriate drug consumption. Enhanced access to comprehensive care and services will enable seniors to remain in their communities. Funds will also be granted to improve access to domestic help, as provided by social economy enterprises. Community organizations involved with seniors and their families will be consolidated so that they can offer more services.

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

<https://www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/fr/publication/Documents/historique-vieil-lir-et-vivre-ensemble.pdf>

An additional \$1.3 billion over five years will fund a package of housing and home support measures. Improved services and transit programs as well as new residential housing developments that are adaptable to seniors' evolving needs will enable seniors to remain independent longer.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

\$22.7 million over five years towards promoting seniors' civic participation. Continued funding of the Age-Friendly Municipality will grow this municipal decision-making initiative from 327 participating municipalities to 860. Funds will also cover implementation costs for a forthcoming strategy to encourage the continued employment of experienced workers. To better equip seniors to use technology effectively, a new computer instruction service will be instituted by hub organizations.

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

<https://www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/fr/publication/Documents/historique-vieil-lir-et-vivre-ensemble.pdf>

Ontario

HEALTH

Savings from updated doctors' fees under the \$11-billion Ontario Health Insurance Plan will be directed to more community care nurses, expanded home care services for at least 90,000 seniors, and 1,100 more doctors.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2012/05/ontario-freezing-doctor-pay-to-invest-in-more-community-care-for-families-and-seniors.html>

Creation of a Healthy Kids Panel that will work with health care leaders, non-profit organizations and industry to create a model to reduce childhood obesity. Its goal is to reduce childhood obesity by 20 percent over five years

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2012/05/healthy-kids-panel-to-help-reduce-childhood-obesity.html>

POVERTY REDUCTION

Announcement from the Minister of Child and Youth Services that a ministry working group made up of graduates of the province's child welfare system will be established to influence system improvements.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mcys/en/2012/05/statement-from-minister-of-children-and-youth-services-on-youth-leaving-care-report.html>

SENIORS

Over the next three years, Ontario will help 90,000 more seniors by adding three million hours of personal support worker care.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2012/05/ontario-adds-three-million-more-home-care-hours.html>

Manitoba

HEALTH

A new Winnipeg facility will allow families to receive integrated, specialized services for children and youth with special needs. Services will include intake and delivery of occupational and physical therapies, assistance with communication disorders and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, respite services, disability services and access to an Integrated Children's Services team.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2012/05/2012-05-15-113900-14174.html>

The province announces the adoption of *Manitoba's Plan to Protect Universal Health Care*. Its three pillars are: healthier Manitobans (prevention through healthier choices), better health services (expanded home care services and ensuring access to family doctors) and better value (administrative and purchasing efficiencies, provision of more physician assistants and nurse practitioners). The full plan is at www.gov.mb.ca/health/plan.html

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2012/05/2012-05-17-100300-14212.html>

The province's 11 Regional Health Authorities were officially merged into five.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2012/05/2012-05-30-145900-14394.html>

POVERTY REDUCTION

The province will join with community partners in June to explore alternatives to payday lending for consumers who may not be able to access mainstream financial services.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2012/05/2012-05-04-115800-14032.html>

RECREATION

\$3.5 million in provincial support in 2012-13 will result in more than \$46 million in community-based construction projects to upgrade existing facilities or create new ones. Some 270 nonprofit community groups



will be involved in Community Places Program initiatives, creating or upgrading local recreational, wellness or cultural facilities.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2012/05/2012-05-11-123400-14112.html>

Saskatchewan

CHILD CARE

The 2012-13 provincial budget has allocated \$2 million to develop 500 new child care spaces in 15 communities, and an additional \$4 million to cover the capital costs of those spaces.

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

<http://www.finance.gov.sk.ca/budget2012-13/BudgetHighlights2012-13.pdf>

Establishment of an electronic case management system designed to keep track of children in care of the Ministry of Social Services.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

DISABILITY

The Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) program is moving away from a welfare model toward a Living Income structure that offers recipients more financial independence. In addition to a \$50 increase in benefits received in January 2012, monthly minimum increases beginning in June 2012 are as follows:

- \$40 for recipients living in residential care settings
- \$200 for individuals who live in independent arrangements
- \$230 for couples who live in independent arrangements.

This year, clients in independent living arrangements will receive an average increase of \$270 per month.

SAID now also has a benefit structure that combines several allowances available under the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan into a single Living Income, further distinguishing SAID as a non-welfare support. Through this simplified benefit structure and reduced reporting requirements, the Living Income benefit will allow beneficiaries more choice in their decisions and control over how to spend their money. It will also ensure that people with similar needs are treated more equitably. An expansion of SAID enrolment is under way – disability impact assessments are being conducted by a third party, the Saskatchewan Abilities Council.

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

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/live/personal-and-family-support/financial-assistance/income-support-for-people-with-disabilities>

Alberta

HEALTH

The provincial government will be filing a lawsuit against tobacco manufacturers to recover \$10 billion in health care costs associated with smoking-related illnesses. AL joins BC, NB, NL and ON in initiating litigation against tobacco manufacturers. SK, MB, NS, PEI and QC are expected to file similar lawsuits shortly.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=324049F843008-C6C6-FF1A-2BE-9F44AE4FA6A3C>

INCOME SECURITY

General minimum wage will increase on September 1 by approximately 3.5 percent, or 35 cents per hour, rising from \$9.40 per hour to \$9.75 per hour. There will be no change to the liquor server minimum wage, which will remain at \$9.05 per hour. The 35-cent increase is based on a formula that links increases to an average of the annual increases in Average Weekly Earnings (AWE) and the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in Alberta. In the past year, AWE rose 4.56 percent in Alberta, while CPI rose 2.44 percent. The average of 3.5 percent equates to a suggested increase of 33 cents per hour. For simpler calculations, the increase was rounded up to 35 cents per hour.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=32410A470D535-D778-903B-0F73ECFBB9B088D7>

THRONE SPEECH

Announcement of several social policy-related plans for the next legislative session, including:

- introduction of the Workers' Compensation Amendment Act to allow all first responders to receive compensation for presumptive Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder without shouldering the burden of proof
- investment in public services and infrastructure
- design and implementation of a plan to extend the province's network of continuing care centres
- continued expansion of family care clinics in consultation with local stakeholders and health professionals who staff the publicly funded health care system.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=32364801926FB-A944-2D98-1586AE2E1A641210>

British Columbia

DISABILITIES

\$5.7 million in funding to enable people with communication disabilities to participate in the Communication Assistance for Youth and Adults (CAYA) project. This technology allows people with limited speech capac-



ity to participate more fully in their communities. Funding for CAYA since 2005 totals more than \$15 million.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/05/province-supports-technologies-for-people-with-disabilities.html>

EMPLOYMENT

The province has completed the selection process for two external advisory panels that will monitor the success of the new Employment Program of BC and has also identified the organization that will create a Centre for Employment Excellence. The Centre will act as a single coordination point for employment research and innovation, tools and training. Resources will include a research and development program, website and a system by which to share good practices throughout the sector. Set to launch in September 2012, the Centre will also act as a critical resource for analysis and evaluation in support of the advisory panels.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/05/advisory-panels-new-centre-monitors-employment-program.html>

HOUSING

As announced in Budget 2012, the *Income Tax Amendment Act, 2012* was introduced to allow first-time home buyers to receive up to \$10,000 to help with the cost of buying a newly-built home. Under the Act, seniors can apply for a Home Renovation Tax Credit of up to \$1,000 annually to assist with the cost of permanent renovations to help them stay in their homes longer.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/05/government-action-gives-bc-families-and-seniors-a-break.html>

INCOME SECURITY

Minimum wage increased to \$10.25 per hour on May 1. This is the third increase to the minimum wage over the past year. Non-hourly rates paid to camp leaders, live-in home support workers and resident caretakers will be adjusted at the same time in proportion to the increase in minimum wage.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/05/bc-workers-benefit-from-minimum-wage-increase-1.html>

SENIORS

Ten public consultations will take place throughout the province as a way for seniors, their families, service providers and other organizations to shape the future role of a seniors advocate.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/05/consultations-kick-off-on-seniors-advocate.html>

YOUTH

Six-month internships will start in the fall for five former children in care who are recent college or university graduates or are currently enrolled in a postsecondary program. They will be introduced to a career in the public service by job shadowing ministry staff and participating in projects focused on ensuring that children and youth in care have the best chance to succeed.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/05/new-internship-program-for-former-children-in-care.html>

Yukon Territory

INCOME SECURITY

Effective May 1, Yukon's minimum wage increased to \$10.30 as recommended by Yukon's Employment Standards Board. This increase brings Yukon's minimum wage rate to the second highest in Canada. Yukon's new minimum wage replaces the previous rate of \$9.27 per hour and will continue to be indexed to any increases to the annual Whitehorse Consumer Price Index.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/12-065.html>

Northwest Territories

No updates this month.

Nunavut

HEALTH

More people are dying from preventable and treatable causes in Nunavut than anywhere else in Canada, says the 2012 Health Indicators report produced by the Canadian Institute for Health Information, released May 24.

Report Link: <https://secure.cihi.ca/estore/productFamily.htm?locale=en&pf=PFC1791>