




Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

June 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

SENIORS

Release of *Close to Home: A Strategy for Long-Term Care and Community Support Services*, a 10-year strategy to guide and transform the delivery of long-term care. It focuses on helping people achieve optimal independence and quality of life in their homes and communities by addressing health and social needs; optimizing rights and participation in decision-making; encouraging choice, independence and mobility; and demonstrating standards of quality in all aspects of service. Annual investments in the system will rise from \$600 million to \$760 million annually over the next five years. \$1.5 million will be allocated for an 18-month Enhanced Care in Personal Care Homes Pilot Project, which will allow residents to receive enhanced residential services as close to home as possible. \$1.5 million over three years is being allocated for the Age-Friendly NL Transportation Project. This initiative will assist incorporated nongovernmental organizations, municipal governments, Inuit community governments and/or reserves to explore public and private sector partnerships to create age-friendly transportation models.
<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2012/health/0620n01.htm>

Nova Scotia

HEALTH

Release of *Thrive: A plan for a healthier Nova Scotia*. The government-wide effort has 34 recommendations and \$2.05 million in new funding for 2012-13. The plan focuses on physical activity and healthy eating.
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20120607002>

New Brunswick

DISABILITIES

Announcement of *Strengthening Inclusion, Strengthening Schools*, an action plan and investment of more than \$62 million over three years to improve inclusion and intervention services.
http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2012.06.0494.html

EDUCATION

Release of *Putting Children First*, a three-year, \$38-million action plan that integrates early childhood services and the school system. Along with investments in early learning and child care facilities, investments will support wage subsidies for child care workers, more family subsidies for child care and additional training for child care staff and services for preschool children with autism spectrum disorder. The child care system will be enhanced by:

- a broadening of the mandate of early intervention agencies from 0 to 5 years to 0 to 8 years in cooperation with the school system.



- the development of two provincial networks of early childhood services, one for each linguistic community, which will be tasked with implementing the strategic framework for early childhood.
- a new early childhood services director in each of the seven school district boundaries. These directors will work closely with the school district management team and their partners for integration of early childhood services in the various locations.
- the development of local early childhood service networks operating in the same areas as the school districts, which will work together to respond to the needs of families in their communities.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2012.06.0506.html

HEALTH

A new dental and vision plan will cover all children of low-income families ages 18 and under (approximately 22,000 children will qualify). Low income is determined according to the Market Basket Measure for families. http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2012.06.0518.html

POVERTY REDUCTION

Launch of the Community Food Action Program, a food security initiative. Organizations can apply for up to \$2,000 for initiatives that demonstrate an ability to increase food knowledge and skills, access to healthy food, and community engagement and mobilization by building on local assets and capacities. http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2012.06.0550.html

RECREATION

Federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for sport, physical activity and recreation endorsed the Canadian Sport Policy 2012. The policy has been designed as a roadmap for all governments, institutions and organizations that are committed to contributing to the benefits of sport to Canadians, their communities and Canadian society, while respecting each government's jurisdiction. The vision for the policy is to have a dynamic and innovative culture that promotes and celebrates participation and excellence in sport by 2022. http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2012.06.0599.html

Prince Edward Island

No updates this month.

Québec

DISABILITY

The Office of Persons with a Disability announced financial support for monitoring services (after school care) for students with disabilities ages

12 to 21 who are unable to remain at home alone. *The internet link to this item is no longer operational.*

\$35 million will be spent on improving services for people with intellectual and physical disabilities or a pervasive developmental disorder (PDD) and for family supports. \$7.5 million will be allocated for family support services and specialized PDD accommodation, \$5.5 million for a specialized rehabilitation centre for physical disabilities and \$22.5 million for services and resources. This third amount will be broken into three areas: \$10 million to improve accessibility to services in health centres and social services centres, \$5 million to allow community organizations to develop daytime activities and provide family support, and \$7.5 million to meet the need for diverse housing. The latter includes the creation of new spaces in residential settings, improved support services for social housing and the promotion of innovative projects. *The internet link to this item is no longer operational.*

Ontario, Manitoba

No updates this month.

Saskatchewan

SENIORS

Announcement of the new Personal Care Home Benefit (PCHB) and increases to the Seniors Income Plan (SIP). Both actions are part of the government's Seniors Affordability Plan and come into effect July 1, 2012. The PCHB will provide seniors with monthly financial assistance to help them with the cost of living in a licensed personal care home. Those eligible for the program will receive a monthly supplement, amounting to the difference between their monthly income and the threshold of \$1,800. To be eligible for the PCHB, an applicant must be 65 years of age or older; have a monthly income below \$1,800; live in a licensed personal care home in Saskatchewan; and receive the Old Age Security pension. The government has committed \$3.5 million this year to the PCHB, which will benefit about 1,500 seniors. In addition, seniors receiving benefits under SIP will receive up to \$50 more each month, which will automatically be added to their payment in July 2012.

[Link](#)

Alberta

SOCIAL POLICY

Residents are invited to share their ideas about how social policy can achieve better outcomes for children, families, individuals and communities. The Speak. Share. Thrive. public engagement initiative provides opportunities at www.socialpolicy.alberta.ca and at community-led discussions to help create a social policy framework that will guide decisions about the relevance and effectiveness of social policies and programs for the province. *The original internet link to this item is no longer operational.* <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/summing-up-results-on-the-Social-Policy-Framework.pdf>



INCOME SECURITY

Low-income seniors will continue to have access to monthly income support through the Alberta Seniors Benefit program. The province is raising the program's qualifying income thresholds to ensure provincial seniors' benefits are not negatively affected because federal seniors' benefits went up. Effective July 1, qualifying income thresholds in Alberta will increase \$500 to \$25,100 for a single senior and \$800 for senior couples to \$40,800.

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

<http://www.seniors.alberta.ca/seniors/seniors-benefit-program.html>

British Columbia

FAMILIES

As part of its Family Affordability Pillar (an element of Families First Agenda for British Columbia), the province will better support people having difficulty repaying their student loans. Stage one will take effect July 1 and will provide payment assistance for the interest portion of the student loan. The second stage provides payment assistance for the principal portion of a loan.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/06/families-first-agenda-unveiled-helps-students-in-need.html>

HOUSING

A \$5-million federal and provincial investment in a newly-funded Aboriginal Housing Initiative will help create affordable housing for Aboriginal households in need in BC. The Aboriginal Housing Management Association has partnered with the province to assist in the evaluation process and oversee the management and operations of the housing projects.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/06/canada-and-bc-help-create-new-aboriginal-housing.html>

INCOME SECURITY, DISABILITY

Announcement of phase one of the Families First Agenda: Supporting Vulnerable Families, initiatives to remove barriers to employment for people who want to return to the workforce while providing adequate support for those most in need. For vulnerable families, changes include:

- increasing the school startup supplement so that families now receive \$100 for every child ages 5-11 and \$175 for every child 12 and over
- providing access to dental services for children of families on hardship so parents can take their children for regular dental checkups
- exempting income tax refunds so individuals and families on income assistance will be able to keep their full income tax refund.

To assist individuals with disabilities, changes include:

- individuals receiving disability assistance will be able to earn up to \$800 per month and still receive full benefits
- earnings can be calculated on an annual basis, rather than monthly,

so individuals with disabilities can maximize their earning during times when they are feeling healthy and able to work – to an annual total yearly exemption of \$9,600.

To help families avoid the cycle of income assistance dependency, changes include:

- extending work search requirements for new applicants from three weeks to five weeks
- instituting a \$200 monthly earnings exemption for all expect-to-work clients, regardless of family size, to give employable individuals a better opportunity to get job skills and experience, take advantage of short-term or temporary work and better provide for their families while receiving assistance
- enhancing employment planning to support people transitioning off income assistance and returning to work.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/06/common-sense-changes-encourage-work-protect-vulnerable-families.html>

SENIORS

A new Seniors Health Care Support Line is now available to provide seniors and their families with support for health care-related issues that they may have had trouble resolving. The line will supplement existing resolution mechanisms to support seniors with complex needs.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/06/phone-line-helps-seniors-with-health-care-concerns.html>

Yukon Territory

HOUSING

The Yukon Housing Corporation will investigate the development of a new home ownership program to assist working residents in lower- and middle-income brackets to buy a home. The Corporation will look at models that exist elsewhere in Canada and develop a recommendation for how a Yukon program may be structured.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/12-123.html>

Northwest Territories

HEALTH

Release of *A Shared Plan Towards Wellness*, a three-year action plan to improve mental health and reduce addiction. It is composed of three elements: community focus and engagement (allowing communities to determine their own culturally appropriate solutions), collaborative partnerships with other departments and agencies, and the development of an integrated continuum of care.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/a-shared-path-towards-wellness-the-mental-health-and-addictions-action-plan-2012-2015/>



HOUSING

The territory's new rent scales will proceed on July 1, 2012. Seniors who reside in public housing and were paying no rent in the past will be required to pay 50 percent of the approximately \$70-\$80 rent increases on September 1, 2012. The full impact of planned rental increases will come into effect on July 1, 2013.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/implementing-the-new-public-housing-rent-scale/>

POVERTY REDUCTION

In partnership with the 30 members of the No Place for Poverty Coalition, the GNWT has formed an Antipoverty Steering Committee to lead the development of a Northwest Territories anti-poverty strategy. Building on the work to date, including the No Place for Poverty workshop and *What We Heard from Northerners about Poverty* report, the Committee was formed from a cross-section of groups and organizations to ensure that ongoing collaboration takes place with communities, nongovernment organizations, business, labour and people living in poverty.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/nwt-antipoverty-steering-committee-formed/>

Nunavut

No updates this month.