



Canada Social Report  
Provincial/Territorial  
Policy Monitor

October 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

### SENIORS

As part of \$22 million in new funding included in the 2012-13 Budget to improve home care supports across the province, the government announced three measures by which it will further support caregivers:

- making the monthly Caregiver Benefit available to about 100 more people
- enabling Caregivers Nova Scotia to expand its programs and services to more areas of the province
- opening respite beds in more communities so caregivers can take a temporary break from caregiving responsibilities.

About 1,100 low-income residents qualify for the \$400 monthly Caregiver Benefit. By raising the low-income threshold from \$18,785 to \$22,003, about 100 more caregivers are expected to qualify. Over the next two years, the province will more than double the grant to Caregivers Nova Scotia to run community-based peer support groups and telephone assistance and support for caregivers. It also partners with organizations to deliver workshops about caregiving issues. Access to the Caregiver Benefit, respite care and other home care programs is available through a single-entry access system (1-800-225-7225).

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20121010005>

## New Brunswick

### DISABILITY

The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons released the 29th edition of the Directory of Services Offered to Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick. Made available annually since 1983, the directory contains information on programs and services offered by government and community groups. An online version of the directory is updated throughout the year.

[http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news\\_release.2012.10.0992.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2012.10.0992.html)

## Prince Edward Island, Québec

*No updates this month.*



## Ontario

### HEALTH

New investments announced in prescription narcotic addiction programs, including:

- opioid treatment programs as well as addiction treatment programs for pregnant women and mothers
- community wellness development teams for Aboriginal communities. Teams are located within First Nations organizations and link First Nations communities to health care service providers in response to misuse of prescription drugs
- expansion of monitoring in emergency rooms and public health units to help with early detection and better coordination of addiction and community mental health services
- public education on opioids and available services.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2012/10/helping-ontarians-over-come-prescription-narcotic-addiction.html>

### SENIORS

Passage of the *Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act* will allow seniors who own or rent homes, and people who share a home with a senior relative, to receive the new tax credit worth up to \$1,500 each year. The credit will make it more affordable to complete home renovations and installations to help seniors stay in their homes more safely and prevent falls and injuries.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2012/10/helping-seniors-live-at-home-longer.html>

### YOUTH

Through Ontario's Youth Action Plan, 35 additional youth outreach workers will work in Toronto, Peel, York, Durham, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, London, Windsor and Hamilton, providing one-on-one support to youth and helping connect them with support services. Youth outreach workers prevent and intervene in negative behaviour, promote civic participation and develop social and leadership skills. To ensure that young people receive the best possible supports and mentorship, all youth outreach workers will be trained in a common set of skills.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mcys/en/2012/10/providing-more-supports-for-young-people-to-succeed.html>

Funding from the Youth Action Plan will also fund 32 community initiatives to help at-risk young people develop job skills and assist those already in trouble with the law. The Safer and Vital Communities grants help community-based, not-for-profit organizations and First Nations chiefs and band councils deliver a variety of crime prevention programs.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mcscs/en/2012/10/helping-communities-tackle-crime-and-gang-violence.html>

## Manitoba

### INCOME SECURITY

The province will increase the minimum wage by 25 cents to \$10.25 an hour on Oct. 1, 2012. The minimum wage rate last increased 50 cents to \$10 per hour on Oct. 1, 2011. That followed an increase of 50 cents on Oct. 1, 2010. The amount of income a person can earn before paying income tax is increasing by \$1,000 over four years, reaching \$9,134 in 2014.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2012/09/2012-09-28-142100-15362.html>

### RECREATION

As part of its five-point Strategy to Keep Kids Out of Crime, the province launched a \$500,000 Sport Opportunities Fund which will give more young at-risk Manitobans the opportunity to get involved in sports and find healthy and positive after-school and weekend opportunities. Community-based sport and recreation organizations will be able to apply for grants that will increase sporting opportunities for high-needs youth and communities with:

- up to \$10,000 for permanent equipment such as volleyball standards, goal frames and athletic field line painters
- up to \$2,500 for equipment with a shorter life span such as volleyballs, pucks and uniforms.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2012/10/2012-10-05-120800-15406.html>

### SENIORS

As part of an enhancement to the Age-Friendly Manitoba Initiative, age-friendly communities are now eligible to receive grants to continue improvements that make life better for seniors. Pinawa, Portage la Prairie, The Pas, Springfield, Steinbach and Dunnottar have achieved their age friendly milestones and have been awarded a one-time grant to use for age friendly initiatives in their communities.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2012/10/2012-10-15-132400-15453.html>

### YOUTH

The province announced 290 more emergency group home beds and a new website to connect foster parents with children who need a temporary place to stay while waiting for permanent placement. Manitoba Family Services and Labour's annual report will now include the number of children who stayed in hotels while waiting for placement; the number will be updated online quarterly. The annual report will also include the number of children in care in 2011-12. Last year there were 9,730 children in care, an increase of 3.2 percent over 2010-11. This is the lowest increase in the number of children in care in the last five years. This number also includes 434 young people who have had their care

extended beyond age 18 in order to pursue education or employment-related goals.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2012/10/2012-10-17-151100-15462.html>

## Saskatchewan

### CHILDREN

The Lac La Ronge Indian Child and Family Services Agency (ICFSA) Inc. have signed an expanded off-reserve child welfare mandate with the Ministry of Social Services. As of December 1, Lac La Ronge ICFSA will provide child protection services, foster care, extended family care and out-of-home care services to 16- and 17-year-olds, and foster parent supports both on and off-reserve in the Lac La Ronge service area. The Town of La Ronge is a unique combination of on- and off-reserve territories within the same small community. The agreement will allow for a more efficient child welfare system that will provide better continuity to children and families who transition both on- and off-reserve.

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

The province provided \$95,000 this fiscal year to the 11 and Under Initiative in Regina, a collaborative effort among the Regina Police Service, schools and a number of community-based organizations. The program works by identifying at risk children age 11 and under, and connecting those children and families with appropriate support services. Since it was launched one year ago, the program has worked with approximately 120 children and families in the Regina area, in an effort to prevent those children from engaging in unhealthy behaviour, and potentially criminal activity later in life.

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

### INCOME SECURITY

Minimum wage in Saskatchewan will rise to \$10.00 per hour on December 1, 2012, an increase from the current rate of \$9.50 per hour. The move follows a commitment by the province to review the hourly minimum wage on a year-to-year basis. The change also results in a corresponding increase to the minimum call-out pay to \$30.00.

*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>

### SENIORS

The new Seniors Home Security Program is intended to help low-income seniors and seniors who have been the victim of a break and enter or home invasion. Under the program, a free home safety assessment as well as home safety equipment and installation are provided to seniors at no cost. Eligible equipment includes: deadbolts, door viewers, smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms and smoke alarm batteries. To be eligible, seniors must be 65 or older and either have an annual household net income of \$35,000 or less or have been the victim of a break and enter or home invasion.

<http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/details.cfm?p=65231>

## Alberta

### EDUCATION

The province's new *Education Act* contains anti-bullying measures and acknowledges that all education partners – parents, students, teachers, administrators and trustees – need to work together to make schools the hubs of the community. The legislation will allow for more local decision-making by giving school boards more flexibility, while reinforcing their obligation to work closely with communities and post-secondary institutions. The bill continues to ensure that parents may choose their children's educational environment, whether it is public, separate, Franco-phone, private, charter or home education.

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

<http://www.calgaryherald.com/life/Education+will+have+strongest+anti+bullying+legislation+country+minister+says/7394562/story.html>

### INCOME SECURITY

The province introduced the *Employment Pension Plans Act*, which will give the private sector the ability to more easily develop pension plans that meet the needs of employers and employees. The first major rewrite of private sector pension laws in 25 years, the proposed Act sets the standards for private sector pension plans with members in Alberta. It deals with funding, investment, disclosure of information, and member entitlement to benefits. It is estimated that only one in six employees in Alberta's private sector belongs to a pension plan.

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

<http://www.finance.alberta.ca/business/pensions/>

## British Columbia

### DISABILITIES

A \$60,000 grant to the SAFERhome Standards Society will fund a two-year pilot project to make housing more accessible. The Universal Design Housing Pilot Project will provide developers of low-rise, multi-unit housing with \$600 for each unit they design in accordance with the SAFERhome 19-point standards, when they provide matching funds. This will encourage the use of universal design principles in new construction and help assess the costs and benefits of inclusive housing design features.

Universal design housing offers the flexibility to use built-in design features without the need to undergo costly renovations later, as accessibility features can be added more easily and inexpensively after construction.

Design standards include:

- slightly larger doors
- fewer tripping hazards
- reinforced walls to accommodate independent lifestyle options



- easier-to-access light switches/plugs
- smart home-style electrical options.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/10/new-incentive-project-supports-universal-design-housing.html>

\$20,000 for a program that helps individuals with developmental disabilities and their families build a life plan and set the stage for a meaningful and inclusive adult life. Following extensive consultations, the Canadian Inclusive Lives Learning Initiative's learning program pilot began in 2011, designed by the University of British Columbia's Centre for Inclusion and Citizenship. The funds have enabled the centre to do a comprehensive evaluation of the pilot, consult on the curriculum and modify it for the second intake of 22 students who began in September. The ten-month program includes online and in-person sessions that focus on supported decision-making, financial literacy, employment and other essential topics. The program is designed to teach, support and inspire people to build their own skills and life plan.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/10/government-supports-new-learning-program.html>

Up to 25 students with developmental disabilities will now have the opportunity to attend classes and gain campus experiences at BC colleges and universities under a two-year, \$400,000 investment with STEPS Forward's BC Initiative for Inclusive Post-Secondary Education, funded by Community Living BC (CLBC). Over the next two years, CLBC will evaluate the program to find out how well it enables students to pursue employment, build relationships and use available natural supports.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/10/post-secondary-funding-helps-young-adults.html>

## EDUCATION

By 2013-14, BC plans to implement an open textbook policy, making it the first province in Canada to offer students free online, open textbooks for the 40 most popular post-secondary courses. Up to 200,000 students could save hundreds of dollars a year or more. An open textbook is typically published under an open licence and can be read online or downloaded at no cost. If a printed copy is desired, the book is made available for printing at a fraction of traditional textbook costs. Because the open textbooks are digital and open, they can be modified and adapted by instructors to fit different classes. Open textbooks are part of a growing movement worldwide supporting Open Education Resources, which takes advantage of the Internet (making information sharing easier) and open licences (which extend the rights to use, reuse, revise and share material).

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/10/bc-to-lead-canada-in-offering-students-free-open-textbooks.html>

## HEALTH

\$48 million to support the ongoing work of the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR). In its first decade, the foundation has funded more than 1,800 research-related positions, including 1,491 researchers funded directly. MSFHR also funds research teams and shared research services to finance researchers across the province, supports multiple projects to address health-system challenges and brings together BC's universities, health authorities, nonprofit organizations and government for health-research planning and action. MSFHR has received more than \$360 million from the province to date, including \$323 million towards initiatives that support the MSFHR mandate and \$37 million in targeted research funding.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/10/48-million-for-research-that-supports-healthy-families.html>

New regulations will give health authorities the ability to provide nurse practitioners with the ability to admit and discharge patients from health-care facilities, working in collaboration with physicians and other health-care providers. The regulations are expected to help enhance health services and meet patient need by easing congestion and reducing workloads, especially for rural regions. BC is the second jurisdiction in Canada, after Ontario, to allow qualified nurse practitioners to admit and discharge patients from hospitals.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/10/nurse-practitioners-to-admit-discharge-patients.html>

## INCOME SECURITY

Income and disability assistance changes announced in June 2012 took effect October 1. Part of the province's Families First Agenda, the changes are designed to help vulnerable individuals and families attain better financial outcomes, assist people with disabilities to lead more independent lives, and help people capable of work avoid the cycle of income-assistance dependence.

Key changes include:

- \$200 monthly earnings exemption for all expected-to-work clients to give employable individuals a chance to build job skills and experience, take advantage of short-term or temporary work, and better provide for their families while receiving assistance
- \$800 monthly earnings exemption for individuals receiving disability assistance
- exemption of income tax refunds so individuals and families on income and disability assistance will be able to keep their full income tax refund without affecting their benefits
- restoration of a number of medically necessary medical equipment and supplies for clients on income and disability assistance, including ventilator supplies, bariatric scooters, orthoses and apnea monitors



- access to dental services for children of families on hardship assistance
- extension of income assistance to parents without legal status in Canada who are fleeing abuse and can't leave the country with their children.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/10/changes-to-income-and-disability-assistance-take-effect-today.html>

### SENIORS

Seniors and their families now have easier access to information they need online and in print with a redesigned SeniorsBC website and a new edition of the BC Seniors' Guide. Complementing the redesigned SeniorsBC website is the ministry's new Home and Community Care website – [www.health.gov.bc.ca/hcc](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/hcc). The site provides more complete information about community care and service care options.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/10/redesigned-online-and-print-resources-for-seniors.html>

## Yukon Territory

### CHILDREN

An amendment to the *Income Tax Act* that will establish a tax credit for parents or guardians of children involved in music, arts, cultural activities or tutoring has been introduced in the Yukon Legislative Assembly. The Children's Arts Tax Credit allows Yukon parents to claim a credit of up to \$500 in eligible expenses per child per year. The benefit doubles for families with children who have a disability. Eligible activities include music; literary, visual and performing arts; and courses in media, languages, customs and heritage; and activities that provide enrichment or tutoring in academic subjects.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/12-206.html>

## Northwest Territories

### EDUCATION

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment has developed a process for adults to receive their high school diploma. Through the Adult Recognition Model, adults enrolled in Adult Literacy and Basic Education programs may receive high school credits for a combination of academic course work and knowledge or skills they have gained through life experience. Using a Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition methodology, they develop a portfolio of formal and informal learning to demonstrate the skills, knowledge and abilities they have acquired. This process also includes a link between the K-12 school curricula and the adult literacy and basic education curricula. The model has been implemented this in Fort Smith and Yellowknife, with plans to expand to Inuvik.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/advanced-education-initiatives/>

## Nunavut

### COMMUNITY

The territorial government announced the release of the Uqausivut Plan, which will guide the implementation of the territory's language legislation. The result of a year-long consultation process, the plan sets out the steps territorial departments and public agencies will take to meet their obligations under the *Official Languages Act* and the *Inuit Language Protection Act*. It also describes the management and accountability framework through which the Plan will be managed and monitored.

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

### EDUCATION

Launch of a comprehensive curriculum on Residential Schools. The curriculum was piloted in March 2012 with a select number of schools across the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/comprehensive-curriculum-first-of-its-kind-in-canada/>

### POVERTY REDUCTION

The Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (the legal representative of the Inuit of Nunavut) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the Nunavut Roundtable for Poverty Reduction and announced the development of a Nunavut Food Security Strategy. The MOU is an agreement for collaboration between the government and NTI to implement *The Makimaniq Plan: A Shared Approach to Poverty Reduction*. The establishment of the Nunavut Food Security Coalition and the preparation of a territorial action plan on food security is a principal goal of *The Makimaniq Plan*.

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

<http://www.tunngavik.com/files/2012/10/2012-10-BACKGROUND-ER-MOU-Poverty-Reduction-ENG.pdf>