



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

April 2013



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

CHILDREN

Release of a Request for Proposals to start the development and delivery of a training program for specialized (level 3) foster homes. Level 3 foster homes are approved foster homes with a stay-at-home foster parent who has specialized knowledge, skills and training to care for children and youth who have highly complex emotional, behavioral or medical needs. The action is part of a \$14.3 million investment announced in Budget 2013. It continues the implementation of the province's Continuum of Care Strategy, aimed at improving the placement options for children and youth in need of out-of-home care.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2013/cyfs/0412n05.htm>

New Brunswick

GOVERNANCE

Legislation was introduced to create the New Brunswick Research and Innovation Council. The council will guide research and innovation across all sectors and stakeholders. Its primary goal will be to accelerate innovation-based entrepreneurship and create the conditions for the commercialization of current and future research in public universities and research centres.

Ex-officio members include the premier and official opposition leader, the ministers responsible for post-secondary education and economic development, the chair of the NB Innovation Foundation and the chair of the NB Health Research Foundation. The council's duties will include advising government on the creation of a multi-year policy and budgetary framework every four years. It will also be tasked with creating and submitting sector-specific studies or reports to government on different aspects of research and innovation.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2013.04.0369.html

INCOME SECURITY

The New Brunswick Department of Social Development plans to spend \$1.1 billion in 2013-14, an increase of \$4.7 million from the previous year:

- social assistance rates will rise by seven percent over six months (\$3.5 million) – a four percent increase in October and a further three percent in April 2014
- \$3 million for the construction and renovation of affordable housing and \$1.9 million for affordable housing rent supplements
- \$9 million between 2011-16 for a nursing home renovation and replacement plan, which includes infrastructure, operations and wages
- \$3.8 million will be provided to increase per diem rates in special care homes, specialized care homes and community residences; this amount will allow a wage increase for workers in these facilities



- a five percent (\$305,000) increase for the disability supplement, which assists persons with disabilities with health- and disability-related expenses.

The Department's Budget estimates also include:

- \$28.1 million for the ongoing support of poverty reduction
- \$18.7 million for affordable housing rent supplements
- \$1.1 million for the Healthy Smiles, Clear Vision program
- \$2.6 million for school supplies for low-income families
- \$750,000 for shelters for the homeless.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2013.04.0367.html

Effective October 2013, changes to the province's social assistance programs will include:

- wage exemption policy will be enhanced – benefits will be reduced by 70 cents for every additional \$1 clients earn beyond the fully exempted amount. The current policy reduces benefits by \$1 for every \$1 in earnings
- social assistance rates will be increased – seven percent over six months
- a new exemption will be added to the Household Income Policy – a 15th exemption is being created to include single clients with multiple education, health, housing and social challenges that present chronic, significant barriers to employment
- the supplement available to families for high shelter costs will be increased by 20 percent. Families that spend more than 30 percent of their assistance on shelter costs receive a supplement to help offset these costs
- clients with disabilities who live with their parents will be eligible for a reduction in their shelter deductions in addition to the overall social assistance rate increase they will receive. When the parental income is less than \$50,000, the shelter deduction will be eliminated entirely. In cases where the parental income exceeds \$50,000, the shelter deduction will be reduced to a flat rate of \$100 for single clients with disabilities.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2013.04.0368.html

Nova Scotia

BUDGET

Strategic investments will be made in job creation, the economy and families. Budget 2013-14 includes \$9.5 billion in revenues, \$9.5 billion

in total spending and a surplus of \$16.4 million.

Health highlights:

- more collaborative emergency centres will open
- insulin pumps and supplies for youth to 19 and supplies for insulin pumps for people younger than 25
- children 13 or younger will be able to receive universal dental coverage for check-ups and treatments (previously, children under 9 received this service)
- newborn screening to be expanded to include cystic fibrosis, sickle cell anemia, and eight additional conditions
- partnering with other provinces to reduce the price of six common generic drugs
- funding for the province's first mental health and addictions strategy, Together We Can

Income security:

- increase the maximum property tax rebate by \$200, bringing the total up to \$800. About 15,000 seniors qualify for the rebate. Of those, 4,000 will benefit from the increase to help them stay in their homes.
- beginning January 2014, more of the province's poorest seniors will be exempt from paying provincial income tax, more seniors will have a portion of their income tax returned to them and the province will increase the maximum property tax rebate available to seniors. The number of seniors who no longer pay provincial income tax will increase to 25,000. Another 4,000 seniors will have a portion of their income tax returned to them.
- increased personal allowance rates for income assistance beneficiaries (\$17 per month) bringing the total increase over four years to \$47 each month, a 22 percent increase
- provide more Nova Scotians with safe, affordable housing options through the province's first housing strategy

Education:

- establish children's centres to make it easier for families to access support services for young children and help them make a successful transition to elementary school
- continue to cap class sizes for Grades 1 to 3 at 25 students, ensuring that average class sizes remain small
- fund school boards to hire 25 new program support staff, psychologists, and speech-language pathologists to help children with special needs, and provide funding for 15 teachers' assistants

Women:

- increase and stabilize funding for transition houses and women's centres



- target groups under-represented in the workforce, as part of the province's ongoing workforce strategy
- continue support for Techsploration, a program designed to introduce girls to career development opportunities in science, trades and technical and technology-related fields
- support Cybersafe Girl to keep girls safe online
- continue to support the domestic violence court, work on the province's domestic violence plan and develop a sexual violence framework

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130404002>

CAREGIVING

Government is asking the public and stakeholders to help redesign residential and related services for seniors and persons with disabilities. In March and April, those interested can access a report entitled Putting People First and fill in a related questionnaire.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

HEALTH

Children 13 or younger to re-qualify for Medical Services Insurance (provincial) coverage for basic dental treatment, including yearly check-ups, cleanings and fillings. The province had provided this coverage until 1997, when it decided to cover children 9 or younger.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130408004>

The province is distributing a mental health services information sheet to all students in Grades 7 to 12. It gives young people phone numbers to call and other resources if they, or someone they know, needs help.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130415006>

RECREATION

For a third consecutive year, the province is investing \$1.5 million in sport, recreation and wellness, fulfilling its 2011 commitment to increase such funding by 25 percent each year.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2013.04.0316.html

SENIORS

Beginning January 2014, more of the province's poorest seniors will be exempt from paying provincial income tax, more seniors will have a portion of their income tax returned to them and the province will increase the maximum property tax rebate available to seniors. The number of seniors who will no longer pay provincial income tax will increase to 25,000. Another 4,000 seniors will have a portion of their income tax returned to them.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130402002>

YOUTH

The province is asking for input and guidance from two youth organiza-

tions for ways to deal more effectively with bullying. Leaders of Today is a network of diverse young people, ages 14 to 24, from across the province who focus on meaningful action on important issues. The group is connected to the Heartwood Centre for Community Youth Development in Halifax. The Youth Advisory Council represents diverse youth from across the province. It was put in place to advise the province on a range of issues affecting youth, including bullying and cyberbullying.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130417008>

Introduction of the *Cyber-Safety Act*. It will create the country's first cyber-investigative unit and allow families and victims to get protection orders from the court. School principals will also have clear authority to act against bullying or cyberbullying, on or off school grounds.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130425001>

Prince Edward Island

HEALTH

The province's vaccine program for Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine will expand this fall to include free vaccinations for Grade 6 boys. The HPV vaccine has been provided to Grade 6 girls since the 2007 school year.

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?number=news&newsnumber=8937&dept=&lang=E>

Québec

DISABILITY

\$10 million in funding to be distributed among various regions of the province to improve services for young adults age 21 and over with a pervasive developmental disorder (PDD) such as autism, intellectual disability or a physical disability. The \$10 million is to be added to the existing \$35 million fund which is aimed at improving overall services. The government is also establishing a working group to further investigate socio-professional options for people 21 or older with PDD.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

Ontario

CAREGIVING

The province proposes an investment in the community care sector of \$260 million in 2013-14 to reduce wait times for patients. This would also help set a target for patients who require nursing services and those with complex needs to receive home care within five days of their Community Care Access Centre assessment.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2013/04/ontario-proposes-investments-in-home-and-community-care.html>

HEALTH

Ontario's public health sector – organizations responsible for protecting and promoting residents' health – released *Make No Little Plans*, a joint plan that lays out a 15-20 year vision, mission, values and strategic goals



for the public health sector. The product of consultations with the public health sector and many others in the health and non-health sectors, it outlines the sector's five shared strategic goals and eight collective areas of focus for the next three to five years. It calls for strong partnerships across all sectors to work towards:

- giving children the best start in life
- improving the prevention and control of infectious diseases through immunization
- getting more Ontarians to exercise more, eat better, not smoke and drink less alcohol
- influencing municipal planning and policy to reinforce the strong link between community planning and health outcomes
- strengthening the public health sector's capacity, infrastructure and emergency preparedness.

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/ministry/publications/reports/make_no_little_plans/docs/make_no_little_plans.pdf

SENIORS

Following the recommendations in the *Living Longer, Living Well* report, the province is improving the delivery of physiotherapy to 200,000 seniors by:

- providing access to exercise and falls prevention classes for 68,000 additional seniors in community settings
- providing funding for one-on-one physiotherapy for all long-term care residents with assessed need in addition to group exercise classes
- offering in-home physiotherapy for 60,000 more seniors and people with mobility issues to clear current waitlists
- expanding clinic-based physiotherapy services across Ontario for 90,000 more seniors and eligible patients.

The province will also integrate physiotherapy into family health care settings, including family health teams, nurse practitioner-led clinics, and community health centres.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2013/04/more-seniors-to-benefit-from-physiotherapy-and-exercise.html>

The government proposes an additional investment in the community care sector of \$260 million in 2013-14 would reduce wait times for patients. This funding would also help set a target for patients who require nursing services and those with complex needs to receive home care within five days of their Community Care Access Centre assessment.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2013/04/ontario-proposes-investments-in-home-and-community-care.html>

YOUTH

Launch of the Youth Jobs Strategy, which focuses on jobs, entrepreneurship and innovation:

- Ontario Youth Employment Fund – to create new job opportunities
- Ontario Youth Entrepreneurship Fund – to support entrepreneurs through mentorship, startup capital and outreach
- Ontario Youth Innovation Fund – supports youth to lead and manage industrial research, development and commercialization. It would also support young entrepreneurs at universities and colleges
- Business-Labour Connectivity and Training Fund – to bring together business, labour, educators and youth to better prepare young people to develop the skills they need to succeed.

The province is committing \$295 million to the strategy over two years and anticipates the creation of 30,000 new job opportunities.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2013/04/jobs-and-opportunity-for-youth.html>

Manitoba

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Budget 2013 projects a \$518-million deficit for 2013-14 and infrastructure spending estimates of \$1.8 billion. Highlights include:

- health care: hiring more doctors, nurse practitioners and other health professionals, and expanding the STARS helicopter ambulance to 24-hour service, seven days a week
 - providing more home care services to seniors who want to remain in their own homes and hiring additional front-line staff in personal care homes
- education and training: creating new apprenticeship opportunities, introducing a new training and skills development strategy and increasing funding to colleges and universities
- income security:
 - reducing income taxes by increasing the basic personal income tax exemption by \$250 and increasing the spousal and dependent exemptions by \$250
 - eliminating school property taxes for all seniors by 2015
 - removing the provincial sales tax from baby supplies such as diapers, car seats and strollers
 - building hundreds more affordable housing units
 - introducing a \$240 per year increase to RentAid
 - increasing the minimum hourly wage to \$10.45
 - ensuring that Manitobans have the lowest combined rates for electricity, home heating and auto insurance in the country.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=17202>



DISABILITY

The government introduced legislation to help governments, private sector businesses and advocacy groups work together to make more places and services barrier free. The proposed legislation set out a framework for collaborative, long-range planning among governments, the private sector and accessibility advocacy groups to make proactive and innovative solutions that enhance accessibility, independence and social inclusion. <http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=17260>

HOUSING

Budget 2013 includes a plan to build 1,000 new rental housing units over the next three years (500 affordable housing units and 500 social housing units). The new units will add to the HOMEWorks! program already under way to develop 3,000 new affordable and social housing units by 2014. Over the next three years, the Manitoba government will also invest \$100 million annually to restore and redevelop housing units in its portfolio. An additional \$34 million will be dedicated annually to repair existing stock.

To encourage the construction of more apartments in the private sector, Budget 2013 creates a new Residential Rental Housing Investment Tax Credit, which will provide an eight percent credit on construction costs for private developers to build new rental housing with affordable units. <http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=17214>

WOMEN

In partnership with several community groups, Family Services and Labour launched a public awareness campaign encouraging Aboriginal men to speak out against domestic violence. This is the next phase of the province's multi-year domestic violence prevention strategy, originally launched in November 2012, which focuses on providing supports for victims and families; interventions for people with abusive behaviour; and prevention, awareness and training. <http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=17171>

YOUTH

The province is expanding its partnership with the Manitoba Foster Family Network to provide 4,800 more foster families with training and mentorship opportunities. The program connects new foster parents with experienced foster parents to create a peer group and organizes monthly workshops on a variety of topics including training and support for childhood development, fetal alcohol syndrome disorder and transitioning youth out of care. <http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=17133>

Saskatchewan

DISABILITY

The province reported the fulfillment of its multi-year commitment to address a wait list of 440 people with intellectual disabilities. An additional 215 Community Living clients beyond the original wait list were also provided access to specialized, residential and/or day programs

to meet their needs. \$62.5 million in funding was directed to new, expanded, or existing services in 41 communities; almost 500 new staff positions were created in community-based organizations. The 2013-14 provincial Budget includes \$4.2 million in operational funding to finalize wait list commitments. The government will also allocate \$1.2 million in operating funds and \$1.0 million in capital funding to provide services for individuals with emerging needs during 2013-14.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

EDUCATION

\$500,000 through the Saskatchewan Community Literacy Fund (SCLF) to support short-term literacy projects that address identified community literacy needs. In 2013-14, the SCLF will assist communities in developing and implementing community literacy projects that focus on the literacy needs of First Nations, Métis and Inuit citizens, immigrants, people with disabilities, young or lone parents, and working age youth. Funding of up to \$50,000 is available for individual projects between three months and one year in length.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

HEALTH

A new \$9.8 million Family Treatment Centre will provide up to eight mothers access to integrated addiction treatment, health care and parenting supports. Onsite childcare and school services and specialized living quarters will allow mothers to attend culturally-affirming inpatient alcohol and drug addiction treatment. The Ministry of Health paid for construction and will fund annual operating costs, expected to be \$2.3 million.

<http://finance.gov.sk.ca/PlanningAndReporting/2013-14/201314Health-AnnualReport>

INCOME SECURITY

Introduction of the *Pooled Registered Pension Plans Act* to ensure all workers are eligible to enroll in low-cost, tax-assisted pension plans, supplying an alternative for those workers who currently do not have access to group pension plans. Amendments are also being introduced today to The *Saskatchewan Pension Plan Act* which will permit the trustees of the Saskatchewan Pension Plan to apply to be a licensed Pooled Registered Pension Plan provider.

<http://www.fcaa.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=5e0985b7-aa9a-4327-b2cf-59ce752fcd8e>

Alberta

GOVERNANCE

Bill 19, the *Métis Settlements Amendment Act, 2013*, introduced by Aboriginal Relations Minister Robin Campbell, supports the recently announced Métis Settlements Long Term Arrangements and promotes accountability and good governance of the settlements. The amendments are the result of negotiations with the Métis Settlements leadership over the last year.



<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=339700F56A0A6-C6C7-B74E-52499E8858C0EC54>

INCOME SECURITY

Introduction of Bill 18, the *Pooled Registered Pension Plans Act*, which will allow employers, employees and the self-employed to access pooled registered pension plans. These large, defined contribution plans will be professionally managed by plan providers, such as banks and insurance companies, and will be open to any employer or to individuals.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=339941F089704-D8A6-8F69-DC-6DAA4C276ECA93>

SENIORS

\$30.9 million investment from the Alberta government in Budget 2013. Maintenance and improvements of up to 172 seniors' lodges, cottages and unique homes will benefit as many as 10,000 seniors across the province. There are 153 lodges, 11 cottages and eight unique homes operating in the province with more than 10,000 living units eligible for support. Of these units, 60 percent are owned by housing management bodies, and 40 percent are owned by the Alberta Social Housing Corporation (ASHC). The ASHC owns the province's portfolio of social housing and manages agreements associated with these buildings.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=33972137895AC-D041-AA70-D3CD-6F57E6CB3C9C>

Through the Seniors Property Tax Deferral Program, homeowners 65 and older can defer all or part of their residential property taxes through a low-interest home equity loan with the Alberta government. The loans are repaid when the home is sold, or sooner if the senior chooses. The Deferral program will provide a new option for seniors as the Education Property Tax Assistance Program begins income testing this year and ends in 2014. On average, seniors received \$160 a year through the education tax program. The Seniors Property Tax Deferral will free up an average of \$2,000 a year for senior homeowners. Over the next three years, it is expected the program will free up \$50 million for 23,500 senior households.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=3399922BCACB5-A728-B3F5-129266CC1683261B>

British Columbia

CAREGIVING

Vancouver Coastal Health is working with the City of Vancouver, community stakeholders and advocates in the disability community to create a comprehensive policy statement and business case to guide the re-development of a 10-hectare facility. The Pearson Dogwood Centre will supply new homes for clients with disabilities and seniors in residential care. Part of an ongoing government plan to release surplus government properties for development in the public and private sectors, the capital funding required for the project is anticipated to come from the rezoning, subdividing and selling portions of the overall site.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/04/planning-underway-for-a-new-mixed-use-community-in-vancouver.html>

CHILDREN

The Adoptive Families Association of BC is receiving \$290,000 from the Ministry of Children and Family Development to develop an online Adoption Education Program – a preparatory program that all prospective adoptive applicants must complete. Currently, the program is administered by social workers but, by offering the educational component online, social workers will have more time to carry out home studies and thereby increase the number of families and individuals approved to adopt children and teens.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/04/new-funding-to-speed-up-adoptions-for-children-in-care-1.html>

EMPLOYMENT

The government is investing in a \$6.8-million partnership with the BC Construction Association to expand the Job Match program. In 2013-14, Job Match will place approximately 1,250 people into construction jobs throughout BC.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/04/government-invests-68-million-to-expand-job-match-program.html>

\$7 million in one-time funding to 19 post-secondary institutions. Funding from the Canada-BC Labour Market Development Agreement will allow the individual institutions to target specific short-term training required to meet the labour market needs of industry in their region. Possible examples of training could include introduction to trades, forestry boot camp, mining fundamentals and automotive technician foundation training.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2013PR-EM0050-000697.htm

\$465,000 investment for training opportunities in Northwest BC through Northwest Community College.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/04/premier-confirms-investment-in-northwest-skills-training.html>

HEALTH

The Childhood Healthy Weights Intervention Initiative will expand existing services and offer new services throughout British Columbia to ensure overweight or obese children and families have access to medical, nutritional and psychological support, as well as healthy eating and physical activity sessions. Initiatives include:

- expanding the Shapedown BC program, currently offered by the BC Children's Hospital, to all health authorities over the next two years. This program will provide medical, nutritional and psychological supports for obese children ages 6 to 17 years.
- launching a new provincial program, Mind, Exercise, Nutrition, Do It!



(MEND) that will provide free healthy lifestyle learning and activity sessions for overweight children ages 5 to 7 and 7 to 13.

- providing enhanced nutrition coaching by pediatric dietitians through Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC to parents who seek out weight management coaching for their children by contacting 8-1-1.
- continuing the delivery of a Physical Activity Line that provides telephone and online support for families.

Through the Provincial Health Services Authority, an initial investment of \$6 million was allocated in 2011-12. A further investment of \$2 million will bring the total to \$8 million for the Childhood Obesity Foundation to plan, implement and evaluate the initiative.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/04/more-support-available-to-help-bc-children-achieve-a-healthy-weight.html>

\$18.4 million to support ongoing research and grassroots projects aimed at individuals and families facing mental illness and substance use challenges. The funding includes \$1.4 million for the Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division (CAMH-BC) to expand Strongest Families BC, a phone-based early intervention coaching service for families and children 3 to 12 years of age experiencing behavioural challenges. The remaining \$17 million is being delivered through one-time grants and includes:

- \$15 million for the Community Action Initiative, a province-wide grant-making body that supports collaborative, community action that addresses substance use and promotes mental health (CAMH-BC is the fiscal agent)
- \$1 million for mental health research projects at the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research
- \$1 million for the University of Victoria's Centre for Addictions Research of BC to support addictions and substance use research and information sharing.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/04/184-million-for-mental-health-and-substance-use-supports.html>

SENIORS

United Way of the Lower Mainland will receive an additional \$5 million to enhance Better at Home, an innovative program that offers seniors help with a variety of non-medical services to assist them in living independently in their own homes. Better at Home is currently underway or in development in close to 60 communities. The new funding will allow the program to expand to assist seniors in up to 68 communities as well as support all sites in operating through December 2015. The new

funding is provided by the Provincial Health Services Authority and brings total government support for Better at Home to \$20 million.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/04/5-million-to-further-support-the-better-at-home-program.html>

YOUTH

Awarding of a one-time grant of \$300,000 to Trades Training BC to support a new youth ambassador program to promote trades and technology careers to young people in K to 12. Ambassadors will bring knowledge and understanding of training in their chosen field to encourage other youth to explore available trades and technical opportunities. Trades Training BC is a group of 14 public post-secondary institutions that promotes trades training.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/04/ambassadors-will-turn-youth-onto-trades.html>

Yukon Territory

EDUCATION

Yukon First Nations social studies materials will become part of the required curriculum for all Grade 5 classes beginning in the 2013-14 school year.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/13-091.html>

RECREATION

The Territory renewed a three-year \$1.7 million bilateral agreement in support of sport programs aimed at increasing participation and access to sport. The new agreement is an extension of a sport funding program that has been in place since 2003. Through the sport bilateral agreements, approximately \$4 million in shared federal and territorial sport funding has been used to improve athlete, coach and official development, and to increase participation by rural Aboriginal youth, female and underrepresented populations in the Yukon sport system.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/13-079.html>

Northwest Territories

No updates this month.

Nunavut

No updates this month.