



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

September 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

No updates this month.

New Brunswick

HEALTH

Release of *Rebuilding Healthcare Together – The Provincial Health Plan 2013-2018*. The plan encourages a philosophical shift that places the patient at the centre of care and an increased emphasis on building a healthier population and services in the community.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2013.09.0933.html

Nova Scotia

FAMILIES

Beginning September 16, 2013, tenants who are victims of domestic abuse can end leases early without financial penalty. Changes to the Residential Tenancies Act will allow victims to work with the Department of Justice's victim services program to end a year-to-year or fixed-term lease with one month's notice.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130911001>

SENIORS

Announcement of *Living Better: Nova Scotia's Plan for Seniors' Care*, a plan to expand home care support and improve long-term care options for seniors who are no longer able to live at home. The province is putting new resources into continuing care, including more than 1,100 new and replacement beds at nursing homes and residential care facilities around the province. Further investment in home care will give families more services and up to 1,500 new home-care spaces.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130904007>

INCOME SECURITY

The province announced plans to amend the Labour Standards Code to allow workers employed for six months with an employer to qualify for pregnancy/parental leave. That change would guarantee the right to return to the same job or a comparable one. Currently, employees have to be in a job for a year before their job is protected.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130902003>

Prince Edward Island

No updates this month.

Québec

GOVERNANCE

The Québec Ombudsman's 2012-2013 annual report notes that the gap between stated services and available services continues to widen. Three examples cited were:



- the lack of monitoring and quality control of care and services in some private seniors residences
- problems with the living environment, food, and monitoring in some publicly-contracted facilities that house people with physical and intellectual disabilities. The health and social services ministry did not carry out any assessment visits to these types of resource in 2012-2013
- the need for increased supervision of daycare centres and coordinating offices for family daycare, to ensure educational quality and consistent application of standards.

The ombudsman further noted long wait times for services and difficulties accessing them.

[Link](#)

The Minister responsible for Democratic Institutions and Citizen Participation presented the government's proposals on religious neutrality of the state and religious accommodation.

[Link](#)

Ontario

EMPLOYMENT

Young people aged 15 to 29 can now apply to the province's new Youth Employment Fund to find jobs and gain work experience. The fund helps employers offer four- to six-month job and training placements for young people looking for employment. The province is providing up to \$7,800 to cover a range of supports and services for each eligible young worker under the fund, including up to \$6,800 to help cover wage and training costs, and up to \$1,000 to help young workers pay for job-related costs like tools and transportation to work. The fund is part of the new Ontario Youth Jobs Strategy.

<http://news.ontario.ca/tcu/en/2013/09/applications-open-for-provinc-es-youth-employment-fund.html>

GOVERNANCE

The province has introduced legislation to establish a Financial Accountability Officer, an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly. If the legislation is passed, the Financial Accountability Officer would provide independent analysis to all MPPs about the state of the province's finances, including the Ontario Budget, as well as trends in the provincial and national economies. In addition, at the request of a legislative committee or an MPP, other types of research could be provided by the officer, including the financial cost or benefit to the province of any public bill. The Officer could also be asked to review and estimate the financial cost or benefit to the province of any proposal that relates to a matter over which the Legislature has jurisdiction, such as the establishment of a new program.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mof/en/2013/09/increasing-financial-accountabili-ty-and-transparency.html>

HEALTH

\$2.5 million for enhanced breastfeeding supports including:

- 24-hour telephone access to expert support
- assistance to hospitals and community health services to help them achieve the World Health Organization/UNICEF's "Baby-friendly Initiative" designation
- targeted support for mothers in population groups that have lower rates of breastfeeding
- new resources to support breastfeeding through Best Start: Ontario's Maternal Newborn and Early Child Development Resource Centre.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2013/09/moms-and-babies-to-benefit-from-new-breastfeeding-supports.html>

INCOME SECURITY

The province is reviewing the *2008 Payday Loans Act* in response to a number of changes in the payday loan industry, including the emergence of online transactions, smartphone-enabled loan approvals and new forms of high-cost, short-term loans. The review of the Act will:

- assess the ability of the current legislation to protect consumers using new online and mobile apps to access short-term payday loans
- explore ways to track payday loans and ensure that companies are compliant with existing regulations
- study stronger protections for consumers against multiple loans and roll-over loans
- review the maximum total cost of borrowing, which is currently capped at a \$21 fee for every \$100 borrowed
- examine the impact on customers of new short-term, high-cost loan products that have recently entered the marketplace.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mcs/en/2013/09/strengthening-protec-tion-for-payday-loan-customers.html>

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

The province has launched *Impact - A Social Enterprise Strategy for Ontario*, a plan that will help social enterprises start and grow their businesses while supporting the creation of 1,600 new jobs in the sector. The strategy will support social entrepreneurs and attract investors by focusing on four key areas:

- connecting, co-ordinating and communicating information to, and about, social entrepreneurs, including exploring new ways to help create 'hybrid' corporations that reinvest profits in a social purpose
- building the social enterprise brand by increasing awareness of the sector using tools like an interactive web portal where social entrepre-



neurs could meet and connect with investors, and access services

- creating a vibrant social finance marketplace through various initiatives, including exploring the launch of a new \$4 million Social Enterprise Demonstration Fund to support early-stage social enterprises
- delivering other innovative supports, like a pilot program to help social enterprises be part of procurements related to the 2015 Pan Am/ Parapan Am Games.

<http://news.ontario.ca/medt/en/2013/09/helping-social-enterprises-thrive-and-create-jobs.html>

SOCIAL FINANCE

Ontario is partnering with MaRS Discovery District to launch Social Venture Connexion (SVX), an initiative which will connect investors with businesses and organizations that focus on making positive social and environmental impacts. This development follows a series of actions taken by the province to strengthen social enterprise, including:

- the creation of an Office for Social Enterprise to promote partnerships with the private, not-for-profit and public sectors by coordinating and expanding the tools available to social entrepreneurs
- launching the Ontario Catapult Micro-loan Fund as a pilot program to support early stage social enterprises by providing them with access to capital, services and programs.
- Investing in SiG@MaRS, a program that supports social entrepreneurs at all stages to help develop and deliver programs that accelerate the growth of social enterprises.

<http://news.ontario.ca/medt/en/2013/09/helping-social-enterprises-grow.html>

YOUTH

The province is supporting MaRS Discovery District in delivering a new program – Studio Y: Ontario’s Social Impact and Leadership Academy. The nine-month program will include intensive training and mentoring for up to 25 youth ages 18 to 29 to build and refine their leadership, social innovation and entrepreneurial skills. The curriculum will be focused on helping participants become social entrepreneurs, change agents or civic leaders – turning their ideas into new businesses or solutions to challenges facing their communities.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mcys/en/2013/09/empowering-exceptional-young-leaders-to-succeed.html>

Manitoba

HEALTH

The province will work with the public, the hospitality industry and public health experts to develop a comprehensive strategy to encourage responsible alcohol consumption and reduce alcohol abuse.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=18890>

Launch of a new strategy to promote and support breastfeeding with a goal of having 85 percent of mothers begin breastfeeding their babies at birth. All regional health authorities are moving toward World Health Organization/UNICEF’s Baby Friendly Initiative accreditation in hospitals, community health offices and other facilities.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=18935>

INCOME SECURITY

The province is increasing the minimum wage on October 1 to \$10.45 an hour. This is an increase of 20 cents over the current minimum wage. With the increase, Manitoba’s minimum wage will be the third highest in Canada.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=19015>

Saskatchewan

YOUTH

Youth ages 14 and 15 must complete the province’s Young Worker Readiness Certificate Course (YWRCC) and abide by Minimum Age Employment laws if they want to work during the school year. Workers under the age of 16 must have the consent of their parent or guardian to work; are not allowed to work after 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday; cannot work before school starts in the morning; and cannot work more than 16 hours during a school week. The YWRCC is a mandatory ready-for-work course that teaches youth about occupational health and safety, labour standards laws and their rights and duties as employees. Since 2010, more than 27,000 certificates have been printed.

<http://www.saskatchewan.ca/work/working-jobs-and-pensions/youth-at-work/take-the-young-worker-readiness-course>

Alberta

No updates this month.

British Columbia

COMMUNITIES

\$375,000 for the Healthy Communities Capacity Building Fund will be available starting November 16, 2013 for eligible local governments to apply for Phase 2 grants to develop local policies and actions that will help residents lead healthier lives. The Healthy Communities Capacity Building Fund was first announced in March 2013, with initial funding of \$200,000. Due to the popularity of the program and quality of grant applications, that amount was increased to \$275,000. The total funding for both phases of the Healthy Community Capacity Building Fund is \$650,000.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/09/bc-invests-in-healthy-communities.html>

EDUCATION

Fifteen online textbooks in a range of subject areas have been reviewed by postsecondary faculty and are now freely available for download. This



is the first phase of BC's open textbook project to develop free, online, open textbooks for 40 popular postsecondary subject areas. When fully implemented, more than 200,000 students each year will benefit from the open textbook project.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/09/free-open-textbooks-available-for-students-and-instructors.html>

YOUTH

New regulations expand the mandate of BC's Representative for Children and Youth, helping to ensure vulnerable young adults are supported during their transition to adulthood at age 19. The representative may now advocate on behalf of young adults with developmental disabilities – who are transitioning from youth services at the Ministry of Children and Family Development to Community Living BC adult services – until their 24th birthday.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/09/broader-advocacy-mandate-supports-vulnerable-young-adults.html>

Yukon Territory

COMMUNITIES

Nineteen community organizations are receiving more than \$1 million in support from the Government of Yukon's Community Development Fund for projects promoting recreation, health and education across the territory.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/13-229.html#.Ujxgbla1GWV>

DISABILITY

Residents who provide care in their homes for adults with intellectual or cognitive disabilities will benefit from a new assessment tool and expanded fee structure which more accurately reflects the levels of care they provide. A new eight-level rate schedule will be introduced on January 1, 2014. In the interim, government staff will meet individually with the 22 affected caregivers to complete a new assessment of the individuals in their care and determine the fee for the services caregivers provide. Daily rates will vary from \$38.41 for level one to \$229.69 for level eight.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/13-227.html#.UjiecMa1GWU>

Northwest Territories

No updates this month.

Nunavut

No updates this month.