



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

October 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

GOVERNANCE

The province will conduct a census of the volunteer and non-profit sector. As the first of its kind in Canada, the census will capture the number, location, mandate and labour market information of volunteer and non-profit organizations in the province.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2013/exec/1023n07.htm>

COMMUNITY

The province is holding 11 Population Growth Strategy community consultations. To help guide discussions, *Changing Course: A Discussion Paper on Population Growth in Newfoundland and Labrador* is available at www.gov.nl.ca/populationgrowth

New Brunswick

DISABILITY

An updated online and print directory of services for residents with disabilities was released in both languages. The directory includes resources regarding disability organizations and government departments throughout the province including education, employment, funding assistance, housing, long-term care and transportation.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2013.10.1079.html

GOVERNANCE

Residents in two regions will vote on community restructuring in December. The rural community program was recently updated as part of the province's 2011 Action Plan for a New Local Governance System.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2013.10.1056.html

Nova Scotia

WOMEN

As part of the efforts to address bullying and cyberbullying, the province released the latest edition of its educational resource, *Guide for Girls*. The publication helps raise awareness of the rights of girls and the unique challenges they face every day.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20131011002>

Prince Edward Island

HEALTH

The Catastrophic Drug Program was introduced October 1, 2013. The percentage of household income a family will have to spend before the new provincial program applies will be on a sliding scale:

- three percent of an annual family income if that income is \$0 - \$20,000
- five percent of an annual family income if that income is \$20,001 -



\$50,000

- eight percent of an annual family income if that income is \$50,001 - \$100,000
- 12 percent of an annual family income if is more than \$100,000.

The program will cover about 60 new drugs that are not in the current PEI Pharmacare Formulary. The province estimates 5,000 to 7,000 people will benefit from the new program.

<http://healthpei.ca/catastrophic>

Québec

DISABILITY

Announcement of \$6 million over five years to enhance support for the integration of children with disabilities in care. This funding was announced as part of a larger initiative entitled Solidarity: a wealth for Québec.

http://www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/publications/pdf/GD_pilier_solidarite_Aide-memoire_en.pdf

HOUSING

As of October 1, the age of eligibility for the province's shelter allowance program is 52 for singles and couples who meet other program criteria. This \$3.4 million investment will benefit 3,400 households in 2013-14. One-year reductions in the eligibility age began in 2011 and will end in 2015 when the eligible age reaches 50.

The maximum allowable income is also increased to \$24,729 for households of two or more people. This change allows couples and seniors who receive maximum Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement benefits to maintain their housing allowance.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

RECREATION

Announcement of \$130 million for sporting and recreation facilities to encourage people to adopt a physically active lifestyle. A total of 84 projects will be implemented across the province.

<http://www.phn-rsp.ca/thcpr-vcpsre-2013/index-eng.php>

SENIORS

On January 1, 2014, the province will raise the eligibility threshold for legal aid and will provide free coverage for some 40,000 older people receiving the maximum Guaranteed Income Supplement.

<http://www.pbiactuarial.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/2013-Guide-to-Government-Benefits.pdf>

Ontario

CHILDREN

The province announced the country's first *Children's Outdoor Charter*, aimed at increasing children's time and experiences in the out-of-doors. <http://www.childrensoutdoorcharter.ca/>

COMMUNITIES

The province is reviewing its land use planning approval system and its *Development Charges Act* to ensure that planning decisions support more livable communities, attract jobs and encourage economic growth now and in future. The review will also look for ways to foster better co-operation and collaboration among municipalities, community groups, property owners and developers to ensure that land use planning matters are resolved locally, instead of being referred to the Ontario Municipal Board.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mah/en/2013/10/province-reviewing-municipal-planning.html>

HEALTH

Launch of Good2Talk, a 24/7 province-wide, free, confidential and anonymous service that offers professional counselling, mental health information and connections to local resources for college and university students. Ontario is also supporting 10 new projects at colleges and universities that will improve access to high-quality mental health services and help identify mental health issues and connect students more effectively.

<http://news.ontario.ca/tcu/en/2013/10/more-mental-health-services-for-university-and-college-students.html>

INCOME SECURITY

The Ontario government is calling for an enhancement to Canada Pension Plan to ensure that people across the province are better prepared for retirement.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2013/10/leading-the-way-for-retirement-security.html>

Manitoba

EDUCATION

Sixth year of funding for the "Bright Futures" program to help 2,500 low-income and new Canadian youth succeed in high school and continue their studies in college or university.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=19210>

Launch of an online resource that will allow educators to share learning resources, network with specialists and share best practices to enhance quality of education. Manitoba Professional Learning Environment (MAPLE) provides access to a variety of tools including moderated discussions, searchable libraries of resources, wiki online databases, blogs, registration to events, news and sharing of resource collections in all subject areas across the curriculum.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=19316>



CHILDREN

Proclamation of Bill 18, the *Safe and Inclusive School Act*. It requires that schools in the province:

- report and act on cyberbullying incidents even if they take place outside of school or after-hours
- expand policies related to the appropriate use of the Internet in schools to include social media, text messaging and instant messaging
- accommodate students who want to establish and lead activities and organizations that fight all forms of bullying, and accommodate any student-led groups that want to use the name gay straight alliance or any other name consistent with the promotion of a positive school environment that is inclusive and accepting of all students
- establish respect for human diversity policies that are consistent with the principles of the Manitoba Human Rights Code and create a safe and inclusive learning environment that is accepting of all students.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=19191>

HEALTH

The province established a policy framework and created an advisory committee as part a multi-faceted approach to active transportation – walking, cycling and other active transportation modes that improve health, reduce transportation costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The government’s efforts will include improved coordination, supportive policies and resources, increased investments, and improved education and awareness.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=19111>

Saskatchewan

HEALTH

The province launched an online consultation tool to inform development of a provincial Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan. Information collected through the consultation phase, which includes in-person meetings, focus groups and one-on-one interviews, combined with research and best practice from other jurisdictions, will inform the plan.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

THRONE SPEECH

Social policy-related highlights include:

Disability

- a comprehensive public consultation on the province’s disability strategy

Education

- a new Student First approach in education that will include wide-ranging consultations with students, teachers, parents and administrators
- new anti-bullying measures

- nine new joint-use schools to be built using an innovative P3 bundling approach
- improvement to internet access and speed in all schools through Sask-Tel’s CommunityNet program

Housing

- expansion of the HeadStart on a Home program to encourage construction of rental properties

Health

- new Collaborative Emergency Centres in Shaunavon, Spiritwood, Wakaw and Canora
- new “hot spotting” pilot programs to take pressure off emergency rooms in Saskatoon and Regina by providing more appropriate services to assist high-risk, high-use patients who repeatedly show up in emergency rooms

Seniors

- a new program to enable some seniors with complex issues to receive house calls from physicians, nurse practitioners and other health care providers
- amendments to The Personal Care Homes Act to allow for the public disclosure of inspection reports
- a new Life Lease Program through Saskatchewan Housing Corporation to improve housing options for seniors.

Full Speech: <http://www.gov.sk.ca/adx/asp/adxGetMedia.aspx?mediaid=54f67cb4-d898-467b-bc92-2c0f103bc96a&PN=Shared>

SENIORS

Release of a long-term care facilities review. CEOs of local health regions reported both improvements and challenges. Positive developments included the beneficial impact of Resident and Family Councils, dedication of staff, resident-centred recreation programs, and positive role played by volunteers. Some of the challenges included food (quality, variety and meal times), care issues (complexity; behaviour management; delays in provision of care), safety (resident needs; staff training), resident mix (placing young with older, frail residents), and aging infrastructure.

<http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/government-structure/ministries/health/other-reports/ceo-visits-to-long-term-care-facilities>

Alberta

COMMUNITY

The province announced a plan to create Family and Community Engagement Councils. If passed, these local councils will replace Child and Family Service Authorities and Persons with Developmental Disabilities boards and will focus on listening to communities, identifying social issues and creating collaborative local solutions. This direction aligns with the



goals and principles described in Alberta's Social Policy Framework. <http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=35215FE81DC4C-F3F8-CB-FB-A481267CEF141DA8>

DISABILITY

The province is creating an employer advisory council to help more people with disabilities obtain work. Only 17 percent of Albertans in the Persons with Developmental Disabilities program have some level of employment, even though 60 percent of those in the program are assessed as having low-needs and could obtain some level of employment. The voluntary Alberta Employer Advisory Council will include employers from across industry sectors throughout the province. Members will meet regularly to discuss challenges and identify solutions to help more people with disabilities enter the workforce. The council will provide advice on the development of an Alberta Employment First Strategy so more Albertans with disabilities have the opportunity to improve their quality of life through employment.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=3522963262905-0ED3-E4D9-3230FF036BEC09C0>

British Columbia

DISABILITY

Inclusion and employment will be the focus of discussions during the province's 15th annual Community Living Month. Throughout the month, there will be community events, employment roundtables and forums to raise awareness and celebrate people with developmental disabilities as equal and contributing members of society. There will be a series of employment roundtables with business owners, employers, community living service providers and local rotary clubs about inclusive hiring. Community Living BC has teamed up with rotary clubs, service providers and other organizations to facilitate these forums throughout the province.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/10/bc-marks-community-living-month.html>

EDUCATION

Continued investment in the Community Adult Literacy Program, launched in 2001. \$2.4 million will support literacy projects in 90 communities in 2013-14. Projects receive up to \$40,000 each to provide instruction and support to adult learners in everything from basic literacy to high-school completion.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/10/province-invests-in-literacy-programs-to-benefit-adult-learners.html>

Twenty open textbooks will be developed for skills training and technical post-secondary subject areas. These books are in addition to the open, online textbooks already being developed for 40 high enrollment first- and second-year subject areas. The open textbook project is being coordinated by BCcampus, a publicly funded organization that aims to

make higher education available to everyone through the smart use of collaborative information technology services.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/10/free-online-textbooks-coming-for-skills-training.html>

HOUSING

Announcement of the opening of the Dave Pranteau Aboriginal Children's Village in Vancouver. Aboriginal foster families, youth transitioning out of foster care and low-income families will have access to 24 new units of affordable housing. The development will also serve as a community gathering place for youth-related cultural activities and programs, such as an Aboriginal art mentorship program and drum and dance groups. Counselling and support for families and children in addition to facilitated training for foster parents and respite workers are available onsite.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/10/17-million-housing-development-for-aboriginal-families-opens.html>

Yukon Territory

HOUSING

The Yukon Housing Corporation has issued a request for qualifications to construct and operate new affordable rental housing in the territory. Yukon Housing Corporation has adopted the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's definition of "affordable," which requires that rates remain at or below 95 percent of median rates within a community. The median rent for Whitehorse in June 2013 was \$875. Projects funded under this process must guarantee that rental rates will remain affordable for at least 10 years.

http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/13-258.html#UmkZ_fmgmfU

Northwest Territories

EDUCATION

Release of a new education framework that will shift the foundation for Kindergarten to Grade 12 education. *Education Renewal and Innovation Framework: Directions for Change* will encourage partnerships, improve relationships between communities and schools and focus on helping children develop a strong sense of identity. It will support educators and life-long learning, renew learning experiences inside and outside the classroom and develop effective assessment tools that measure this learning.

http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/files/ERI/eri_framework_tabled.pdf

Nunavut

No updates this month.