



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

March 2014



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

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Entitled *Shared Prosperity, Fair Society, Balanced Outlook*, the 2014 Budget a number of social policy-related highlights:

Caregiving

New funding for long-term care and community support services to:

- cover growth in the Home Support Program
- increase the Personal Care Home and Community Care Home monthly subsidy to \$1,950
- improve access to Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy services in the community
- increase the monthly rate at Alternate Family Care Homes to \$1,355.

Children

- \$308,000 to implement a new one-year mentoring team and to hire two new community services workers. This initiative will enable the province to improve and expand the delivery of programs and services in the Innu Zone
- \$200,000 in 2014-15 to provide additional funding for travel to continue the newly-implemented fly-in/fly-out approach
- \$190.6 million this year in Child, Youth and Family Services, an amount that enhance the delivery of services. Approximately \$1.5 million will be provided to hire staff for an additional 20 new positions, including social worker supervisors and social workers.
- \$50,000 for the Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association to strengthen capacity and training
- \$9.7 million to implement a new voluntary child care operating grant program that will require participants to meet specific criteria, such as setting child care rates at the provincial daily subsidy rates, and meeting accountability criteria relating to staffing, wages, program quality and financial oversight
- \$35.4 million over three years, beginning this year, for Phase II of the province's Early Childhood Learning Strategy, Learning from the Start. Phase II will include \$4.8 million over three years for the continued development and enhancement of initiatives aimed at children from birth to age 3.

Disability

- continued investment in the Vehicle Accessibility Program, which provides up to \$25,000 per family for a vehicle retrofit
- Inclusion Grants will be offered to non-profit community organizations to make their facilities and events accessible.
- extension of the Home Modification Program for a further three years, at a cost of \$9 million. This program provides financial assistance to homeowners with disabilities and seniors with low-to-moderate



incomes that require accessibility changes to their residences

- \$2 million this year, annualizing to \$3.9 million in 2015-16, to increase access to assessment and treatment for children with autism and other developmental conditions. The province is also funding 22 positions in the regional health authorities, increasing to 30 positions in 2015.

Education

- \$5.1 million to continue the tuition freeze for students attending Memorial University and College of the North Atlantic
- provincial student loans will be eliminated and replaced with upfront grants that do not have to be repaid. \$14.7 million will be invested over two years to complete the conversion of student loans to grants, with a projected investment of \$50.6 million over five years
- beginning the process of implementation of a universal full-day Kindergarten program, to be operational by September 2016
- \$1 million increase in student assistance support which translates into an additional 43,000 hours of assistance for students with identified needs
- despite a decline in K-12 enrollment, there will be no reduction in teaching services. Budget 2014 provides \$2.4 million annually to retain the 28.5 teaching units that would otherwise have been removed.

Health

- \$158,800 to expand the Newborn Screening Program to include cystic fibrosis
- \$159,000 annually to promote breast feeding awareness in recognition of the positive health benefits of breast milk for newborns
- \$500,000 to enhance the Provincial Home Dialysis Program. Budget 2014 also provides \$1.5 million to establish a hemodialysis site in Bonavista and \$1.2 million to address increased growth in hemodialysis in Stephenville and St. John's.
- further expansion of the Medical Transportation Assistance Program
- extending coverage under the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program by six months to help with the transition to employment
- increasing the cap for basic dental services under the Adult Dental Program from \$150 to \$200
- \$712,000 to subsidize smoking cessation products for people living on low incomes
- \$383,700 to add a second methadone maintenance treatment team in St. John's.

Housing

- \$12 million over the next three years to extend the Residential Energy Efficiency Program and assist 1,000 clients per year with energy retro-

fits that will significantly improve affordability by reducing heating costs

- to address housing in the Inuit Communities of Northern Labrador, \$350,000 will be directed towards an equal partnership with the Nunatsiavut Government to assist low-income private homeowners in Nunatsiavut complete major renovations
- to increase affordable housing options in the private market, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation's (NLHC) Rent Supplement Program will be expanded. The annual allocation will be increased to \$9 million and will provide an additional 150 rent supplement units. The program assists individuals and families on low incomes, and individuals with complex needs, by paying the portion of their rent that exceeds 25 percent of their net household income up to \$800 monthly, but not before NLHC conducts detailed inspections to ensure the property is suitable and acceptable
- \$500,000 will be allocated through NLHC's Supportive Living Program for a total annual investment of \$5.3 million to advance the work of community partners and stakeholders and to address homelessness, reduce poverty and promote self-reliance
- a new five-year federal/provincial agreement to invest in affordable housing – \$68 million over the next five years – will create close to 590 more new affordable housing units. The agreement also extends the Provincial Home Repair Program, and will annually assist approximately 2,000 households with low incomes to repair their homes under the program.

Income security

- \$4.8 million this year, and an estimated \$32.3 million over the following five years, to raise the basic income support rate by five percent, effective July 1
- \$170 million in continued investment in the province's poverty reduction strategy
- thresholds for the Low-Income Tax Reduction (introduced in 2005) will be increased, eliminating provincial income tax for individuals with net income up to \$18,547 and for families with net income up to \$31,362. Partial tax reductions will be received by individuals with net income up to \$22,815 and for families with net income up to \$38,006
- Seniors' Benefit maximum payment will be raised to \$1,036, up from \$971 in 2013. In 2014, the \$40.4 million budget for the program is more than five times higher than the budget in 2003. About 42,000 seniors receive benefits under this program each year.

Youth

- \$100,000 to create 24 summer employment positions in Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Community Centres across the province to hire at-risk youth and help them continue their education and career paths.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2014/fin/0327n01.htm>



HOUSING

The provincial and Nunatsiavut governments have released the results of an Inuit Housing Needs Assessment that identifies individual and family housing requirements of Nunatsiavut residents. The assessment confirmed housing shortages and the need for improved housing in Nunatsiavut, in particular in the communities of Nain and Hopedale.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2014/aes/031908.htm>

New Brunswick

DISABILITY

The Community Based Services for Children with Special Needs Program has been modernized and renamed Family Supports for Children with Disabilities. Expenditures of \$1.5 million will assist in redesigning services to reflect a family-centred, strength-based approach to serving children with disabilities and their families. Program options will be more flexible and focused on the needs of the family, allowing them to customize support solutions to the needs of their particular circumstances. The application process will be streamlined; there will be new eligibility criteria; a revised Family Financial Contribution Scale Policy will be introduced; and, as youth age out of the children's program, those eligible will be assisted with a direct case transfer to the Disability Support Program. Enhanced supports will be developed to achieve greater levels of family involvement and participation. Supplementary child care and special medical items will be available and reimbursement rates will be increased for eligible clients.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2014.03.0270.html

The provincial government has signed a memorandum of understanding with the federal government, introducing labour market agreements for persons with disabilities totalling nearly \$48 million. The agreement will secure funding to March 31, 2018. The federal government will match New Brunswick's investment up to approximately \$6 million per year for four years.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2014.03.0291.html

EMPLOYMENT

The provincial government has signed an agreement in principle with the federal government to renew labour market agreements and create the Canada Job Grant totalling \$66 million. Under the agreement in principle, the province will receive \$11 million annually over six years for skills training, which is the province's per capita share of the \$500 million allotted to the national program. Of this, \$4 million may be spent in the province on employer-driven training.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2014.03.0243.html

INCOME SECURITY

Basic social assistance rates in New Brunswick will increase by three

percent on April 1 for most clients except those who are single and able to work. The rise follows an increase of four percent in October 2013. Effective October 1, 2014, the government will invest a further \$1.3 million to enact the following changes:

- increase the flat-rate wage exemption portion to \$500 per month for persons with disabilities
- increase the allowable asset limits for life insurance asset, prepaid funeral asset and business assets for all clients and applicants
- increase the allowable asset limits for a registered retirement savings plan and liquid asset exemptions for clients and applicants with disabilities
- implement a youth services program with a new rate and benefits structure for people 16 to 18.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2014.03.0301.html

Nova Scotia

EDUCATION

Postsecondary graduates who entered repayment on their provincial loans on or after November 1, 2007 may no longer have to pay interest on their provincial student loans. To qualify, a borrower must:

- be a resident of Nova Scotia
- have graduated from an approved, designated postsecondary school
- have a Nova Scotia government-sponsored direct-lend loan.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20140328001>

EMPLOYMENT

Universities, the Nova Scotia Community College and the province have come together to create four sandboxes where students, innovators and industry can develop new ideas that could become businesses. The sandboxes are:

- the Island Sandbox: Cape Breton University and NSCC Marconi Campus
- the Community Sandbox: Saint Mary's University, NSCAD University, and Mount Saint Vincent University
- the Nova Scotia Agriculture Sandbox: Dalhousie University and Acadia University
- the ICT Sandbox: Dalhousie University, Saint Mary's University, NSCAD University and Volta Labs.

Each sandbox will offer a combination of academic programming and



entrepreneurial, professional and management resources.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20140319003>

HOUSING

\$4 million investment by the provincial and federal governments in social housing upgrades. Funds will be released through the carry-over of \$61.8 million from the 1997 Canada-Nova Scotia Social Housing Agreement.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20140324002>

Prince Edward Island

No updates this month.

Québec

EMPLOYMENT

Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey showed that the Quebec labour market grew by 1.2 percent (47,800) in 2013, compared to 0.8 percent (30,800) in 2012. The jobs created were permanent and were found in businesses with fewer than 100 employees. The majority of new jobs were full-time and non-unionized, and benefit mainly men and the private sector. The unemployment rate fell by 0.2 percentage point to 7.6 percent. The average hourly wage of employees was \$22.52 in 2013, exceeding the rate of the consumer price index (+1.5 percent versus +0.7 percent).

[Link](#)

Ontario

EDUCATION

The province is inviting universities to submit proposals for new or expanded campuses in underserved areas (colleges are encouraged to partner with universities to submit proposals).

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2014/03/helping-more-students-pursue-postsecondary-education.html>

GOVERNANCE

Introduction of legislation aimed at strengthening political accountability, enhancing oversight and increasing transparency across government and the broader public sector. If passed, the legislation would:

- extend the role of the Ontario Ombudsman to include municipalities, school boards and publicly funded universities
- establish a Patient Ombudsman to assist patients in resolving complaints against public hospitals, Long-Term Care Homes and Community Care Access Centres
- give the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth new powers, like those of the Ontario Ombudsman, to investigate matters relating to children and youth involved in the child protection system

- amend the Lobbyists Registration Act to improve reporting requirements for lobbyists, address conflicts of interest and increase fines for offences.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2014/03/strengthening-accountability-and-increasing-transparency.html>

INCOME SECURITY

PEI and Manitoba are joining Ontario's Technical Advisory Group on Retirement Security. PEI will be represented by Sandy Stewart, Secretary of Economic, Trade, Policy and Strategy of PEI's Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning and former Clerk of PEI's Executive Council, and Manitoba will be represented by Ewald Boschman, the province's former Deputy Minister of Finance.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2014/03/leading-the-country-to-provide-better-retirement-income-security.html>

SENIORS

The province is increasing the number of nurse practitioners in long-term care homes to strengthen the quality of care. Over the next three years, Ontario will hire 75 new nurse practitioners to enhance access to primary health care services for long-term care residents, which will help to:

- reduce unnecessary ambulance use, emergency department transfers and hospital admissions
- keep residents safer by preventing injuries from falls
- reduce the need for restraints by increasing patient supervision
- improve resident and caregiver experience.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2014/03/improving-primary-care-for-long-term-care-home-residents.html>

Manitoba

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Two key areas of focus in Budget 2014 are the creation of more apprenticeship and training opportunities to grow Manitoba's workforce by 75,000 by 2020 and a five-year plan to invest \$5.5 billion in core infrastructure to improve roads, bridges, flood protection and municipal infrastructure. Social policy-related highlights include:

- an improved tax credit of up to \$5,000 to encourage employers to take on more apprentices and a new bonus for employers who take on apprentices for the first time
- more job opportunities for students to gain valuable work experience
- a Premier's initiative to bring together community leaders to help more Manitoba First Nations students graduate from high school
- new funding of \$5.5 million to build more child care spaces for families and provide operating grants for child care centres to support better



wages

- an increased and simplified rental benefit for Manitobans on social assistance and better support to help make the transition from welfare to work
- a new seniors school property tax rebate of up to \$235 on top of the \$1,100 existing tax credit, entirely eliminating school property taxes for 7,200 more seniors.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=30100&post-ed=2014-03-06>

EDUCATION

\$12.4 million to renovate or build 21 classrooms in eight schools across the province as part of its continuing support for a 2011 plan to create smaller kindergarten to Grade 3 class sizes.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=30000&post-ed=2014-03-12>

A new \$1 million career development grant for schools will help students develop clear career paths. The grant will:

- support schools to hire staff to match employers with students so they can get valuable first-hand experience in careers that interest them
- provide resources to help students explore interests and potential careers and plan for post secondary training
- extend work placement and co-operative education opportunities
- create innovative initiatives that increase exposure to the skilled trades as a potential career path and increase awareness of apprenticeship options.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=30060&post-ed=2014-03-17>

EMPLOYMENT

The province is offering a new \$1,000 bonus for businesses that hire apprentices for the first time and is improving apprenticeship tax credits to increase the incentive to hire. Apprenticeship Tax Credits will be made permanent and improved to a standardized rate of 15 percent and a maximum \$5,000 per hire for all levels of apprentices and newly certified journeypeople. The application process will also be streamlined, reducing red tape by eliminating the need for pre-approval and separate claims for each level of apprenticeship completed. The rural/northern tax credit for Level 1 and 2 apprentices will be improved by increasing the cap to \$5,000 and continuing the higher rate at 20 percent of wages and salaries.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=30122&post-ed=2014-03-20>

HEALTH

Children and youth with concussions will be able to receive specialized care from newly recruited concussion experts and benefit from world-class research through a partnership with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority's Pan Am Clinic and the True North Foundation.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=30020&post-ed=2014-03-13>

Saskatchewan

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The province forecast a budget surplus of \$71 million. Revenue for 2014-15 is projected at \$14.07 billion, down 0.7 percent from 2013, while expenses are estimated to be \$14.0 billion, down 0.2 percent.

Social policy-related highlights include:

Aboriginals

- \$189.2 million for initiatives that directly benefit First Nations and Métis people including \$6.0 million to double funding for initiatives related to the Joint Task Force on First Nation and Métis Education and Employment.

Children

- \$8.7 million increase for Child and Family agenda initiatives (\$62.5 million in spending since 2011)
- \$956.5 million to be spent through the Ministry of Social Services – up \$65.8 million or 7.4 percent compared to last year
- \$1.76 billion to be spent through the Ministry of Education
- \$1.82 billion in school operating funding provided to school divisions – \$1.17 billion from the Ministry of Education and \$646.7 million from Education Property Tax
- \$52.7 million to expand the number of child care spaces by 500
- \$20.4 million to support 15 new pre-Kindergarten programs.

Disability

- \$446.2 million for new and enhanced programming for people with disabilities and for increased utilization.

Health

- \$5.0 billion to be spent through the Ministry of Health – a 3.0 percent increase from 2013
- regional health authorities will receive \$3.25 billion, up 3.4 percent from last year, for operating funding and targeted initiatives
- \$60.5 million for the surgical waitlist initiative, aiming to meet the three month waitlist target for all regional health authorities by the end of 2014-15
- \$13.2 million – an increase of \$3.4 million – for the operation of five Collaborative Emergency Centres, as well as the enhancement of primary health care sites



- \$4.5 million for the HomeFirst/Quick Response Homecare program – an increase of \$2.5 million from 2013
- \$155.7 million, up \$4.9 million from 2013, for initiatives including the planning, delivery and evaluation of cancer care through the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency.

Postsecondary

- \$668.9 million for postsecondary institution operating grants and targeted funding
- direct student supports of \$216.0 million, including:
 - \$82 million through the Graduate Retention Program
 - \$37.4 million for other ongoing provincial tax credits related to education costs and interest paid on student loans
 - \$32.5 million for the Student Aid Fund
 - \$31.0 million for the Provincial Training Allowance
 - \$7.5 million for the Saskatchewan Advantage Grant for Education Savings
 - \$7.0 million for the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship
 - \$5.0 million for the Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunity Scholarship
 - increases of \$2.1 million to add 700 new Adult Basic Education spaces and \$1 million to add 300 new apprenticeship training seats.

Seniors

- \$3.7 million for ongoing enhancements to the Seniors' Care Urgent Action Fund to address issues in long-term care facilities
- \$800,000 to develop a new Seniors' House Calls program for seniors with complex issues.

<http://finance.gov.sk.ca/budget2014-15>

DISABILITY

Additional highlights of the 2014-15 Budget include:

- \$9.9 million in funding for the Ministry of the Economy's Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities program to assist adults with disabilities to prepare for, secure and maintain employment
- through the Ministry of Health, \$7.6 million for Autism interventions, \$4.2 million for intensive Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder prevention programming and community supports, and \$43 million for Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living to maintain benefits for people with long-term disabilities or illnesses
- through Finance, \$15.8 million for the Disability Tax Credit and Disability Supplement, and \$1.2 million for the Caregiver/Infirm Dependent Tax Credit
- \$3.5 million in capital and operating funding through Government Relations' Transit Assistance for People with Disabilities

- through the Ministry of Social Services, \$5.1 million in 2014-15 will increase benefits under the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) program by \$20 a month for those in residential care, \$50 a month for individuals and \$55 a month for couples. The increase will take effect in June 2014 and will benefit more than 12,000 households.

- Social Services' 2014-15 Budget will increase by \$20.4 million, or 14 percent, for community-based organizations that provide residential spaces and programs for people with intellectual disabilities. Social Services supports 4,300 people with intellectual disabilities in communities around the province.

<http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2014/march/19/disabled>

HOUSING

Highlights of the 2014-15 Budget include:

- \$9.2 million for the first year of a five-year extension to the federal/provincial Investment in Affordable Housing Agreement for new affordable housing, home renovations, home adaptations and rental housing supplements
- \$750,000 to continue to support Habitat for Humanity and develop 12 new homes across the province
- expansion of the Life Lease Program to increase the number of affordable units available to seniors, offering them security of tenure in exchange for an upfront payment. Units will be available beginning this summer. An added advantage to expanding the Life Lease program is that equity deposits may be used to build or purchase group homes for people with intellectual disabilities supported by the Ministry of Social Services.

<http://www.finance.gov.sk.ca/PlanningAndReporting/2014-15/SSPlan1415.pdf>

INCOME SECURITY

The Government of Saskatchewan will increase the province's minimum wage from \$10 to \$10.20 per hour effective October 1, 2014 and will introduce regulations to provide for regular indexing of the minimum wage each year. Highlights of the new minimum wage regulation will include:

- the indexation formula will be based on the equal weighting of the percentage changes in the Consumer Price Index and Average Hourly Wage for the previous year



- a change in the minimum wage will be announced on or before June 30 of each year, with that change coming in effect on October 1 of the same year.

<http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/details.cfm?p=70138>

SENIORS

Additional highlights of Social Services' 2014-15 Budget for seniors include:

- a \$10 per month increase in benefits under the Seniors Income Plan (SIP) in July 2014 to a maximum of \$260 for single seniors and \$225 per month for each member of a married couple. Close to 15,000 Saskatchewan seniors receive SIP benefits each month. Seniors receiving SIP benefits are also entitled to additional health benefits such as one free eye examination every 12 months, chiropractic services (to a maximum of 12 services per year), a reduced Prescription Drug Plan semi-annual deductible, a home care subsidy and an exemption from many of the charges under the Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living Program.
- an increase in the monthly income threshold in the Personal Care Home Benefit from \$1,875 to \$1,950 in July 2014. This monthly supplement subsidizes the difference between a senior's total monthly income and the cost of living in a personal care home, and helps some 800 seniors.

<http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2014/march/19/ss-seniors>

Alberta

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Budget 2014 has a \$2.6 billion operational surplus, a \$1.1 billion increase in net assets, and a \$1 billion increase for health, education, post-secondary education and support for vulnerable Albertans.

Social policy-related highlights include:

Aboriginals

- the Budget will help First Nations develop economic opportunities for their people as well as strengthen the voices of Aboriginal women through two Aboriginal Women's councils and other Aboriginal women's initiatives
- the government has signed Memorandums of Understanding with the Stoney Nakoda and Siksika Nations for rebuilding and repairing of homes damaged by the June 2013 flooding. These include a commitment to train both the Siksika and Stoney Nakoda people and give them the opportunity to learn skills with a focus on providing a labour force to support their rebuilding efforts.

Children

- child Intervention is budgeted at \$735 million, an increase of \$42 million, including \$199 million for foster care support
- \$20 million to bolster community action on issues such as child sexual abuse, children's mental health, parenting supports and mentoring opportunities for children
- implementation of Alberta's new Family Violence Strategy, with approximately \$4 million to provide advanced family violence training to child intervention workers; supporting rural, remote and diverse communities; engaging men and boys; peer support and outreach services; and strategies to address dating violence.

Communities

- municipalities will receive more than \$2 billion in direct funding in 2014-15 from across government
- \$49 million will support greater collaboration for regional initiatives through the Alberta Community Partnership program.

Disability

- income and health benefits and other supports will be provided to about 50,000 severely handicapped adults to help them live more independently
- \$1.1 billion for the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program, including \$192 million for AISH health benefits
- support for services that assist people with disabilities will be increased to \$967 million, up \$54 million or 5.9 percent
- the province will continue to focus on Employment First, an approach to providing employment supports for persons with all types of disabilities and functional challenges.

Education

- school enrollment is projected to grow by 3.0 percent in 2014-15, or 18,000 new students
- \$6.5 billion in operational support for Alberta's K-12 educational system, a \$200 million or 3.2 percent increase from 2013
- \$624 million in 2014-15 for the construction of new schools and modernization projects, modular classrooms and other renewal and maintenance funding
- post-secondary institutions will receive over \$2.1 billion in base operating grants.

Health

- the province will support new and ongoing programs, including improved treatment for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness, 24-hour mental health workers in emergency departments, and the development of child and adolescent mental health inpatient beds in the Calgary area
- increases to the seniors programs will allow more access to health



and supplementary benefits, home care and the province's tax deferral program

- enhanced home care and rehabilitation services will be increased by \$12 million (44 percent) to \$40 million to supply quality and safety in the continuing care system, and help more people go home from hospital with enhanced home care support
- community and other health services will receive \$805 million for podiatry, oral and optometric services, tissue and blood services, and health services provided in correctional facilities. Also included in this funding:
 - the Alberta Organ and Tissue Donation Registry, making it easier for people to register their intent to become an organ and tissue donor
 - the continuation of programs such as the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening program, reducing rates of low birth weight, improving maternal mental health, and improving breastfeeding rates
 - immunization programs, such as offering the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine to Grade 5 male students
 - the Insulin Pump Therapy program, where Albertans with Type 1 diabetes who meet clinical criteria can receive coverage for insulin pumps and basic supplies.

Housing and homelessness

- Since 2009-10, about 8,800 Albertans who were homeless have been provided housing and supports to help them remain housed. The Budget will continue to invest in homeless support programs to house about 2,000 homeless Albertans this year, as well as fund more than 3,200 spaces in emergency/transitional shelters.

Seniors

Alberta has one of the most comprehensive packages of seniors' benefits in the country, supporting approximately 150,000 low-income seniors.

- \$353 million budgeted in 2014-15 for the Alberta Seniors Benefit, an increase of \$21 million or 6.2 percent
- \$31 million for special needs assistance to low-income seniors for items including home repairs and medical expenses, an increase of \$6 million or 23 percent
- more than \$20 million in loans are anticipated under the Seniors Property Tax Deferral Program in 2014-15. Through the program, seniors most in need can defer taxes until they sell their home.

Women

- the province is increasing the capacity of women's emergency shelters by adding \$3.8 million, bringing total investment to almost \$33 million.

<http://alberta.ca/budget-highlights.cfm>

COMMUNITY

Budget 2014 commits \$5.1 billion invested in municipal infrastructure over the next three years, including \$150 million more for the Municipal Sustainability Initiative. A total of \$20 million will move into the new Alberta Community Partnership (previously called the Regional Collaboration Program), making it a \$49 million program in 2014-15. The Alberta Community Partnership will encourage municipalities to work together on developing and implementing strategic long-term plans that improve service delivery.

Funding for Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) will be maintained in 2014-15 at \$76.1 million. FCSS is a unique 80/20 funding partnership among the province, municipalities and Métis Settlements, supporting community design and delivery of preventative social services. Services include family/school liaison programs, information and referral services, life-skills programs, youth development activities and short-term counselling. There are 207 FCSS programs operating in 322 municipalities and Métis Settlements throughout Alberta. Nearly all Albertans live in communities directly served by FCSS programs.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=36050258F3A6D-0796-1847-381107EFBDD32D40>

British Columbia

EDUCATION

Nine public post-secondary institutions will receive an additional \$6.7 million in 2014-15 to support English as a Second Language. This funding complements the \$10.5 million announced last month, for a total of \$17.2 million. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) will continue to fund English language programming through agreements with service delivery organizations such as not-for-profit agencies and some post-secondary institutions as it does in the rest of Canada. BC and CIC will work together to ensure that federal and provincial programs are complementary.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/03/additional-67-million-to-support-esl-transition.html>

FAMILIES

Ninety-eight children of BC's missing and murdered women are eligible to share \$4.9 million from the province, as recommended by the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry (MWCI). The \$50,000-per-child compensation offer is intended to provide the children of the women identified in the MWCI report with an opportunity to enhance their education, housing or other circumstances.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/03/children-of-missing-women-compensated-per-mwci-report.html>

HEALTH

To improve care for patients with severe addiction and mental health needs, the province is launching an Assertive Outreach Team in Vancouver and opening a new Acute Behavioural Stabilization Unit at St. Paul's Hospital. The Assertive Outreach Team includes a nurse, social worker,



psychiatrist, physician and Vancouver Police Department staff. Members of the team work together to support patients who suffer from severe addictions and mental health issues and help them make the transition from local emergency departments in Vancouver to appropriate community services. The Assertive Outreach Team will support patients transitioning from the new Acute Behavioural Stabilization Unit at St. Paul's. This new unit is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and provides nine dedicated emergency psychiatric beds located in a separate area of St. Paul's emergency department.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/03/bc-introduces-first-of-its-kind-mental-health-and-addiction-supports.html>

HOUSING

The provincial and federal governments announced \$300 million over five years in joint funding through an extension of the Investment in Affordable Housing agreement. BC will make five annual contributions of \$30 million to support existing programs and \$30 million for new construction or renovation.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/03/canada-and-bc-extend-affordable-housing-funding.html>

INCOME SECURITY

About 180,000 families will be eligible to receive up to \$55 per month, or \$660 annually, for each child under age 6 when the BC Early Childhood Tax Benefit is introduced in April 2015.

It is estimated that 140,000 families will receive the full benefit, while an additional 40,000 families with net incomes over \$100,000 will receive a partial benefit. The tax benefit was announced in February 2013 as part of the BC Early Years Strategy to improve the affordability of child care and assist families with the cost of raising young children.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/03/new-tax-benefit-for-families-with-young-children.html>

SENIORS

Appointment of the country's first Seniors Advocate. The Office of the Seniors Advocate will monitor seniors' services, promote awareness and work collaboratively with seniors, families, policymakers, service providers and others to identify solutions to systemic issues and make recommendations to government on ways to improve care for the aging population.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/03/bc-appoints-canadas-first-seniors-advocate.html>

WOMEN

The province announced that \$5 million in Civil Forfeiture Office proceeds will be used to take further action on the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry recommendations and support the prevention of violence against women and youth crime prevention initiatives.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/03/over-5-million-to-fund-mw-ci-recommendations.html>

Yukon Territory

HEALTH

Twenty-five stories from 12 Yukon communities have been collected in a new publication called Stories that Inspire: Working Together Towards Wellness. The stories describe activities that promote health, happiness and positive relationships. The project is part of Pathways to Wellness, an initiative launched in 2012 to improve the health and well-being.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/14-053.html#Uxnn8PldWoE>

\$1 million in funding over three years to the Kwanlin Dün First Nation to support land-based healing programs at the Jackson Lake Healing Centre.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/14-070.html#UzQ4NPldWoE>

Northwest Territories

EDUCATION

The territory announced the redesign of its Graduate Internship Program to provide recent graduates with improved career development options by better aligning opportunities in the public service with the studies and aspirations of young Northerners.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/internship-program-changes-improve-career-development-options/>

Announcement of new funding for the Beaufort Delta Education Council's (BDEC) e-learning program. It allows students to remain in their home communities while taking a wide range of academic courses not normally offered in their community school. The funding was established as part of the Education Renewal and Innovation initiative to sustain the current BDEC e-learning program and to expand this opportunity to communities outside of the Beaufort Delta region. Currently hosted in Inuvik and offered in schools in Aklavik, Tuktoyaktuk and Fort McPherson, the pilot program expansion is being offered as a one-time funding opportunity of \$500,000 to explore e-learning in more NWT communities.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/ece-funds-beaufort-delta-e-learning-program/>

HEALTH

The Department of Health and Social Services has signed funding agreements with the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer to implement two projects focused on improving the experiences of First Nations, Inuit and Métis cancer patients in the NWT. The Dialogue and Storywork project will combine oral traditions with multimedia to document cancer stories that will be used to enhance understanding between patients and health care providers of the unique needs and perspectives of Aboriginal cancer patients. The Continuity of Care project will improve community-based supports for cancer patients, from diagnosis through discharge and survivorship, while exploring other tools—such as telehealth technology—to meet the needs of patients in remote communities. Both projects will produce culturally appropriate resources for Aboriginal cancer patients.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/health-and-social-services-launches-first-nations-inuit-and-metis-community-based-cancer-projects/>



Nunavut

EDUCATION

The government announced the introduction of an updated, standardized education curriculum and resources, and new literacy and assessment frameworks. It will invest \$1 million to purchase math and science text books, intervention materials, and literacy program and assessment systems for all schools in Nunavut. The Department of Education will continue to develop Nunavut-specific resources to complement the curriculum. In accordance with the Education Act, the department will establish and maintain a program of Nunavut-wide assessments to gauge the literacy of students in each language and their numeracy skills. It is also introducing a literacy framework that complements the assessment framework. The first phase of the literacy framework begins in 2014-15 with Kindergarten to Grade 4.

[Link](#)