



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

May 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

No updates this month.

New Brunswick

POVERTY REDUCTION

Announcement of the renewal of the province's plan to reduce poverty. *Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan, 2014-2019*, is based on four pillars:

- community empowerment, includes actions addressing community development, communication and networking, and volunteerism
- learning, includes actions addressing child and youth education and adult education, training, and preparation for work
- economic inclusion, includes actions addressing participation in the labour market and business activity
- social inclusion, includes actions addressing food security and healthy food availability, housing and transportation.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2014.05.0559.html

SENIORS

\$7.2 million for year one of Home First. To be phased in during the next three years, Home First encourages a fundamental change in philosophy and practice whereby hospital admissions, lengthy hospital stays and transfers directly from hospital to residential facilities are considered only after fully exploring other community-based options.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2014.05.0549.html

Nova Scotia

DISABILITY

A one-day forum will bring together people, community groups, advocates and policy-makers to discuss ways to help more persons with disabilities get involved with public and political service.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20140521001>

EDUCATION

The province will conduct an internal review of key organizations that provide supports for African Nova Scotian students.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20140521004>

EMPLOYMENT

The province is doubling its investment in the Apprenticeship START program, from \$500,000 to \$1 million. About 60 more Nova Scotians will be able to access apprenticeship training and achieve certification because of the increased funding. The program will help businesses hire apprentices from under-represented groups and rural communities to give them the training they need to find jobs in their trade.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20140523002>

GOVERNANCE

Announcement of a Financial Condition Index that uses 15 indicators to give municipalities a snapshot of their financial health, including revenue, budget and capital assets. Launched by the Department of Municipal Affairs and the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, the index will help



councils and their communities understand the financial implications of their decision.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20140515006>

HEALTH

\$1 million will be spent on a new palliative care strategy that seeks a more integrated approach between health professionals and community organizations. The strategy includes establishing an advisory committee to guide implementation. It also includes hiring a provincial palliative care coordinator and additional palliative care team members

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20140506001>

The province announced a multi-year expansion of SchoolsPlus and will support the program by increasing the number of mental health clinicians in schools. SchoolsPlus brings a range of mental health services and other health programs together with mentoring, social work, homework support and justice services into schools where children, youth and families can easily access them. The Department of Health and Wellness is providing funding to add 10.5 mental health clinician positions to support SchoolsPlus sites across the province.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20140523007>

WOMEN

Announcement of \$500,000 in additional funding to help transition houses, women's centres and second stage housing provide more support for women and children.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20140521003>

Prince Edward Island

No updates this month.

Québec

HOUSING

Introduction of Bill 190, which aims to better protect seniors from foreclosure or recovery of their homes. With this bill, property owners wishing to evict an older person whose financial situation or state of health is precarious, or who wish to enlarge or repossess the premises, would be obliged to find the tenant equivalent housing. New lodgings should correspond to the senior's needs and be located in the same district or municipality. No eviction would be permitted between December 1 and March 31.

[Link](#)

The *habitation du Québec* (SHQ) is launching the Innovative Habitat for Seniors competition. It will highlight innovative and exemplary achievements in the field of housing for seniors. The contest is aimed at co-ops, nonprofit housing developers and private organizations. SHQ hopes to educate housing-based organizations and companies about the importance providing seniors with suitable living environments. The winner of

the competition will be announced on October 1, 2014, the International Day of Older Persons.

[Link](#)

Ontario

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The government announced a 10-year plan that focuses on employment, infrastructure and supporting an innovative business climate.

Social policy-related highlights include:

Caregiving

- providing support for wage increases for personal support workers in the publicly funded home and community care sector, and front-line child care workers

Disability

- enhancing supports for adults with developmental disabilities and front-line workers in the community services sector

Employment

- establishing a 10-year, \$2.5 billion Jobs and Prosperity Fund aimed at attracting business investments, strengthening strategic sectors and supporting economic growth
- investing \$295 million over two years for the Ontario Youth Jobs Strategy. Since September 2013, the strategy has helped 10,000 young people gain work experience and find jobs
- expanding the reach of Ontario's exports to fast-growing emerging markets to help many small and medium-sized businesses grow and create jobs.

Education

- \$11 billion over 10 years for elementary and secondary education infrastructure.

Health

- \$11.4 billion over 10 years in major hospital expansion and redevelopment projects over the next 10 years. This is in addition to almost \$700 million over the next 10 years to address deferred maintenance in hospitals.

Income security

- proposal of a new mandatory provincial pension plan, the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. The plan would build on the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), and expand pension coverage initially to more than three million working Ontarians who currently rely on the CPP, Old Age Security and their own savings for retirement income
- raising the minimum wage to \$11.00 per hour and proposing legislation to index it to inflation to help ensure that workers receive a decent wage
- increasing the Ontario Child Benefit by proposing to index it to inflation.



Poverty reduction

- continuing to reform the social assistance system, which will improve income supports and reduce barriers to entering the workforce
- proposing to remove the Debt Retirement Charge cost from residential users' electricity bills after December 31, 2015, to save a typical residential ratepayer about \$70 per year.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mof/en/2014/05/budget-2014-building-opportunity-securing-our-future.html>

Manitoba

CHILDREN

The province has introduced legislation that would increase accountability in the child welfare system and foster a culture of learning from adverse events by making critical incident reporting required by law. Under the proposed legislation, agency and authority staff, volunteers, student trainees, foster parents, child care centre operators and those providing services in a place of safety, such as a family residence, would be legally obligated to immediately report critical incidents to the agency and authority involved as well as to the director of child and family services. Operators of child-care facilities, other than foster homes, and those unfamiliar with the system would be required to report critical incidents to the director of child and family services.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=30670&post-ed=2014-05-01>

Announcement of the launch of a new five-year child care plan which includes:

- investing in 5,000 new and newly-funded spaces
- investing an additional \$25 million to continue building and expanding 20 early learning and
- child care centres
- supporting higher wages for workers through regular operating grant increases to centres including a two percent operating grant increase for wages starting January 2015
- developing a new wage enhancement grant in specific support of long-term early childhood educators working in centres
- providing new supports for licensed home-based child care providers
- improving the online registry and child care website to make them more parent-friendly
- creating an Early Learning and Child care Commission to examine the future of child care in Manitoba and consider ways to redesign the system to better meet current and future needs.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=30665&post-ed=2014-05-01>

GOVERNANCE

Twenty-five remaining Manitoba municipalities have officially amalgamated into 10 newly-amalgamated municipalities.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=30668&post-ed=2014-05-01>

SENIORS

Senior homeowners can start applying this month for the new Seniors' School Tax Rebate, the first step in the province's plan to eliminate school taxes for seniors by 2016. About 10,000 senior homeowners already have their school taxes fully covered by the Manitoba government's Education Property Tax Credit. This year an additional 7,200 senior households will no longer pay school taxes with the new Seniors' School Tax Rebate. To qualify for the new tax rebate, a senior must:

- own and live in their home
- be at least 65 years of age by the end of 2014
- have school taxes not already fully covered by the existing Education Property Tax Credit.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=30705&post-ed=2014-05-02>

Saskatchewan

No updates this month.

Alberta

DISABILITY

The Residential Access Modification Program grant for lower-income earners is increasing from \$5,000 to \$7,500 and can be used for changes such as the addition of ramps or lifts, door widening, flooring changes and bathtub door inserts. In addition, applicants can now qualify for multiple grants totalling up to \$15,000 in a 10-year benefit period.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=3643269655DC0-F7AB-90C0-6A5640E11FA8F9B7>

Announcement of the Employment First Innovation Fund, a \$2 million grant program, to encourage more innovative approaches to creating employment opportunities for Albertans with disabilities at the second annual symposium on employment and persons with disabilities. The grants will be open to registered non-profit, public educational institutions and registered companies.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=365006DBB6232-9675-E574-1871C8C2D2C1CF13>



FAMILIES

Through a partnership with the University of Calgary and the province, The Welcome to Parenting initiative will provide a “baby basket” to vulnerable parents that will include parenting information, children’s books, toys, blankets and other items that support positive early childhood development. The goal is to help parents understand the value of bonding with their infant and intentional interactions, such as reading to their babies. The initiative is a unique two-year project designed to support at-risk newborns and their parents, who have been identified as needing extra help, in Edmonton, Calgary, Grande Prairie and Coaldale. These communities were chosen due to high birth rates and their community readiness, which includes parents’ ability to access programs and services through Parent Link Centres.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=-365016FA8A249-B8D1-305C-0B9CBBB4330ABA55>

HEALTH

A new children’s mental health facility in Edmonton will improve access to mental health services for Alberta children and youth. The government will spend \$17 million to replace a 60-year old mental health services centre in Edmonton. The new government-owned facility will provide an additional 10,000 square feet, expanding services for children, adolescents and their families.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=-36418D90863A5-D99D-9F88-6E91DC2B5D3CE8DD>

The Edmonton Police Service (EPS) will use proceeds of crime funding from the province to work with community partners to help vulnerable people become more independent, less likely to be victimized, and require fewer police, medical and social interventions. By identifying gaps and duplications in services, the EPS-led project also targets the causes of repeat minor crimes that result from substance and alcohol abuse. Benefits of using community supports more efficiently include freeing up agencies like the EPS for other calls for assistance. The Heavy Users of Services project is a partnership with more than 16 groups, including health and social service providers, first responders, justice services, Aboriginal-focused organizations and government representatives. So far, nine individuals have agreed to participate in the initiative. The goal is to work with up to 50 individuals identified as the city’s most frequent users of social, medical, criminal and justice services.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=363383D33A32C-AB2E-0A03-294AA398E68C9634>

\$32 million will be available to Primary Care Networks in 2014-15 to implement advancements such as same day/next day appointments and extended operating hours. As outlined in Budget 2014, the government will also spend \$45 million for the creation of nine new Family Care Clinics in the Edmonton, Calgary, Peace River and central Alberta areas that

will focus on providing community-specific health care services.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=363363A-F8AA7B-D161-BC89-0AB27E187CC342BA>

Let’s Talk about Wellness engagement aims to broaden residents’ collective understanding of health and wellness and to shift conversations from the delivery of health care to the factors that contribute to wellness. Conversations begin this fall, led by the Associate Minister of Wellness, Dave Rodney, and the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. James Talbot.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=3652441A2776E-B76C-2F38-D598A2093A737B36>

INCOME SECURITY

On September 1, 2014, Alberta’s general minimum wage will increase from \$9.95 to \$10.20 per hour. The liquor server minimum wage will rise from \$9.05 to \$9.20 per hour. The increase is based on a formula used since 2011 that links the general wage rate to annual increases in Average Weekly Earnings and the Consumer Price Index in Alberta.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=36532A71CB3AD-B3F2-299B-ACE-5C7BE879842B2>

SENIORS

Starting on July 1, 2014 and over each of the next two years, maximum accommodation charges for long-term care and designated supportive living residences will rise by three percent, or the annual increase in the Alberta Consumer Price Index (CPI), whichever is higher. Beginning on July 1, 2017, annual accommodation charge adjustments will be based solely on inflation as reflected by Alberta’s CPI. Increases to the accommodation charges will apply only to continuing care centres. Seniors lodges will continue to determine their own charge structure.

Effective July 1, 2014, the Alberta government is also increasing accommodation-related financial supports for designated supportive living and long-term care residents who are clients of the Alberta Seniors Benefit program. Guaranteed disposable income for residents of these facilities will include an additional \$50 a month up to \$315, which ranks Alberta’s monthly allowance among the highest in Canada.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=36452DA76A3E5-C9B1-C301-7F7EB7156D19EB9F>

British Columbia

CHILDREN

Child care providers throughout the province are encouraged to apply for a total of \$14.8 million in major capital funding to create new licensed child care spaces. Nonprofit child care providers can apply for up to \$500,000, while private child care organizations can apply for up to \$250,000. Funding can be used to:

- build a new child care facility, including the cost of buying land or a building



- assemble a modular building and develop a site
- renovate an existing building
- buy eligible equipment (including playground equipment) and furnishings to support new child care spaces in an existing facility.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/05/apply-now-148-million-now-available-for-child-care-providers.html>

COMMUNITIES

Forty-nine local governments have received BC Healthy Community Capacity Building Fund grants ranging from \$2,000 to \$20,000 to assist with healthy community planning, projects and policy development. This round of grants marks the second year for the Healthy Communities Capacity Building Fund first announced in March 2013.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/05/government-invests-375000-for-healthy-communities.html>

EDUCATION

Announcement of a strategy to re-engineer BC's education and apprenticeship systems, entitled BC's Skills for Jobs Blueprint: Re-engineering Education and Training. The province currently invests more than \$7.5 billion annually in education and training. Blueprint sets out three overarching objectives to maximize the potential of BC's workforce:

- a head-start to hands-on learning in schools
- a shift in education and training to better match jobs in demand
- a stronger partnership with industry and labour to deliver training and apprenticeships.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/04/bc-launches-skills-for-jobs-blueprint-to-re-engineer-education-and-training.html>

As a result of a core review, government announced its intention in April 2014 to directly regulate the private career training sector. Before that can happen, legislation is required to dissolve the Private Career Training Institution Agency and transfer its functions to the Ministry of Advanced Education. Government is inviting written submissions from students, the private career training sector and the public to guide the development of legislation and supporting regulations needed to regulate the sector in BC.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/05/students-institutions-asked-for-input-on-private-career-training-legislation.html>

HEALTH

Two new Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams are helping people with severe addiction and mental illness, bringing the total to five. Established in January 2012, Vancouver Coastal Health's ACT teams have demonstrated that, as a result of treatment, clients experience a 70 per cent reduction in emergency department visits, a 61 per cent reduction in

criminal justice involvement, and a 23 per cent reduction in incidents of victimization. The two new units will cost \$3.6 million annually; the five units will treat 420 people each year.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/05/vancouver-act-teams-reduce-er-visits-by-70.html>

New HIV testing guidelines were released for health care providers along with a recommendation that all adults are regularly tested for the disease. At present, only pregnant women are routinely offered HIV testing – a program that has virtually eliminated HIV transmission from mother to child in the province.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/05/new-hiv-aids-testing-guidelines-for-all-bc-adults-released.html>

POVERTY REDUCTION

The province released the Community Poverty Reduction Pilot Projects 2014 Progress Report. Pilot projects were launched in May 2012 in Cranbrook, Kamloops, New Westminster, Port Hardy, Prince George, Stewart and Surrey to reflect a mix of metro, urban, rural and remote communities. A key priority in all communities was to ensure that the families knew about the programs and services offered by community agencies and all levels of government, and that they were supported in accessing them.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/05/first-poverty-pilot-progress-report-is-now-posted.html>

Yukon Territory

No updates this month.

Northwest Territories

EDUCATION

22 of 29 small communities will implement Junior Kindergarten this September. The remaining communities will introduce the program by fall 2016.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/jackson-lafferty-junior-kindergarten-update/>

Nunavut

POVERTY REDUCTION

The Nunavut Food Security Coalition released the Nunavut Food Security Strategy and Action Plan. The aim is to provide all Nunavummiut with an adequate supply of safe, culturally preferable, affordable, nutritious food, and to incorporate a food system that promotes Inuit Societal Values, more self-reliance and environmental sustainability. Six themes structure the strategy and action plan: country food, store-bought food, local food production, life skills, programs and community initiatives, and policy and legislation.

<http://www.gov.nu.ca/sante/news/food-security-strategy-and-action-plan-released>