



Canada Social Report  
Provincial/Territorial  
Policy Monitor

June 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

### POVERTY REDUCTION

Release of the province's poverty reduction plan progress report. Highlights include:

- a 50 percent drop in the number of persons living with low incomes occurred between 2003 to 2011, as measured by low income cut-offs (LICOs)
- Median Family Income increased by 26 percent
- in 2013, seven percent of residents received Income Support, the lowest level ever recorded
- the province ranks as the most affordable jurisdiction on the Cost of Learning Index – a measure of the cost of postsecondary education.

The province's 2014 investment of \$170 million is the largest amount ever committed in support of poverty reduction efforts. More than \$1 billion in new funding has been budgeted through the strategy since its launch in 2006. Consultations and a new action plan will guide future themes and directions.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2014/aes/0604n02.aspx>

## New Brunswick

### ABORIGINALS

The provincial government has created a three-member First Nations partnership team. The team's purpose is to support the Premier's commitment to transform the economic, social and political role that First Nations play in New Brunswick.

[http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news\\_release.2014.06.0726.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2014.06.0726.html)

### EMPLOYMENT

The New Brunswick and federal governments signed the Canada-New Brunswick Job Fund in order to establish the Canada Job Grant. As part of the agreement, the province will receive about \$11 million annually over six years. Both governments also signed a Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities (matched funds of \$5.9 million per year until 2018) and the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (matched funds of \$2.5 million per year until 2017) to help unemployed older workers in eligible communities re-enter the labour force.

[http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news\\_release.2014.06.0738.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2014.06.0738.html)

### GOVERNANCE

The province has posted new regulations for procuring goods and services used by the public sector. The regulations establish the circumstances and methods by which preferential treatment may be given to a prospective New Brunswick supplier under the province's Procurement Act. This Act and its regulations streamline and modernize government



procurement and will replace the 40-year-old *Public Purchasing Act*.  
[http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news\\_release.2014.06.0661.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2014.06.0661.html)

## Nova Scotia

### DISABILITY

Announcement of the Minister's Advisory Panel on Accessibility Legislation. Areas of focus for the panel include access to information, labour market and employment opportunities, removing structural barriers, attitudes and public awareness, transportation and housing.  
<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20140624003>

### GOVERNANCE

\$1 million in new funding was announced for public and community-based transit. \$500,000 in additional funding will be directed to the Community Transportation Assistance Program and will be distributed among 14 community-based transit organizations providing door-to-door service in rural Nova Scotia.  
<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20140617005>

## Prince Edward Island

### POVERTY REDUCTION

The Department of Community Services and Seniors will spend \$2.8 million over five years to increase food rates for Social Assistance clients. Effective September 1, 2014, social assistance food rates will increase five percent for a single adult and a comparable amount for families. Increased food rates are based on the PEI Consumer Price Index for food (using a 10-year average) and in recognition of the National Nutritious Food Basket as the standard for food costing. During the spring of 2014 department staff met with food security advocacy groups that provided feedback on food rates and food security issues.  
<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?number=news&newsnumber=9703&dept=&lang=E>

## Québec

### BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Budget 2014-15 seeks to strengthen support for families, seniors and vulnerable populations.

#### Child care

The government cancelled the \$2 increase in the daily rate of child care imposed by the previous provincial government, citing its impact on low-income families. Instead, child care costs are to be indexed to the rate of growth of the program cost. Parental contributions will be raised to \$7.30 on October 1, 2014.

#### Health

\$50 million in tax revenues from specific tobacco products will fund projects such as indoor and outdoor rinks, swimming pools, tennis courts,

soccer fields, sports centers, multi-sport facilities and other projects in all regions of Quebec.

#### Housing

\$250 million will be spent to build 3,000 new social, community and affordable housing units throughout the province. 500 units will be reserved for homeless individuals.

#### Seniors

- to promote health among seniors, the government will create a refundable tax credit that will cover 20 percent of eligible costs (up to \$200) for sports, arts and cultural activities
- up to 50 new infrastructure and urban development projects per year will be designed to be more senior friendly.

[Link](#)

### EMPLOYMENT

In May, employment remained stable in Quebec (- 800, 0.0%), while a slight increase was noted in all of Canada (+ 25,000; + 0.1%). This stability is due to the increase in part-time employment (+ 25,900), offset by the decline in full-time employment (- 26,700). The employment gain by women (+ 4,200) was offset by the decline noted among men (- 5,000).

[Link](#)

### HEALTH

Adoption of Bill 52, the *Bill for end of life care*. The bill addresses the issues of palliative care and medical assistance to die. This second option is reserved for exceptional cases of acute suffering. The law also confirms the primacy of the individual's will, including the establishment of the system of advance medical directives.

[Link](#)

### SOCIAL FINANCE

The province will spend \$600,000 on social economy projects in the Montréal area in 2014-15. Funding priority will be given to start-ups, innovative projects from existing companies or projects addressing an unmet market niche. In Québec, the social economy sector includes more than 7,000 companies, creates 150,000 jobs and earns sales in excess of \$17 billion, more than 8 percent of the province's GDP.

[Link](#)

## Ontario

### INCOME SECURITY

The Premier and members of the government's Technical Advisory Group on Retirement Security met to discuss how to best implement the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. The Group aims to ensure the plan is



cost effective, business friendly and will protect the millions of working Ontarians who do not have a pension plan.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2014/06/building-a-strong-and-secure-retirement-system-in-ontario.html>

## Manitoba

### DISABILITY

A new pilot program at Red River College (RRC) will provide individuals with intellectual disabilities new educational opportunities focused on successful transitions into good jobs. The 20-student Transforming Futures program will begin in September 2014 and will include hands-on learning in career exploration, essential employability skills and full integration into RRC programming if a student chooses this option. A 2013 report from the Canadian Association for Community Living estimated that 70 percent of adults with intellectual disabilities are unemployed or out of the labour force, and are three times more likely than non-disabled Canadians to live in poverty. RRC will be working closely with employers to ensure the program leads to successful job matches for graduates. The Manitoba government is providing \$266,000 to support the pilot program.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=31206&post-ed=2014-06-03>

### EDUCATION

The province is supporting students in the *Division scolaire franco-manitobaine*, offering more skills training and trades opportunities in French. Currently, most DSFM students interested in taking Technology Education Program courses have to travel to English centres or schools.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=31405&post-ed=2014-06-16>

### EMPLOYMENT

Through the Manitoba Works! Co-operative Work Experience Program, community-based organizations will help more than 250 employment and income assistance participants to overcome barriers to employment and the challenges in finding and keeping good jobs. The program is being piloted at four sites in the province.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=31446&post-ed=2014-06-19>

### HEALTH

The province has launched a new, five-year framework to guide planning and investments to help address dementia. Manitoba's Framework for Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias was developed in consultation with the Alzheimer Society of Manitoba and incorporates feedback from individuals, caregivers and medical professionals across the province. The framework outlines recommendations in five key areas:

- raising awareness and understanding

- early recognition, initial assessment and diagnosis
- management, care and support
- end-of-life care

- research and evaluation.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=31385&post-ed=2014-06-13>

### HOUSING

Details of Manitoba's new Rent Assist program were announced. This new financial benefit is available to both social assistance recipients and other low-income Manitobans. Rent Assist will replace the current Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) shelter allowance and RentAid programs. Individuals on EIA living in private rental accommodation will receive increases of between \$50 and \$70 per month for shelter costs. Single individuals will now receive \$435 dollars per month compared to the previous \$365 per month. Individuals outside of EIA will receive a maximum of \$270 per month with benefits gradually declining as recipients increase their earnings. A new Rent Assist calculator will be available online in July to help residents determine if they are eligible for Rent Assist and their estimated benefit amount.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=31446&post-ed=2014-06-19>

### INCOME SECURITY

On October 1, the province will increase the minimum wage to \$10.70 an hour. The increase of \$0.25 per hour brings the current minimum wage to \$10.70 from \$10.45 and will put Manitoba the fourth highest among other Canadian jurisdictions.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=31425&post-ed=2014-06-18>

## Saskatchewan

*No updates this month.*

## Alberta

### FAMILIES

The province will spend \$1.4 million over the next three years on the Healthy, Empowered and Resilient Pregnancy Program which supports at-risk women throughout their pregnancies and connects them to local health agencies.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=3661947077475-AB7B-D87A-56CF6820FB632D11>

New resources to sexual assault centres were announced to address wait times, add more staff to improve access to services in rural Alberta and

increase collaboration of services for child victims of sexual abuse.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=366277526E6BB-CC83-C5AF-OCCF-8412CA92294E>

## HEALTH

The Stroke Action Plan, a new stroke rehabilitation pilot project is helping to reduce the number of days patients spend in hospital. Set up in rural and small urban areas, the project began on March 24 in Grande Prairie and delivers one-on-one stroke rehabilitation programs to the homes of patients. The Plan uses provincial standards to ensure that in-patient care in rural settings is the same quality as the care delivered in larger urban areas.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=36670DA8F2DF7-0C24-7E42-72D0F7537A124AC4>

## SENIORS

Under a new \$3 million grant program over three years, communities can apply for up to \$150,000 in funding to develop, implement or enhance elder abuse prevention initiatives.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=36637A6758DC4-C517-79E2-25E6F2A734C7EE64>

## YOUTH

More mentoring opportunities are now available to help lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) youth in Edmonton. The mentorship project will operate through Edmonton's Pride Centre, with funding support from an Alberta government Civil Forfeiture Fund grant. The project invites youth to develop relationships of trust with adults in the LGBTQ community to provide the support they need to help stay safe and develop positive community connections.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=3661743B56C24-021E-FF4E-93AAD-ED2E2C0BB70>

## British Columbia

### ABORIGINALS

Eleven of the province's colleges and universities will receive more than \$3.9 million for programs and activities that will enhance Aboriginal learners' post-secondary education and training experiences and outcomes. The funding supports Aboriginal Service Plans, which are developed co-operatively by post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities, organizations and institutes. Programs funded through the plans include elders-in-residence, cultural learning, mentoring, development of partnerships with Aboriginal communities and organizations, and program development and delivery. Aboriginal Service Plans are part of the ministry's Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Action Plan launched in 2012.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/06/bc-invests-in-aboriginal-learners.html>

## CAREGIVING

\$2 million in funding for United Way's Better at Home program, which provides non-medical supports to help seniors remain independent in their homes for as long as possible. To date, government has provided \$22 million in funding to enhance and support the operations of the Better at Home program, which now operates in 60 communities throughout BC. Managed by United Way of the Lower Mainland, Better at Home services vary by community and are selected, along with service providers, through an engagement process that includes local seniors. Examples of Better at Home services include friendly visits, light yard work, minor home repair, grocery shopping, light housekeeping and transportation to appointments. Better at Home is a key component of BC's Seniors Action Plan, which commits to ensuring improved access to non-medical supports to help seniors stay in their own homes.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/06/2-million-helps-support-seniors-to-stay-at-home-longer.html>

## Yukon Territory

### COMMUNITY

The territory awarded more than \$870,000 to six community organizations for recreational, accessibility and training initiatives throughout Yukon.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/14-153.html#U5skhPlDXbo>

## HEALTH

The Yukon government's Continuing Care branch is one of 15 Canadian health-care organizations selected to participate in a project aimed at improving care for dementia patients. Teams from eight jurisdictions will adapt and implement an approach that will reduce the number of continuing care residents on anti-psychotic medication. The initiative is led by the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvements (CFHI), a nonprofit organization dedicated to accelerating health care improvements by working with partners to promote health care that delivers better outcomes. With a \$10 million annual federal investment, CFHI anticipates saving provincial and territorial health care budgets more than \$1 billion per year.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/14-142.html#U5YJrvidXbo>

## Northwest Territories

### EDUCATION

In response to the success of the Kid Gardening Program – a hands-on introductory agriculture experience piloted last year – the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment is expanding the program to include all schools in the South Slave Region. Other regions have also expressed interest in participating.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/take-a-kid-gardening-program-continues-to-grow-in-2014/>

Nunavut *No updates this month.*