



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

September 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

HEALTH

The province announced \$53,000 in additional funding for its Think Twice program, an anti-stigma educational initiative that was introduced in 2010. Delivered in school settings, it challenges young people on their attitudes and beliefs about mental health and mental illness, informs students about various mental illnesses and provides information on how they can get help for themselves or their friends. The province invests \$100 million annually for mental health and addictions programs and services delivered by the four regional health authorities. Through Budget 2014, an additional \$2 million is being allocated to 10 community agencies that provide mental health and addictions services.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2014/health/0926n01.aspx>

New Brunswick

EDUCATION

Tuition fees for undergraduate Arts and Sciences programs in Maritime universities this fall range between \$5,520 and \$7,488, increasing on average three percent in nearly all universities. By comparison, in June 2014, inflation stood at 2.4 percent in Canada.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2014.09.1117.html

Nova Scotia

DISABILITY

A new workplace attendant support program will help more Nova Scotians with disabilities enter and stay in the workforce. Up to \$20,000 per client is available annually, based on income. This year, \$225,000 will be invested, with \$400,000 added in the next fiscal year. The program is available through the renewed federal-provincial Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities, and is managed by Independent Living Nova Scotia.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20140924003>

FAMILIES

The Nova Scotia Welcome to Parenting website was launched to provide prenatal education and parenting support through a baby's first year. The program gives information about a range of subjects including healthy pregnancy, labour and birth and breastfeeding. It allows new parents to connect with others online to share experiences. They can also have questions answered by experts in health, parenting and child development.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20140916002>

GOVERNANCE

Provincial and Territorial Ministers responsible for Social Services met to discuss three shared issues: Aboriginal children in care, services for persons with disabilities, and how social services departments across Canada



can better share information and best practices to improve services.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20140910002>

HEALTH

Introduction of the new *Health Authorities Act*, which will create a new provincial health authority on April 1, 2015. By moving to two district health authorities instead of 10, government estimates the health care system will save more than \$5 million each year in senior leadership salaries and board expenses. The newly-unified health care system will focus on patients, improve public accountability and ensure prompt collective bargaining.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20140929005>

THRONE SPEECH

To help balance the Budget by 2017-18, government will eliminate programs not achieving desired results. It will determine how to best deliver services, including considering if they could be offered by the private sector. Social policy-related priorities include:

- a new focus on entrepreneurship in the high school curriculum will teach students how to build their own businesses and take advantage of existing and emerging markets
- improving educational programs in accord with a soon-to-be completed comprehensive review of the education system. Restored funding has helped improve the primary-to-12 education system and access to skilled trade education across the province.
- legislation will be introduced to help Nova Scotians better fund their retirements through Pooled Registered Pension Plans, bringing lower management fees and plan portability if they switch jobs.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20140925002>

Prince Edward Island

CHILDREN

Government will be investing \$3.75 million over five years to increase and enhance services to children with complex health needs and to decrease wait times. Service enhancements will be made in the areas of:

- pediatric occupational and physiotherapy
- school therapy service
- orthoptics – a specialized service that provides all aspects of orthoptic (eye) examinations on children and adults, including diagnosis and treatment
- preschool autism assessments
- speech language pathology and audiology.

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?number=news&dept=&newsnumber=9839&lang=E>

Québec

DISABILITY

The Ministry for Rehabilitation, Youth Protection and Public Health is partnering with the Ministry of Health and Social Services and the Québec Federation of Rehabilitation Centers for Intellectual Disabilities and pervasive developmental disorders. The organization will establish a diagnostic assessment for autism spectrum disorder (ASD) for children currently on a waiting list in hospitals in the Montreal area. Two teams will be created. Their first team players will conduct a comprehensive needs assessment and provide support to children and their families and caregivers. A second team will provide training to parents so that they are able assist their child's development more effectively. This training will also be available to staff who provide services for children with ASD.

[Link](#)

HOUSING

\$3.4 million over two years was invested by the federal and provincial governments and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to complete repairs to a set of low-income housing built in Granby in the 1970s. Each year, hundreds of millions of dollars are invested by the federal and provincial governments to improve the condition of some 73,000 social housing units in Québec.

[Link](#)

Ontario

EDUCATION

The province has fully rolled out its full-day kindergarten program, making it available to 265,000 4- and 5-year-olds in approximately 3,600 schools across the province. By the end of the 2014-15 school year, almost half a million kids will have been enrolled since the program was first introduced in 2010.

<http://news.ontario.ca/edu/en/2014/09/full-day-kindergarten-available-across-ontario.html>

FOOD SECURITY

The Food Donation Tax Credit for Farmers provides a tax credit valued at 25 percent of the fair market value of the agricultural products farmers donate to community food programs, including food banks and student nutrition programs. The tax credit is a part of the province's local food strategy and *Local Food Act 2013*.

<http://news.ontario.ca/omafra/en/2014/09/new-tax-credit-to-benefit-farmers-and-communities.html>

HEALTH

The province launched the Healthy Kids Community Challenge to promote healthy and active lifestyles among children and youth. Forty-five communities across Ontario were chosen to participate. Over the next four years, they will deliver local programs and activities to enhance



children's health by focusing on healthy eating, physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2014/09/challenging-communities-to-create-a-healthy-ontario.html>

INCOME SECURITY

Ontario is increasing support for people receiving social assistance. Starting this fall, the rate increases announced in the 2014 Budget come into effect, including:

- a \$30 increase (almost five percent) for singles without children receiving Ontario Works
- a one percent increase for families receiving Ontario Works
- a one percent increase for individuals with disabilities who rely on the Ontario Disability Support Program.
- a one percent increase for various other rates, including Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities.

The government is also replacing the Northern Allowance for social assistance recipients with a new Remote Communities Allowance. People who receive this allowance will get an additional \$50 per month for the first person in their family and an extra \$25 for each additional family member.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mcss/en/2014/09/increasing-support-for-people-receiving-social-assistance.html>

POVERTY REDUCTION

The province released *Realizing Our Potential: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy 2014-19*. The plan recommits to the goal of reducing child poverty by 25 percent. New investments and initiatives include:

- \$42 million for the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative, which enables local governments to develop homelessness programs tailored to their community's unique needs, bringing the investment to a total of almost \$294 million per year
- creating 1,000 new supportive housing spaces by allocating \$16 million over three years to help Ontarians living with mental illness and addictions issues
- raising the maximum annual benefit for the Ontario Child Benefit – which supports about one million children in more than 500,000 low-to moderate-income families – to \$1,310 per child as of July 2014. The province is indexing the benefit to inflation to help families keep up with the cost of living
- committing to provide health benefits for children and youth in low-income families to ensure they have access to good and services, such as prescription drugs, vision care and mental health services outside of publicly-funded health care

- \$50 million over five years for a Local Poverty Reduction Fund designed to reward local solutions that demonstrate they are helping to lift people out of poverty.

<http://www.ontario.ca/document/realizing-our-potential-poverty-reduction-strategy-2014-2019>

SENIORS

Ontario is allocating \$11.5 million to support 265 centres across the province. Elderly Persons Centres provide social and recreational programs that promote wellness for seniors through various activities including fitness classes, computer classes, and arts and crafts. This funding will help the centres maintain their operations and make small renovations, such as improving accessibility or making IT upgrades to better serve clients.

<http://news.ontario.ca/oss/en/2014/09/more-support-for-local-seniors-centres.html>

Manitoba

HEALTH

The Manitoba government has announced \$75,000 annually to the Canadian Cancer Society to help with the costs of delivering its transportation services for treatment and appointments. Volunteer drivers take cancer patients to and from appointments in Winnipeg, Brandon and many rural sites. The transportation service provides about 30,000 rides annually in more than 50 communities throughout the province. In 2012 alone, the volunteers collectively travelled more than 750,000 kilometres.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=32745&post-ed=2014-09-24>

Saskatchewan

EDUCATION

13 organizations across Saskatchewan will receive \$814,231 to support adult literacy programs and services.

<http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2014/sep-tember/24/adult-literacy-initiatives>

Alberta

HEALTH

The province will create a rural health care action plan. A review panel of health care experts and stakeholders will identify communities in rural Alberta that need attention and will review existing services and facilities in consultation with regional Health Advisory Councils. The panel will focus on rural communities in three categories: those with a population of 1,250 people and less, between 1,250 and 2,500; and more than 2,500. Areas of focus include:

- timely access to appropriate health care



- evaluation of specialist services in rural areas
- optimizing the use of existing rural health facilities, ensuring patient safety and quality services
- ensuring communities are engaged in health service planning and policy development
- recruitment and retention of health personnel in rural areas, consistent with appropriate levels of care
- the link between rural economic development and the provision of health services within communities.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=37094627D9889-0D69-2D5A-20F9EF77BF5A416B>

British Columbia

DISABILITY

A new online supportive employment report and toolkit will help social enterprises and other employers successfully employ people with multiple barriers to employment. Success Themes in Supportive Employment: How Social Enterprise Connects People with Jobs & Jobs with People, identifies best practices of social enterprises successful at employing people facing multiple barriers to employment, such as low literacy, gaps in work skills and work history, addictions, mental illness and poverty. The report is also the basis of an online employment toolkit with information and resources to help employers better support individuals who face barriers to finding and keeping jobs.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/09/new-tools-for-employers-to-support-inclusive-employment.html>

FAMILIES

Two announcements focus on improving access to legal advice for families. A new full-time family duty counsel at the Victoria Justice Access Centre will allow families to book appointments in advance and have access to the same lawyer for a repeat visit, if necessary. A second project will increase the services available through the Family LawLINE, which provides residents with legal advice and information over the telephone.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/09/improved-legal-help-for-families-at-heart-of-new-legal-aid-projects.html>

GOVERNANCE

By December 2014, a new rural advisory council will be appointed in accord with a key commitment from the province's new report on rural development, *Supporting Rural Development: Creating a Voice for Rural British Columbia*. The Rural Advisory Council will provide input to government policy decisions to best support thriving rural communities, within the context of a balanced budget for the province. The initial focus of the Council will be to provide advice on:

- avenues to support greater rural access to capital

- stronger business development support for rural entrepreneurs and businesses
- moving forward on the Rural Dividend.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/09/province-commits-to-rural-development.html>

HEALTH

Mayors from throughout BC attended the "Improving Health for Remote and Rural Communities" forum to provide input on access to health care for rural, remote and First Nations communities. A key component of finalizing the Rural Health Strategy will be to inform future planning decisions by looking at the short- and long-term needs of communities and taking a fresh look at existing supports – what is working, the areas that need to be changed and other actions that may be required. The Rural Health Strategy will have a clear focus will include measurable outcomes.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/09/discussions-on-rural-health-strategy.html>

LITERACY

The Province is providing \$2.4 million to support adult literacy training programs in 90 communities. The 2014-15 funding will support 9,000 learners in obtaining reading, writing and math skills. Funding for the Community Adult Literacy Program is distributed to nonprofit community groups to offer free literacy training that is easily accessible in local schools, native friendship and community centres. The program is tailored to the needs of Aboriginal learners, young parents, and other adults in the community and is delivered by trained volunteers offering one-to-one tutoring or small group classes.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/09/adult-literacy-funding-supports-9000-british-columbians.html>

HOUSING

The province launched a new website to help tenants and landlords access the information they need to maintain successful tenancies.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/09/new-website-supports-tenants-landlords.html>

Yukon Territory

No updates this month.

Northwest Territories

DISABILITY

Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority awarded the NWT Disabilities Council with a contract to provide day shelter services effective October 1, 2014.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/yellowknife-day-shelter-contract-awarded/>



Nunavut

GOVERNANCE

Canada's territorial Premiers renewed their collaborative vision for the North at the Northern Premiers' Forum in Yellowknife. Originally released in 2007, *A Northern Vision: Building a Better North* outlines a vision for the North shared by the governments of the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut. It will help the territories to continue working together to ensure the North is a region of vibrant, healthy communities with sound economies and diverse opportunities, and where the environment is protected for future generations.

<http://www.anorthernvision.ca/>