



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

October 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

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will launch an online treaty education resource for all educators this month, and will strengthen the curriculum and create new resources on Mi'kmaw language and culture.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20141024006>

DISABILITY

To reduce the need for students to file a human rights complaint about a failure to accommodate, the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission has published a guideline on accommodating students with disabilities in post-secondary institutions. It explains that accommodation must be personalized, timely and respectful of the student's dignity and privacy. The guideline sets out the responsibilities of both students and educators. It supplements existing guidelines that apply to accommodation of disabilities in the workplace and in schools from kindergarten to Grade 12.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2014.10.1193.html

POVERTY REDUCTION

\$300,000 investment is being made in three poverty reduction programs in Saint John. Funding provided to the Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative in Saint John will assist the implementation of the Early Learning Centre project, Partners Assisting Local Schools and First Steps.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2014.10.1238.html

YOUTH

The province's new Youth Employment Fund will help 1,500 young people each year obtain work experience and training. In response to high levels of youth unemployment and out-migration for jobs in western Canada, the fund will match unemployed youth ages 18 to 29 with employers for six-month work placements that can include up to two months of training. The placements will be subsidized by the provincial government and begin on April 1, 2015.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2014.10.1191.html

Nova Scotia

GOVERNANCE

The province released a new, four-year diversity strategy for hires in the public service. Key actions include:

- developing a diversity recruitment strategy and ensuring the public service is representative of the public



- providing enhanced and mandatory training on diversity and inclusion for all public servants
- developing a reciprocal mentorship program that pairs members of under-represented groups with senior leaders.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20141002005>

INCOME SECURITY

Legislative changes will allow Nova Scotians access to Pooled Registered Pension Plans.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20141015008>

Prince Edward Island

HEALTH

The government announced new investments of \$9 million over three years to ensure that Island youth can access enhanced mental health and addictions treatment. These will include a new 12-bed provincial Youth Recovery Centre in Summerside, a Youth Mental Health Unit with up to 12 in-patient beds in Charlottetown and a new Behavioural Support Team to provide intervention and support for youth with behavioural conditions.

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?number=news&newsnumber=9856&dept=&lang=E>

SENIORS

An increase to the lifetime grant for the Seniors Home Repair Program will give eligible seniors extra support to remain longer in their homes. Raised to \$2,000 from \$1,500, the program provides assistance to low- and moderate-income seniors to make necessary repairs to their residence. The lifetime grant increase is also available to previous recipients of the program. If individuals have already reached the current maximum, they may now be eligible for the additional funding.

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?number=news&newsnumber=9905&dept=&lang=E>

Québec

EMPLOYMENT

Emploi-Québec announced reductions to Contracts Work Integration wage subsidies offered to companies that hire people with disabilities. The subsidies had been considered a powerful lever for job creation in social enterprises and community groups. Previously, employers received a wage subsidy of 52 weeks in the first year and 30 weeks in the second year. Rates were set at 100 percent of the salary in the first year and 60 percent in the second. New levels offer the subsidy for a period of 30 weeks at a 60 percent rate in the first year only.

[Link](#)

HEALTH

The Ministry of Health and Social Services announced an anxiety disorders awareness campaign. It is estimated that such disorders affect 16 percent of the population.

[Link](#)

HOUSING

As of October 1, the age of eligibility for the Shelter Allowance Program of the *Société d'habitation du Québec* (SHQ) is 51 for people living alone and couples meeting the program's other criteria. This measure represents an additional investment of \$2.3 million, and the SHQ estimates that it will assist 3,400 new Québec households. In addition, the maximum allowable earnings are increased to \$24,989 for households of two or more people. This increase enables senior couples who receive the maximum Old Age Security benefit and the maximum Guaranteed Income Supplement to keep their shelter allowance.

http://www.revenuquebec.ca/en/citoyen/situation/faible_revenu/programmes_Allocation-logement.aspx

Ontario

CAREGIVING

Effective October 29, the province instituted three new leaves of absence through the *Employment Standards Amendment Act (Leaves to Help Families), 2014*. The Act builds on the existing Family Medical Leave by creating three job-protected leaves:

- Family Caregiver Leave: up to eight weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave for employees to provide care or support to a family member with a serious medical condition
- Critically Ill Child Care Leave: up to 37 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to provide care to a critically ill child
- Crime-Related Child Death or Disappearance Leave: up to 52 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave for parents of a missing child and up to 104 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave for parents of a child who has died as a result of a crime.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mol/en/2014/10/caregiver-leaves-to-help-families-now-in-effect.html>

COMMUNITIES

The province is allocating \$10 million over three years to improve and expand internet and wireless services, develop user-friendly websites, enhance collection development with new technology such as e-books, and encourage innovation and research.

<http://news.ontarionewsroom.com/mtc/en/2014/10/investing-in-ontarios-public-libraries-1.html>



DISABILITY

Ontario has appointed former Lieutenant Governor, The Honourable David C. Onley, as a special advisor on accessibility to champion opportunities for people of all abilities in the public and private sectors.

<http://news.ontario.ca/medt/en/2014/10/former-lieutenant-governor-to-champion-accessibility-in-ontario.html>

EDUCATION

The province is investing \$2.9 million through the Campus-Linked Accelerators program to build on world-class innovation and entrepreneurial initiatives at colleges and universities in Eastern Ontario. The initiative will help student entrepreneurs gain business skills, mentorship and hands-on experience to start and grow a business. Queen's, Ottawa and Carleton universities and Algonquin College will participate in the program.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mri/en/2014/10/fostering-student-entrepreneurship-in-eastern-ontario.html>

HEALTH

Ontario is applying the training and skills of paramedics to improve access to care in the community for patients with chronic conditions, especially seniors. The province will spend \$6 million to expand and develop 30 community paramedicine programs. Paramedics will work with Health Links and other health professionals teams to:

- make home visits to seniors and high-needs patients and help them with a range of services, such as ensuring they are taking medication as prescribed
- increase assessment and referrals to local services in the community – e.g., Community Care Access Centres for follow-up care
- educate patients on managing their chronic diseases.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2014/10/paramedics-to-of-fer-more-community-care.html>

POVERTY REDUCTION

Ontario has raised the income level (eligibility threshold) at which people can qualify for legal aid assistance. The 2014 Budget includes an initial investment of \$95.7 million to increase the eligibility threshold by six percent for the first three years of the plan. The first increase will take place on November 1, 2014. Once fully implemented, an additional one million low-income Ontarians will have access to legal aid services, more than double the number currently eligible for legal aid services.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mag/en/2014/10/giving-more-ontarians-access-to-affordable-legal-services.html>

RECREATION

\$13.5 million in continued funding of the province's After School Program will help service providers deliver programs at 400 locations in priority

neighbourhoods across the province. These programs serve more than 21,000 children and youth.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mtc/en/2014/10/keeping-ontarios-kids-active-after-school.html>

Manitoba

CHILDREN

Details of the Family Choices Building Fund were announced, part of the province's five-year plan to create more high-quality child care for families across Manitoba.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=32850&post-ed=2014-10-02>

WOMEN

The Manitoba government will launch new initiatives to help women access job opportunities in non-traditional skilled trades.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=32851&post-ed=2014-10-02>

Saskatchewan

CHILDREN

Changes to the Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol announced today by the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Social Services will enhance the province's coordinated and integrated approach to child abuse investigations, while clarifying responsibilities for protecting children.

The protocol is now user-friendly, explaining the roles that government ministries, police, communities, organizations and individuals must play in responding to suspicions of child abuse.

[Link](#)

DISABILITY

The province proclaimed October as Disability Employment Awareness month. Government's investment of \$9.9 million in workforce development programming helps people with disabilities to prepare for, secure and maintain a job. Employment is a priority area for the Saskatchewan Disability Strategy, which is scheduled to be released in early-to-mid 2015. The strategy is expected to include recommendations to support the inclusion of people who experience disabilities in the workforce.

[Link](#)

EDUCATION

The province announced the reallocation of \$4.6 million in capital funding to support students and teachers in the classroom. \$3.5 million has been distributed to school divisions based on the Supports for Learning component of the funding formula. The remaining \$1.1 million will also roll out through Supports for Learning, but will be targeted toward enrolment growth.

[Link](#)



HEALTH

The province introduced legislative amendments that will expand scope of practice for Saskatchewan pharmacists. The amendments will allow pharmacists to administer vaccines and drugs, such as flu shots and vitamin B12 injections. They will also enable pharmacists to order, access and use laboratory tests, working in collaboration with physicians.

[Link](#)

HOUSING

Two Regina condominium developments, totalling 29 entry-level homes, are receiving \$6.5 million in financing from the province through the HeadStart on a Home program. Announced in March 2011, HeadStart on a Home is expected to finance 1,500 new entry-level homes in five years. To the end of September 2014, the program has financed 1,329 new housing units that are either complete or under construction, in three years. An additional 365 units have been approved for financing. Municipalities may apply for the loans on behalf of builders and developers. There is \$200 million in financing available for the program through the Federal Immigrant Investor Program, which flows through the Saskatchewan Immigrant Investor Fund Inc. (SIIF). SIIF is a subsidiary of Crown Investments Corporation. The target sale price for homes constructed through HeadStart on a Home is at or below the MLS average sale price in each community.

[Link](#)

INCOME SECURITY

Effective October 1, 2014, Saskatchewan's minimum wage increased to \$10.20 from \$10 per hour. Since 2007, Saskatchewan's minimum wage has increased by 28.3 percent, with six increases from \$7.95 to \$10.20 over the past seven years.

[Link](#)

THRONE SPEECH

Social policy-related highlights of the Throne Speech include:

- increases to the Seniors Income Plan benefit
- increases in the number of Adult Basic Education seats and apprenticeship training seats
- as an outcome of the province's review of mental health services, the government will release a 10-year Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan
- patients' privacy and medical records will be better protected
- wait times for organ transplants will be reduced
- pharmacists' scope of services will be expanded
- legislation will be introduced to better protect victims of domestic violence
- a child welfare legislative review will lead to improvements in laws that protect children
- a Poverty Reduction Strategy will be developed
- fee waivers will be expanded to make the justice system more accessible to low-income people
- Sweet Dreams home in Saskatoon was opened and will provide at-risk single mothers with affordable housing and support while they complete their education and learn life and parenting skills. This project was made possible through a Social Impact Bond funding model – the first of its kind in Canada. The government will explore other opportunities for Social Impact Bond-funded projects.

[Link](#)

Alberta COMMUNITIES

The government released a Rural Economic Development Action based on five key themes:

- industry and business development
- financial and capital access
- attraction, retention and entrepreneurial development
- rural business infrastructure capacity
- regional and cross-regional collaboration.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=3725269B42635-E852-FAC6-F26E-0C88E084E864>

HEALTH

The province is working to ease pressure on hospitals by addressing the needs of more than 700 senior or complex needs patients who are waiting in acute care for a continuing care space.

In the first phase of the 2014 Continuing Care Capacity Plan, Alberta Health Services will, over the next 12 months, open 464 continuing care spaces that are currently unfunded or unstaffed through the reallocation of existing resources. In the second phase of the plan, government will assist remaining patients waiting in acute care through \$60 million in targeted Affordable Supportive Living Initiative funds. Alberta Health Services will dedicate approximately 20 percent of the freed-up acute care spaces for exclusive emergency department use.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=371919FB781CE-99CD-56D8-CB3E-787C90AC7449>



POVERTY REDUCTION

The province announced \$5.5 million in new funding to make legal aid available to more people, including Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped recipients.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=37274DA5F7A33-A24E-689D-FC-912A288C1C7EA8>

SENIORS

The province has committed \$70 million to Housing Management Bodies to make immediate upgrades to sprinkler and fire safety systems in older seniors care facilities. Many of the 24,000 government-owned and supported seniors units in Alberta were built between 1960 and 1990 before fire sprinklers became mandatory under fire and building safety codes.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=37258A64BF2ED-E59D-9C92-10A7B0765F55D46F>

British Columbia

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

An investment of \$6.4-million as part of BC's Skills for Jobs Blueprint will help more than 440 Aboriginal people get the skills and education that they need for jobs. Twenty-three projects will enable partnerships between public post-secondary institutions and local Aboriginal communities to deliver education and training that ranges from academic upgrading to formal qualifications.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/10/bcs-blueprint-helps-aboriginal-learners-get-skills-for-jobs.html>

COMMUNITIES

The province is working to identify transportation opportunities and priorities as it develops "BC on the Move," a new 10-year transportation plan to build the economy and connect the province's communities. The plan will focus on growing the economy, moving goods and people safely and reliably, connecting and strengthening communities, and maximizing collaboration and investment with partners including First Nations, the federal government, local governments and the private sector.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/10/public-engagement-opens-on-new-transportation-plan.html>

DISABILITY

BC is declaring October 2014 as the first Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) Awareness Month to help raise awareness among people with disabilities, their families and friends about the benefits of RDSPs as a tool to save for the future.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/10/saving-today-for-a-secure-tomorrow.html>

As part of BC's Skills for Jobs Blueprint, 20 public post-secondary institutions have each received \$75,000 in one-time funding to help learners

with disabilities access training programs for high-demand job skills. <http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/10/15m-helps-learners-with-disabilities-access-skills-training.html>

Adults 55 and older with developmental disabilities can get help during the transition to their senior years through a new service model. Operating currently as a pilot project in Burnaby, the model offers a navigator service that is wrapped around an individual and their family. The navigator gives support and helps an individual identify and realize housing and activity goals. They assist in developing a plan and coordinating the services and supports to make that plan concrete.

Acting as a one-on-one support for families, the navigator can assume a proactive role in ensuring that all the elements of the person-centred plan are carried out. The navigator is focused on the needs of the family and individual and is not answerable to any one funding or service organization. This support is designed to take families through the years where their needs are changing as they age, and allow them to have more control over these changes and be proactive about their futures. The model is also available for youth with developmental disabilities between the ages of 16 and 24 years transitioning to adulthood in a number of communities. Expanded roll-out for other areas of BC will be considered in spring 2015.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/10/navigator-help-for-older-adults-with-developmental-disabilities.html>

\$153,000 from the province is supporting the development of an online tool to help people with developmental disabilities prepare for work and break down barriers to employment.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/10/mapping-jobs-for-people-with-developmental-disabilities.html>

HEALTH

Beginning April 2015, the Provincial Health Services Authority will assume responsibility for provincial coordination of transgender services in BC and will look to expand capacity for these services in consultation with clinical experts and stakeholders from the transgender community.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/10/programs-and-services-for-transgender-community-to-be-strengthened.html>

HOUSING

The BC government is strengthening the nonprofit housing sector by transferring provincially-owned properties to nonprofit housing providers. The province owns approximately 350 parcels of land that are currently leased long-term to nonprofit housing providers who own and operate social housing buildings on these properties. Having ownership of the land will improve a nonprofit's ability to support better long-term planning and self-sufficiency. Owning the lands on which they operate will also help nonprofits secure the financing they need to be sustainable. In order to transfer title, the province will end these leases and transfer



land ownership to the societies. The properties will be transferred at fair market value. The province will assist the societies to secure mortgages on the properties. The current operating agreement that BC Housing has with each nonprofit society will remain in place. Approximately 115 properties will be transferred by March 31, 2015, and the rest will be transferred over the next three years.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/10/asset-transfer-program-supports-non-profits.html>

HOMELESSNESS

British Columbia's new Homeless Prevention Program (HPP) will make rent supplements and support services available to four groups at risk of becoming homeless. The program is operational in six communities and soon will expand to more than 30 communities throughout BC. Over the next five years, it is estimated that up to 4,000 people will benefit from the program. HPP assists youth transitioning out of foster care, women who have experienced violence or are at risk of violence, individuals leaving the hospital and correctional systems, and Aboriginal people. Monthly supplements are made available to participants to put towards housing costs.

Additional provincial funding will go toward services that connect clients to community supports. The federal and provincial governments will contribute \$62.5 million over five years to the Homeless Prevention Program for rent supplements under the Investment in Affordable Housing agreement.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/10/new-rental-assistance-for-victoria-residents-in-need.html>

Yukon Territory

EDUCATION

Yukon College is developing its first made-in-Yukon degree and post-degree certificate. Beginning in 2017, the college will offer a three-year Bachelor of Policy Studies in Indigenous Governance and a one-year postgraduate certificate in Climate Change and Public Policy. Since 2011, the college has been exploring the development of a unique post-secondary model for the territory that will serve the North for generations to come. This initiative – in the college's 2013-2016 strategic plan – is to design a future focused, post-secondary learning model inspired by Yukon's unique culture, economy and environment.

http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/14-231.html#.VEZAqvnF_WE

RECREATION

The Yukon government is increasing the maximum amount that may be claimed under the Yukon Child Fitness Tax Credit to \$1,000 from \$500, effective for the 2014 income tax year.

http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/14-244.html#.VFliid_nF_WE

Northwest Territories

EDUCATION

Without changing the current funding approach to Junior Kindergarten, it will be completely voluntary for any of the 23 communities now offering Junior Kindergarten to continue with the program this year. If they choose, they will also be able to offer it in the next school year. Any of the 23 communities may stop offering the program now if they so choose. The government will undertake a thorough review of the implementation of Junior Kindergarten in the 23 communities. It will not offer Junior Kindergarten in any of the regional centres or Yellowknife until the review has been completed.

<http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/files/pages/892/fulljkinfokitfebfinal.pdf>

FAMILIES

The government released *Building Stronger Families – An Action Plan to Transform Child and Family Services*. The plan identifies three areas of reform:

- service delivery and child protection practices
- risk management and quality assurance
- program administration and management.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/glen-abernethy-building-stronger-families-an-action-plan-to-transform-child-and-family-services/>

HEALTH

The territory announced the introduction of Med-Response, a 1-800 number for all health care workers to call when they need an air ambulance, or when they need advice or consultation that is beyond the capacity of local expertise. When a call is received, an Emergency Medical Coordinator will immediately assess the urgency of the patient's condition, and then take the appropriate action. That might include getting a dispatcher to start arranging a medevac, or patching in an ER physician or specialist to provide advice and support. The phone system provides for up to nine callers to be involved, so that everyone with a role to play understands what is happening in real time.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/glen-abernethy-med-response-2/>

The government announced the launch of the Wellness Court for chronic offenders who have mental health issues, addictions or cognitive challenges that contribute to their criminal behaviour. A person who is charged comes before a judge but their sentencing is delayed so that they can participate in the Wellness Court Program. In this program, a case manager and team provide intensive support and supervision to offenders as they work to make positive changes. The team helps them access services such as housing and income support, as well as mental health and addiction programs.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/david-ramsay-nwt-wellness-court/>



Nunavut

FOOD SECURITY

The Nunavut Food Security Coalition launched a website that covers the six themes of the Nunavut Food Security Strategy, including:

- country food
- store-bought food
- local food production
- life skills
- program and community initiative
- policy and legislation.

The site offers information about the Nunavut Food Security Strategy, highlighted actions and ways that individuals can help improve food security in Nunavut. The Nunavut Food Security Coalition is a collaborative group of government departments, Inuit organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector working together to improve food security in Nunavut. The coalition is a task group of the Nunavut Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, and is co-led by the government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.

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

DISABILITY

The territory is offering residents with mobility-related disabilities up to \$20,000 to support unmet program, equipment and service needs. Applications can be made for Nunavut Solutions Grants from October 8 to November 28, 2014.

<http://www.gov.nu.ca/family-services/news/nunavut-solutions-grants-persons-living-mobility-related-disabilities>