



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

November 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

CHILDREN

New legislation was introduced to modernize current legislation for child care services, while ensuring the continuation of quality, safe child care across the province. Service definitions, capacity limits, licensing appeals, inspection and review processes were included in the review.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2014/edu/1125n06.aspx>

HEALTH

The province, IBM and the federal government launched the Translational and Personalized Medicine Initiative (TPMI). Led by Memorial University, TPMI will bring the latest discoveries in health research directly to patients in an effort to enhance care and treatment options. The province is contributing \$7.2 million to a \$50 million fund, which will be allocated over the next five years.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2014/exec/1127n01.aspx>

HOUSING

The Governments of Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador announced a combined investment of more than \$68 million over five years to help more individuals and families access affordable housing and renovate their existing homes. The funding will be delivered through an extension to the Investment in Affordable Housing agreement, administered through Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2014/swsd/1128n01.aspx>

POVERTY REDUCTION

The province is gathering input for a renewal of its poverty reduction strategy. Approximately \$1 billion has been approved for poverty reduction initiatives since the launch of *Reducing Poverty: An Action Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador* in 2006.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2014/swsd/1117n05.aspx>

RECREATION

The province announced a \$300,000 investment in Participation Nation Unplugged. This after-school physical activity program is designed to provide inclusive, non-competitive opportunities to increase physical activity and promote healthy, active lifestyles in the after-school time period. The program works with participating schools to help identify and remove barriers to increasing physical activity.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2014/swsd/1127n08.aspx>

New Brunswick

CHILDREN

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate and the NB Health Council released the seventh annual *State of the Children Report*. The Child and Youth Advocate also introduced the first round table of the Strategy for the Prevention of Harm to Children and Youth. The strategy will function on a provincial level to implement the right of children to be protected against all forms of violence, in accordance with article 19 of the *Conven-*



tion on the Rights of the Child. The round table will make it possible to lay the foundations for the strategy, scheduled to be launched in 2015.
http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2014.11.1309.html

EMPLOYMENT

Six additional trades will see their requirements and criteria harmonized across the Atlantic provinces as part of the Council of Atlantic Premiers' Atlantic Apprenticeship Harmonization Project. The six trades to be harmonized include: carpenter, metal fabricator, welder, steamfitter-pipe-fitter, plumber and industrial electrician. This investment is in addition to a previous set of four trades which were announced earlier this year: bricklayer, cook, construction electrician and instrumentation and control technician.
http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2014.11.1274.html

INCOME SECURITY

The provincial government will increase the minimum wage to \$10.30 per hour by the end of 2014. The 30-cent increase honours the commitment made under the province's first poverty reduction plan and marks the first increase to the minimum wage in New Brunswick since April 2012. The government plans to further increase the minimum wage to \$11 per hour by 2017 and thereafter by the rate of inflation.
http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2014.11.1295.html

WOMEN

The province is working to improve a woman's right to reproductive services. Barriers to service have included the requirement to have written certification by two doctors prior to being able to access the service; time-liness of access; availability of accurate and non-judgmental information; and capacity within the system to provide the service.
http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2014.11.1334.html

Nova Scotia

DISABILITY

The province announces the release of *Choice and Inclusion: Shaping the Future of Nova Scotia's Disability Support Program*. The report outlines the province's response to a joint government-community committee that recommended transforming the Services for Persons with Disabilities program. The plan will guide efforts over the next 10 years. It focuses on three key areas:

- increase supports so more people with disabilities can live in the community
- modernizing services and programs to make them more flexible and person-directed

- reducing reliance on long-term residential facilities.

Nova Scotia currently supports 5,200 people with disabilities, about one-third of whom live in large residential facilities. The Minister's Advisory Panel on Accessibility Legislation will conduct 11 community consultations in 10 locations between November 13 and December 5, 2014. The accessibility legislation is expected to be introduced in spring 2016. Plan: <http://novascotia.ca/coms/spd/docs/DisabilityActionPlan.pdf>
<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20141113001>

Prince Edward Island

HEALTH

Babies born in Prince Edward Island are currently screened for 13 conditions, including metabolic conditions and blood disorders. Another 13 will be added within the next two years.
<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?number=news&newsnumber=9957&dept=&lang=E>

THRONE SPEECH

The government's Throne Speech outlines its support of the economy, environment, health, education and social programs. Social policy-related highlights include:

- \$300,000 over five years for a new Family Literacy Initiative that includes in-home support, books and materials for children aged 24 to 36 months
- introduction of the Positive Parenting Program, an evidence-based parenting program that supports parents with practical strategies
- introduction of a Grade 11 math assessment to continue and extend the progress that has been achieved up to Grade 9
- development of a high school examination in literacy that requires a satisfactory outcome to graduate from Grade 12. Students not initially meeting this requirement will receive further learning support
- implementation of a new out-of-province travel support program to help residents travel to access health care services across the Maritimes
- enhancement of drug programs to include nine new cancer medications
- investment of an additional \$3.7 million to enhance services to children with complex health needs including occupational health, physiotherapy, autism assessments and speech language therapies
- creation of a new therapeutic model of service for adults with mental health and addictions problems in the justice system.

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?number=news&newsnumber=9934&dept=&lang=E>



Québec

GOVERNANCE

The Quebec Auditor General's report focused on three areas:

- key findings and recommendations related to taxation
- a critique of the design and management of the Solidarity tax credit system
- an audit of the Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports that discussed the government's role in pursuing academic success

[Link](#)

HEALTH

The province introduced Bill 20, *An Act to promote access to family medicine and specialized medicine services* and to amend various legislative provisions relating to assisted procreation. It would impose minimum caseloads for family physicians and would suspend universal funding for in vitro fertilization.

[Link](#)

HOUSING

Québec announces the adoption of new mandatory lease forms. The forms were modified to ensure that they comply with the legislative amendments made over the last few years, particularly with regard to better protection for seniors who rent dwellings in private seniors' residences.

<http://www.rdl.gouv.qc.ca/en/outils/nouvformulbail2014.asp>

Ontario

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

The government is investing \$10 million in the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy to reduce family violence, violence against Aboriginal women and improve Aboriginal health, healing and wellness. The strategy will support culturally appropriate programs and services in 250 Aboriginal communities across Ontario, including:

- new Healing Lodge sites to provide residential programs that address the underlying impacts of sexual assault, physical, mental and emotional abuse and family dysfunction
- training for front-line workers in areas such as mental health and addictions, traditional healing practices, crisis intervention, grief counselling and family violence
- funding to help address the high costs of delivering programs in northern remote and fly-in communities

- ongoing funding for Talk4Healing, a helpline for Aboriginal women in the North who have limited access to services.

<http://news.ontarionewsroom.com/mcss/en/2014/11/promoting-healthy-and-safe-aboriginal-communities.html>

The province is supporting front-line services that help Aboriginal women facing abuse. Measures include:

- a 2014 budget investment of \$14.5 million over three years to ensure fair compensation and training for front-line workers who support women and children who are fleeing abuse
- ongoing funding through the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy for Talk4Healing, Ontario's only women's helpline
- support for the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres' new Honour Life, End Violence campaign that reaches out to women in abusive relationships and reminds men and youth that they have a role to play in ending violence in their homes, workplaces and communities.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mcss/en/2014/11/keeping-women-safe-from-violence.html>

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The government presented the 2014 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review. Social policy-related highlights include:

education

- completing the rollout of full-day kindergarten and investing in child care modernization
- awarding more than 2,200 Parents Reaching Out Grants during the 2014-15 school year to help school councils identify local barriers to parent engagement and find solutions
- launching Experience Ontario, a nine-month paid community work and service program that allows high school graduates to gain valuable work experience before they enrol in postsecondary education or choose their career path
- continued investment in elementary, secondary and post-secondary education and the Ontario Youth Jobs Strategy

income security, pensions

- strengthening retirement income security by advancing the plan to introduce a new mandatory provincial pension plan – the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. Its implementation is scheduled to coincide with expected reductions in Employment Insurance premiums in 2017



- introducing a legislative framework for pooled registered pension plans that is consistent with the model introduced by the federal government
- allowing for more flexible models such as target benefit pension plans
- facilitating conversions or mergers of employer-sponsored, single-employer pension plans into new or existing jointly sponsored pension plans.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mof/en/2014/11/ontario-governments-plan-is-building-opportunity-securing-our-future.html>

HEALTH

Changes to the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* mean that, starting January 1, 2015, it will be illegal to:

- smoke on bar and restaurant patios
- smoke on playgrounds and public sports fields and surfaces
- sell tobacco on university and college campuses.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2014/11/smoking-to-be-prohibited-on-patios-sport-fields-and-playgrounds.html>

The government introduced the *Making Healthier Choices Act, 2014* to protect youth from the dangers of tobacco and the potential harms of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes). Also included in the legislation are measures to help families make healthier food choices by giving them caloric information when eating out or purchasing take-away meals.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2014/11/ontario-takes-action-to-reduce-smoking-and-obesity-rates.html>

Ontario is implementing the next phase of its mental health strategy by establishing a Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council and increasing support to community mental health service partners. New initiatives include:

- \$2.75 million to improve access to mental health care and reduce wait times at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, Waypoint Centre for Mental Health in Penetanguishene, the Royal in Ottawa and Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Services in Whitby
- \$16 million to create 1,000 more supportive housing spaces over the next three years, as part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy
- improving supports for youth with eating disorders through a pilot program with Ontario Shores, which will open a new 12-bed pediatric residential treatment unit treating 32 patients per year
- partnering with the province's public health units to increase awareness, fight stigma and promote mental health in schools and in the workplace
- developing a funding model - based on advice from the new advisory

council - to improve outcomes, deliver higher quality care, and ensure that programs are better tailored to the needs of local communities.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2014/11/ontario-expanding-strategy-to-address-mental-health-issues.html>

\$3 million in provincial funding will support the establishment of the Ontario Institute for Regenerative Medicine. The Institute will bring together stem cell researchers to apply newly discovered treatments to a wide variety of diseases, including cancer, diabetes, blindness, heart and lung diseases.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mri/en/2014/11/ontario-supporting-groundbreaking-stem-cell-research-1.html>

\$2.3 million over two years will expand the province's Low Back Pain Strategy and conduct a pilot project aimed at helping primary care organizations deliver better access to appropriate, cost-effective, patient-centred care.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2014/11/ontario-expanding-care-for-low-back-pain-patients.html>

RECREATION

The province announced a partnership with ACTIVE AT SCHOOL and the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (Ophea) to get children more active every day. ACTIVE AT SCHOOL will be working with Ontario and Ophea to help implement 60 minutes of physical activity for kids connected to the school day. ACTIVE AT SCHOOL is a broad-based group of more than 80 private, public and not-for-profit organizations committed to promoting one hour a day of quality physical activity in schools across Canada.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2014/11/promoting-well-being-at-school.html>

SENIORS

A new Age-Friendly Community Planning Grant will offer a total of up to \$1.5 million over two years for short- and longer-term projects. Funding will support local governments and community organizations to undertake strategic planning with a focus on and lead to the development of local aging plans that will eventually be implemented, evaluated and improved upon. Grants will be available for amounts up to:

- \$25,000 for small communities (populations under 20,000 residents)
- \$35,000 for medium-sized communities (between 20,000 to 99,999 residents)
- \$50,000 for larger communities (more than 100,000 residents).

http://www.grants.gov.on.ca/prodconsum/groups/grants_web_contents/documents/grants_web_contents/prdr013013.pdf



TRANSPORTATION

The province has announced \$321.5 million in Gas Tax Funding to 96 municipalities this year to help expand and improve public transit. The Ontario Gas Tax Program helps municipalities increase accessibility, buy more transit vehicles, add more routes and extend hours of service, making it easier for people to use public transit. It will also help ease traffic congestion and reduce air pollution.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mto/en/2014/11/gas-tax-funding-fuels-transit-growth.html>

Ontario is launching a new pilot program to improve community transportation services for seniors, persons living with disabilities, youth and other members of the community who need transportation. The Community Transportation Pilot Grant Program will provide funds to municipalities to partner with community organizations, such as health and community agencies, transit agencies, school-bus operators and private transit operators, to coordinate local transportation services, so more rides and destinations can be provided to more people. For example, municipalities and organizations will have the ability to coordinate vehicles and drivers to give rides to more clients from multiple organizations, such as community and social health services, to a common destination. This helps free up other vehicles to make trips to other destinations or to offer rides to the broader public.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mto/en/2014/11/improving-community-transportation-for-seniors-persons-living-with-disabilities.html>

Manitoba

CHILDREN

The province has launched a major update of its programs for children in crisis to improve care, reduce reliance on hotels as emergency shelters and redirect funds to key support services. The update will:

- create 71 new emergency foster home spaces
- open a secure residential care unit to work with girls ages 12 to 17 who have complex needs
- increase capacity to perform multi-disciplinary clinical assessments of children with behavioural challenges
- reduce reliance on contract workers by hiring 210 highly trained, permanent child care workers over two years
- increase emergency foster placements and supports in rural areas to care for children closer to their homes.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=33258&post-ed=2014-11-18>

EDUCATION

The province introduced a bill that would introduce smaller classes for kindergarten to Grade 3 students.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=33332&post-ed=2014-11-24>

EMPLOYMENT

The government launched Manitoba Career Prospects, a program that will offer high school students and parents improved access to employers, connecting them directly with experts and information about career opportunities. The program gives students and their parents an opportunity to speak with and ask questions of experts, learning what it is like to work in different fields.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=33312&post-ed=2014-11-21>

HEALTH

A new cancer hub in Winnipeg will enhance support for patients suspected of having cancer and ensure they are able to access treatment services as quickly as possible.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=33350&post-ed=2014-11-25>

Saskatchewan

EDUCATION

The province announced the launch of an International Education Strategy. It includes three main goals:

- increase global engagement by increasing the number of Saskatchewan students studying abroad by 50 percent, from 900 to 1,400
- increase the number of international students studying in Saskatchewan by 75 percent from 3,500 to 6,200
- grow global research partnerships by increasing the number and value of international research partnerships.

<http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2014/november/24/international-education-strategy>

FAMILIES

The Ministry of Justice, with support from the Law Foundation of Saskatchewan, has developed a three-year pilot program to assist families through separation and divorce. Family Matters: Assisting Families through Separation and Divorce will help minimize the effect of separation and divorce on all family members, especially children. The program, which received nearly \$1.3 million in funding from the Law Foundation of Saskatchewan, offers families in transition access to an early, affordable and informal opportunity to resolve issues. Information, support and guidance will assist clients in addressing issues such as child custody, parenting plans, children's developmental needs and property division. As



of November 1, 2014, the program became available in Saskatoon and Prince Albert. Availability will be expanded to Regina and Moose Jaw in April 2015. A province-wide expansion will occur in April 2016.

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2014/november/06/separation-and-divorce-assistance>

Changes to the *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act*, 2012 will give the province's Maintenance Enforcement Office more tools to collect child and spousal support payments.

<http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2014/november/26/child-and-spousal-support>

Alberta

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

The province and the Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association pledged to take a stand against violence towards Aboriginal women through the Moose Hide Campaign.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=374040E5637E2-06F6-BA39-7CC29A44630A13C7>

EDUCATION

The province introduced the *Act to Amend the Alberta Bill of Rights to Protect our Children*. It proposes to amend the *Alberta Bill of Rights* in two ways: it will clarify the government's commitment to equality for the LGBTQ community and confirm parental rights with respect to their children's education. The government further proposed to amend the *Alberta Bill of Rights* to explicitly add sexual orientation to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination and a clause that cements the rights of parents to make informed decisions about the education of their children.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=3742181CCFA54-CD-CA-84FC-EB578F25F9FF6D7D>

FAMILIES

The Alberta government is supporting foster and kinship care families with a 2.1 percent cost of living increase and one day of respite care per child per month.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=3732380ED2053-COA9-FA33-8976FF720990704B>

THRONE SPEECH

The speech outlined the government's direction, including new legislation to enhance accountability. Other areas of focus include: climate change, emergency response, transportation, capital planning for education, health, seniors and skills training, flood mitigation, a clearer Budget process and legislation to protect condo owners and buyers.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=373607AF4D994-EE54-601C-4DB-2398F4706436E>

British Columbia

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

The province announced the signing of the Mission Public School's second Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement. Since the district's first agreement was signed, the six-year completion rate for Aboriginal students in Mission has increased from 53 percent in 2008-09 to 68 percent in 2012-13. Overall, the provincial six-year completion rate for Aboriginal students has climbed to a record high of 59.6 percent, a 41.6 percent increase since 2000-01. These agreements are one of the ways that government, school districts and Aboriginal communities are working toward reconciliation. Mission's second agreement was developed over a two-year period by the Enhancement Agreement Committee comprised of members and staff from the Siwal Si'wes Advisory Committee, the Mission Teachers Union, principals, parents and representatives from the local Aboriginal communities.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/11/aboriginal-education-is-all-about-empowerment.html>

CHILDREN

The province announced \$7 million in funding to create 1,006 new licensed child care spaces in 28 communities. Priority was given to applications in underserved areas – such as Surrey, Fort St. John and Langford – and on school grounds, where children can smoothly transition from early years' programs, the classroom and after-school care. The province aims to support the creation of an additional 1,000 spaces under the BC Early Years Strategy by March 2016. This builds on the approximately 107,000 spaces that government currently supports throughout the province.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/11/1006-new-child-care-spaces-coming-to-bc-families.html>

HEALTH

\$2.9 million in Community Action Initiative (CAI) grants were awarded to 16 community-based projects that promote positive mental health. A key complement to the province's comprehensive 10-year plan, Healthy Minds, Healthy People, CAI is a province-wide program that supports mental health and substance abuse groups.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/11/mental-health-projects-receive-29-million.html>

SENIORS

The government announced a \$4.5-million grant for the Centre for Hip Health and Mobility for programs to help prevent falls and hip fractures in older adults and enhance mobility through early intervention.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/11/province-provides-grant-for-seniors-falls-prevention-and-mobility.html>



\$4 million in funding for the Alzheimer Society of BC to help expand First Link, an early intervention service that connects families to support groups, education and community and health-care services.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/11/bc-commits-an-addition-al-4-million-for-dementia-care.html>

Yukon Territory

FAMILIES

The territory is expanding the Healthy Families Yukon program to Watson Lake, Pelly Crossing and Carmacks. Its aim is to help parents build nurturing relationships with their children as well as increase their knowledge of child development

http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/14-251.html#VGEPyfnF_WE

Northwest Territories

EMPLOYMENT

The Northwest Territories Nominee Program is a key component of the territory's efforts to attract 2,000 new residents and further develop its workforce by 2019. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) has set a target of increasing the number of nominees by 25 percent annually starting in 2014-15. ECE will continue to clarify the nominee application process, improve the forms and access to online information and promote and improve awareness of the program.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/jackson-lafferty-developing-our-north-ern-workforce/>

HEALTH

The territory announced the launch of Working on Wellness (WoW). The initiative is designed to help employers support their employees in making healthy lifestyle choices. WoW's long-term goal is to reduce preventable cancers and other chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Five sites have signed on to pilot the program in their workplaces: De Beers Group of Companies, Dominion Diamond Ekati Corporation, Diavik Diamond Mines Inc., Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission and the Department of Health and Social Services.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/working-on-wellness-wow-another-healthy-choice/>

Nunavut

POVERTY REDUCTION

The Nunavut Roundtable for Poverty Reduction today finished its fall 2014 gathering, and participants reviewed the Five Year Poverty Reduction Action Plan. The plan will be reviewed in detail with communities over the next two months, looking for approval early in 2015.

http://www.gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/2014-11_nr_fs_nti_nunavut_roundtable_for_poverty_reduction_-_eng.pdf