



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

January 2015



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

HEALTH

The province announced the launch of ACCESS NB, a youth-focused mental health initiative. ACCESS NB is being funded as part of ACCESS, a Canada-wide project that won a national competition created by the Graham Boeckh Foundation and the Canadian Institute for Health Research. The \$25 million grant was awarded to the group presenting the best ideas and capacity for transforming youth mental health services across the country over a span of five years. New Brunswick is one of 12 ACCESS sites across Canada and is a special demonstration project, as the only provincial site within the national initiative. ACCESS NB's proposed transformation consists of four main parts:

- developing safe spaces for youth with mental health issues to empower their voice and enable improved access to care
- providing mental health training for all sectors of society to better identify and support youth with mental health needs
- knowledge sharing both within the province and throughout the broader national network to ensure that New Brunswick youth benefit from the best clinical care practices
- evaluating the results of the changes to youth mental health care.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2015.01.0049.html

INCOME SECURITY

The province launched Life Stages, a new web resource developed by the Financial and Consumer Services Commission. Information is broken down into nine topics, addressing the key financial decisions associated with each life event.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2015.01.0040.html

Nova Scotia

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

A new Aboriginal education officer at the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission will strengthen relationships, raise awareness of human rights issues and better understand how the commission can support First Nations communities.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20150113001>

CAREGIVING

A group of experts has been named to help put the provincial palliative care strategy into action.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20150122005>



DISABILITY

Families who have children at risk of developmental delays will get the support they need sooner as a result of the early intervention program review. Improvements will focus on:

- ensuring access to early intervention for families
- strengthening early intervention programs across the province
- supporting and developing the early intervention workforce
- aligning early intervention programs with the early years system and the public school system.

More than 300 children are currently waiting for services.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20150120002>

EDUCATION

A new five-year education action plan focuses on fundamental changes to improve and modernize the education system for the first time in a generation, create an innovative curriculum, promote inclusive school environments and advance excellence in teaching and leadership.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20150129002>

INCOME SECURITY

The province will increase the minimum wage by 20 cents, to \$10.60 an hour on April 1. The minimum wage for someone with less than three months' experience will also increase by 20 cents an hour, to \$10.10. Minimum wage rates are adjusted annually, and are based on the previous year's national Consumer Price Index.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20150128003>

Prince Edward Island

No updates this month.

Québec

No updates this month.

Ontario

CHILD CARE

Starting in January 2015, Ontario is implementing a wage increase of \$1 per hour for eligible child care workers in the licensed child care sector. Another wage increase is set for next year. The increase will help close the wage gap between registered early childhood educators working in full-day kindergarten programs and child care professionals in licensed child care settings.

<http://news.ontarionewsroom.com/opo/en/2015/01/ontario-increases-wages-for-early-childhood-educators.html>

EMPLOYMENT

The province's Youth Employment Fund has exceeded its initial goal by helping more than 25,000 young people access job opportunities, develop skills and gain valuable work experience. Part of Ontario's Youth Jobs Strategy, the fund helps employers offer four- to six-month job placements for youth ages 15-29 who are looking for work, particularly those facing multiple barriers to employment. Since its launch in September 2013, the program has helped 26,582 youth. Eighty-five percent of youth participants have either been retained or gone on to further employment elsewhere.

<http://news.ontario.ca/tcu/en/2015/01/ontario-helps-over-25000-young-people-through-the-youth-employment-fund.html>

HEALTH

Ontario is supporting 14 projects that will help more postsecondary students get access to mental health services faster. Initiatives will focus on students who are Aboriginal, have addiction issues, or face mental health or addiction issues while transitioning from high school to college or university. Funding will flow through Open Minds, Healthy Minds – the province's multi-year, \$257-million mental health and addictions strategy.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2015/01/improving-mental-health-for-postsecondary-students.html>

The province is bringing together workers and experts from a wide range of sectors at a summit on work-related traumatic mental stress on March 5 in Toronto. Participants will share innovative approaches, promote cultural change and learn from industry leaders on how to enhance the mental health and safety of employees.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mol/en/2015/01/ontario-to-host-summit-on-work-related-traumatic-mental-stress.html>

HOMELESSNESS

To meet the long-term goal of eliminating homelessness stated in the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the government is establishing an Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness. The province will work with the panel to get advice on how to best approach this goal, beginning with ways to define and measure homelessness.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mah/en/2015/01/expert-advisory-panel-on-homelessness-members.html>

Manitoba

EDUCATION

Total funding for public education will increase by \$25 million to \$1.27 billion from \$1.24 billion. Overall, funding has increased more than \$500 million or 64.9 percent since 1999.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=33871&post-ed=2015-01-29>

FAMILIES

The province is revising its funding model for Manitoba Child and Family Services agencies to expand supports for families with the goal of keeping children at home and in their own communities rather than taking them into care.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=33831&post-ed=2015-01-27>

Saskatchewan

DISABILITY

The province will make available \$750,000 over three years to the Saskatoon Public School Division to support the needs of students who require materials in alternate formats, such as Braille and large text resources. These funds will allow the school division to develop and distribute these materials across the province and provide school and school division staff with training. It will also support the operation of an alternate format resource centre that will be available to all school divisions.

<http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2015/january/06/alternate-format-materials>

The government announced a 2014-15 investment of \$200,000 in the Ability in Me Program to support children and youth living with Down syndrome. Funds will improve access to speech and language services for children and youth with Down syndrome and their families in the Saskatoon region.

<http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2015/january/08/down-syndrome-support>

HOUSING

The government announced a decision to transition its Affordable Housing Program into a Social Housing Program in Saskatchewan's largest centers. Beginning March 1, 2015, anyone who applies for government-owned rental housing in urban centres will only be eligible for the Social Housing Rental Program, where rent is based on 30 per cent of income. Tenants who remain in the Affordable Housing Program will pay a lower market rent, but these rents will increase over time.

<http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2015/january/22/social-housing-transition>

Alberta

CAREGIVING

Families and caregivers will have access to information, the latest research and other resources via webcasts on mental health, brain injury, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and disabilities.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=3759753FB0C7C-ED77-2CB2-37C9F63571887637>

British Columbia

EDUCATION

The province is aligning operating grants provided to public post-secondary institutions to support training for in-demand jobs, starting with \$40 million in 2014-15 as outlined in the Skills for Jobs Blueprint. Previously, the government targeted about \$190 million annually or 10 percent of provincial operating grants toward specific programs, primarily health-related. Funding for programs that support high-demand occupations will increase to 25 percent of annual operating grants provided to public post-secondary institutions, up to \$460 million annually by 2017-18. The top 60 occupations listed in the BC 2022 Labour Market Outlook, as well as priority health occupations, regional labour priorities, Aboriginal people and people with disabilities, are the focus of the shift in funding.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2015/01/post-secondary-funding-to-align-with-in-demand-jobs.html>

EMPLOYMENT

The province has developed a 2022 Labour Market Outlook that lists the top 60 high-demand occupations the provincial economy needs to grow. The list has the latest in-demand employment opportunities to meet a variety of work interests.

<http://ow.ly/Eb79f>

HOUSING

The province outlined the changes made to its 2006 housing strategy, Housing Options, reviewing 2014 improvements and plans for 2015. Highlights included: licensing for home inspectors, more options for rental assistance, the Homeless Prevention Program, the transfer of provincially-owned land to nonprofit housing providers and \$169 million in 2015 to assist the homeless and those at risk of becoming so.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2015/01/building-for-the-future-housing-matters.html>

Yukon Territory

DISABILITY

Training will begin this month for professionals who will make up the diagnostic team for adults suspected of having Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. This team will complement the early childhood and youth diagnostic teams already in place. A pool of local physicians and psychologists will be trained to build capacity among service providers in Yukon. Focus will be on functional assessments to identify an adult's strengths and needs. Assessment results will help in the development of supportive strategies for those individuals.

http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/15-012.html#_VLkLiEff_WE

EMPLOYMENT

The territory announced \$850,000 in funding for a three-year extension of the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers. The program helps participants secure employment through skill development and a four-week work placement. Between fall 2007 and spring 2013, 223 older



workers from across Yukon participated in the program; 75 per cent of participants found employment upon completion.

http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/15-005.html#.VLSYRCvF_WE

Northwest Territories

HOUSING

The Governments of Canada and Northwest Territories announced an additional combined investment of more than \$18 million over five years, through an extension to the Investment in Affordable Housing agreement.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/governments-of-canada-and-northwest-territories-extend-funding-to-offer-more-affordable-housing-solutions-in-nwt/>

INCOME SECURITY

Effective June 1, 2015, the minimum wage will increase from \$10.00 per hour to \$12.50 per hour, giving the NWT one of the highest minimum wages in Canada. The increase was based on findings from the Minimum Wage Committee appointed in 2013 to research, engage stakeholders and provide options on the minimum wage rate in the territory.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/nwt-minimum-wage-to-increase-to-one-of-the-highest-in-canada/>

WOMEN

The territory is joining eight other provinces and territories to encourage greater representation of women on corporate boards and in senior management. Changes to its securities rules are intended to increase transparency for investors and other stakeholders. Changes will apply to all non-venture issuers reporting in the NWT.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/adoption-of-new-securities-rules-promotes-greater-representation-of-women-on-boards-and-in-senior-management/>

Nunavut

No updates this month.