



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

July 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

EMPLOYMENT

As part of the province's 10-year population growth strategy, the Department of Advanced Education and Skills is accepting project proposals under the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers program. Designed to help older worker integrate into the workforce, projects are expected to be linked to local economic development plans and initiatives, and involve a minimum of 25 hours per week of employment programming.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2015/aes/0724n02.aspx>

New Brunswick

No updates this month.

Nova Scotia

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The audited financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2015, show the deficit was \$143.7 million, \$135.3 million lower than the budgeted deficit of \$279 million. The difference was due mainly to reduced departmental expenses and increased income and sales taxes. Total consolidated revenues were \$10.6 billion, a \$228 million increase from the estimate, due to higher income and sales taxes. Despite success in keeping expenses under control in most areas, total consolidated expenses were \$10.8 billion, a \$92.7 million jump from the estimate. Net debt was \$15 billion. Net debt-to-GDP was 37 percent, lower than the estimate of 37.4 percent and the prior year's result of 37.7 percent. <http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20150730004>

TRANSPORTATION

Under the Nova Scotia Transit Research Incentive Program, the government is investing more than \$167,000 in initiatives that will generate new or improved public transit services in rural and underserved urban areas of Nova Scotia.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20150715001>

The province is making \$366,000 available to safe, affordable and accessible transportation projects in nine communities. Funding can be directed toward the purchase or conversion of accessible vehicles. Up to two-thirds of the eligible costs are available to a maximum of \$70,000 for new vehicles and \$15,000 for used.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20150715005>

Prince Edward Island

GOVERNANCE

The provincial government released a *White Paper on Democratic Renewal* encouraging all Islanders to engage in a robust discussion on how to strengthen the province's democratic institutions. The paper presents three sets of topics: the method of how residents vote, the number and distribution of seats in the Legislative Assembly, and opportunities to enhance election laws and representation in the Legislative Assembly. A special committee of the Legislative Assembly will engage with citizens on electoral reform and present an interim report by November 30, 2015. That report will clarify the question to be posed in a plebiscite and present it to the Legislative Assembly. The committee will continue to engage Islanders and present a final report during the spring 2016 sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?number=news&newsnumber=10276&dept=&lang=E>



Québec

DEMOGRAPHICS

According to preliminary data, 22,410 marriages were celebrated in Québec in 2014; 21,832 marriages of opposite-sex couples and 578 marriages of same-sex couples. These numbers follow a continuing downward trend. If the 2014 marriage figures remained constant, 27 percent of men and 30 percent of women would marry at least once before the age of 50. In 2014, the average age at first marriage is 33.0 years for men and 31.6 years for women, a respective increase of approximately seven and eight years compared to the early 1970s.

[Link](#)

HOUSING

The Governments of Canada and Québec announced the extension of the Agreement for Investment in Affordable Housing for the period April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2019. The agreement is based on a joint investment of \$577 million over five years.

[Link](#)

Ontario

HEALTH

The province is investing \$7 million in 50 small hospitals, including many rural hospitals, to improve patient care close to home.

[Link](#)

Manitoba

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act was given royal assent, making the University of Manitoba the official home to the National Centre on Indian Residential Schools. Along with housing documents from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the new centre will build awareness of the legacy of residential schools. The Act also ensures people will have the right to access their own information and family members of survivors will be able to trace a relative's experience to better understand their history.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.htm-?item=35512&posted=2015-07-13>

CHILDREN

The province is helping citizens gain the skills necessary to pursue self-employment in the child care sector by establishing their own licensed family child care homes. The program aligns with Manitoba's Strategy for Sustainable Employment and a Stronger Labour Market, and supports the province's five-year plan to create 5,000 new high-quality child care spaces for families across the province. The Family Child Care Project is delivered by Family Dynamics, a community agency specializing in child care supports for Winnipeg families. Four participants have

already obtained licensed accreditation and 29 participants are currently pursuing licenses.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.htm-?item=35641&posted=2015-07-27>

HEALTH

Patients will have access to an additional 54 new drugs through the Manitoba Pharmacare Program, including Holkira Pak medication for the treatment of hepatitis C.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.htm-?item=35642&posted=2015-07-27>

Saskatchewan

EDUCATION

The Registered Teachers Act has been proclaimed into force, which establishes the Saskatchewan Professional Teachers Regulatory Board (SPTRB). Under the Act, the SPTRB will be responsible for teacher certification and discipline in Saskatchewan. This new body will provide for a single, independent organization to administer the regulatory process.

<http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2015/july/02/sptrb>

HEALTH

Beginning August 1, the province will provide coverage for Holkira Pak, a new lifesaving drug for patients with hepatitis C who meet certain medical criteria.

<http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2015/july/28/saskatchewan-supporting-patients-with-hepatitis-with-new-drug>

Alberta

No updates this month.

British Columbia

CAREGIVING

Up to 24 people will be trained as dietary aides and help ensure that people in long-term care facilities receive the nutrition they need to stay healthy. \$132,000 in government funding for the Aboriginal Agricultural Education Society of British Columbia will provide participants with 10 weeks of occupational skills classroom training in nutrition, First Aid level one, Serving it Right (safe serving training for alcohol), food safety and computer skills. This is followed by six weeks of on-the-job work experience with local employers and a minimum of two weeks of follow-up job search supports.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/stories/dietary-aides-get-training-for-care-facilities>

DISABILITY

People receiving disability assistance and people receiving income assistance who are designated as Persons with Persistent and Multiple



Barriers can now file their taxes with the help of Tax AID DABC, a new program offered by Disability Alliance BC, a nonprofit organization.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/stories/tax-assistance-and-information-for-people-with-disabilities>

EDUCATION

As part of the BC Skills for Jobs Blueprint, the government is investing \$12 million in 2015-16 for new trades equipment at 14 public post-secondary institutions so students planning to enter in-demand occupations learn their trade using industry-standard technology.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/stories/putting-new-trades-equipment-in-the-skilled-hands-of-bc-students>

EMPLOYMENT

The province and the Industry Training Authority announced funding of more than \$75 million to BC's trades training providers through to March 31, 2016, to meet industry needs and ensure quality training in high priority trades. This action was taken in response to the objectives outlined in *BC's Skills for Jobs Blueprint* and the *MacDonald Report on Higher Education*.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/stories/bcs-trades-training-providers-receive-over-75m>

HEALTH

The province is providing public drug plan coverage of another new generation hepatitis C drug, Hologic's Pak. This is the third new generation hepatitis C drug BC has covered under PharmaCare in the past year.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015HLTH0053-001186>

HOUSING

Richmond, BC seniors in living on low incomes are benefiting from 296 new affordable rental apartments at Kiwanis Towers. Contributions included \$16.3 million from the province for long-term financing; \$20.8 million from the municipality for construction and \$3.3 million to offset development cost charges and fees; and \$12.9 million from Kiwanis for land as well as \$21 million in equity. This project addresses major priorities of the City of Richmond's Affordable Housing Strategy. Since Council adopted the strategy in 2007, the city has secured commitments to create more than 1,700 affordable housing units in Richmond, with another 11,425 square metres (123,000 square feet) of new residential rental space for which unit numbers are yet to be determined. The entire amount funded by the City of Richmond is through the city's Affordable Housing Reserve, funded by current and future developer contributions.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/stories/60-million-seniors-development-opens-in-richmond>

INCOME SECURITY

Effective September 1, 2015, amendments to the employment and assistance regulations and the employment and assistance for persons with disabilities regulations will allow significant changes to be made to

the income and disability assistance program in BC. The new Single Parent Employment Initiative will remove barriers to employment for single parents on income and disability assistance, offering them the training and supports they need to secure long-term and sustainable employment. Up to 16,000 single parents on income and disability assistance will be able to benefit from this program which offers:

- up to 12 months of funded training for in-demand jobs, or a paid work experience placement
- transit costs to and from school
- child care costs during their training or work placement and in the first year of employment
- health supplement coverage for a full year after they leave income assistance for employment
- single parents will also be able to remain on income assistance when they attend a training program
- exemptions for bursaries, scholarships and grants have also been extended to single parents in approved training programs.

Regulation changes required to make child support payments fully exempt for parents on income and disability assistance were also made. This measure is expected to provide \$32 million to more than 5,400 vulnerable children throughout the province over the next three years.

The government also amended regulations to make the Canada Pension Plan Orphan's Benefit exempt. Like child support, the ministry intends for these payments to fully benefit children. The Orphan's Benefit is a monthly payment that goes to a surviving child of a deceased parent. The average monthly benefit is about \$235.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015SDSI0038-001163>

Yukon Territory

No updates this month.

Northwest Territories

INCOME SECURITY

The territorial government will exempt the federal retroactive Universal Child Care Benefit payments as a source of income for calculating income assistance for public housing tenants and residents on income assistance.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/nwt-housing-corporation-exempts-retroactive-universal-child-care-benefit-payments/>

Nunavut

No updates this month.