



Canada Social Report  
Provincial/Territorial  
Policy Monitor

August 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

### HEALTH

Atlantic health ministers are working together to improve health care, outcomes and access, and to save money through group procurement. Talks among the group focused on ways to improve collaboration on generic drugs, opioid monitoring, strategic procurement and rural health care.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2015/health/0819n07.aspx>

## New Brunswick, Nova Scotia

*No updates this month.*

## Prince Edward Island

### HEALTH

As of August 1, 2015, a new Optometry Service Program allows for costs associated with the treatment of primary eye care by optometrists to be covered by the province, including diagnosis and treatment of dry-eye and red-eye conditions as well as screening for eye diseases in patients with diabetes.

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?number=news&newsnumber=10315&dept=&lang=E>

### INCOME SECURITY, POVERTY REDUCTION

The food allowance rates for social assistance clients will increase by up to 17 percent depending on the age and number of people in a family on September 1. This measure advances the goals outlined in the province's three-year *Social Action Plan to Reduce Poverty*, released in May 2012. Other components of the provincial strategy to address issues faced by low-income Islanders include:

- recent changes to the *Income Tax Act* that will reduce or eliminate provincial income taxes for 12,000 low-income residents
- excluding the federal Universal Child Care Benefit when calculating eligibility for social assistance programs, thereby allowing parents and caregivers to keep the full monthly benefit of \$120 for preschool-age children and \$60 for school-age children
- a recent policy revision to exempt student loan monies in the calculation of the eligibility for the provincial Child Care Subsidy.

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?number=news&newsnumber=10321&dept=&lang=E>

## Québec

### DISABILITY

The province announced that it would allocate \$945,500 to 30 organizations that offer monitoring services to students with disabilities who are between the ages of 12 and 21. The program was established in 2012-13 by the Ministry of the Family to offer families support with older



children who are unable to stay at home alone after school hours.

[Link](#)

### GOVERNANCE

The province's Permanent Program Review Committee concluded that Québec's public finances are fragile and quality of public services is sometimes deficient. The rapid growth of spending and smaller increases in income have led to accumulated deficits over the last 45 years. The Committee noted that while considerable efforts have been made to balance the Budget, the recovery remains precarious. In terms of the quality of public services, the Committee points to aging infrastructure and the continuing difficulties of access to health care.

[Link](#)

### HEALTH

The government announced the opening of the Centre for Translational Research on mood disorders and suicide and the expansion of the Douglas Brain Bank at the Douglas Mental Health University. The project required an investment of \$9,987,000; \$7.38 million by the Québec government, \$2 million by Bell Canada and the remainder by the Douglas Mental Health University Institute Foundation.

[Link](#)

## Ontario

### ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

The Chiefs of Ontario and the Government of Ontario signed a historic Political Accord that will guide the relationship between First Nations and the province. The Accord:

- affirms that First Nations have an inherent right to self-government and that the relationship between Ontario and the First Nations must be based upon respect for this right
- commits the parties to work together on issues of mutual interest, including resource benefits sharing, the treaty relationship and jurisdictional matters
- sets a path for further reconciliation between First Nations and the people of Ontario.

The Accord also commits the Premier and First Nations' leadership to meet twice yearly in order to further advance their efforts on shared priorities.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2015/08/first-nations-ontario-sign-political-accord.html>

### COMMUNITY

The province's Community Hub Framework Advisory Group has released *Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan*, a report to guide the creation of community hubs. The Advisory Group's

action plan lays out eight overarching recommendations:

- create a provincial lead for community hubs
- foster integrated service delivery
- develop a provincial strategy for public properties
- remove barriers and create incentives
- support integrated and long-term local planning
- ensure financial sustainability
- increase local capacity
- evaluate and monitor outcomes.

A community hub can be a school, neighbourhood centre or other public space that offers coordinated services such as education, health care and social services.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2015/08/ontario-community-hubs-action-plan-released.html>

Ontario is developing a new strategy to build safer, stronger communities that will allow police to more appropriately respond to new challenges. These include advancements in technology and widespread use of the internet, the increasing frequency of police interactions with vulnerable individuals, such as those suffering with mental health or addiction issues, and citizens' enhanced expectations about oversight and accountability of law enforcement.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mcscs/en/2015/08/province-developing-a-new-strategy-for-a-safer-ontario.html>

### DISABILITY

As part of Ontario's three-year, \$810 million investment to support the transformation and modernization of developmental services, the province is investing up to \$3.47 million over two years in 12 creative community-based housing initiatives for adults with developmental disabilities. A second call for proposals for additional projects will be issued by the Housing Task Force later this year. The Task Force will consider larger-scale residential options to further increase the range and number of housing options.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mcss/en/2015/08/ontario-investing-in-housing-for-people-with-developmental-disabilities.html>

The province announced up to \$588,773 in two local agencies to pilot housing projects for adults with developmental disabilities. The Canadian Mental Health Association, in partnership with Community Living organizations in Peterborough, Haliburton and Kawartha Lakes, is receiving up to \$188,800 over the next two years for a project that help young people learn daily living skills such as cooking and banking, so they are equipped to live more independently. Community Living Campbellford/Brighton,



in collaboration with the Campbellford Memorial Hospital and other partners, is receiving up to \$398,973 over the next two years to create a centralized hub that will provide supports to aging individuals with developmental disabilities in rural areas to enable independent living.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mcss/en/2015/08/ontario-supporting-people-with-developmental-disabilities.html>

The province is providing \$143,000 over the next two years to pilot an inclusive housing project for adults with developmental disabilities. Lanark County Support Services will partner with Developmental Support Services, Lanark County and Lanark County Social Housing to provide residential supports to four adults with developmental disabilities who have complex medical needs. The project will enable the individuals to live in their own unit in an existing building with the assistance of a supportive tenant. Participants will also receive assistance from a full-time community support facilitator.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mcss/en/2015/08/ontario-supporting-people-with-developmental-disabilities-1.html>

## EMPLOYMENT

Ontario is expanding the Focus on Youth Summer Program, a summer program launched in 2007 that provides at-risk children and youth with work experience and leadership opportunities to five new communities. It will invest \$1 million to bring the program to Brantford, Kingston, Peterborough, Sudbury and Thunder Bay.

<http://news.ontario.ca/edu/en/2015/08/ontario-helping-more-at-risk-youth-learn-beyond-the-classroom.html>

## HEALTH

Ontario will spend \$1.1 million a year for the next three years to enhance specialized counselling services and community outreach support for survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. Of that funding, approximately \$900,000 per year is allotted for enhancing existing specialized counselling services, with an additional \$200,000 to develop a province-wide community outreach program.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2015/08/ontario-supports-survivors-of-sexual-assault-and-domestic-violence.html>

## INCOME SECURITY

The province announced details of the design of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP):

- the ORPP would not apply to those currently in a comparable workplace pension plan
- enrolment would be phased in to ensure the ORPP is focused on employees without access to a plan and to give employers time to adapt
- like the CPP, the ORPP would be funded by equal co-contributions from both employers and employees
- contributions would also be phased in, reaching 1.9 percent each from

employers and employees by 2021

- benefits would be paid starting in 2022. They would be earned as contributions are made, ensuring that the system is fair and younger generations are not burdened with additional costs related to benefits for older workers
- every employee in Ontario would be part of the ORPP or a comparable workplace pension plan by 2020.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2015/08/premier-releases-details-of-ontario-retirement-pension-plan.html>

## RECREATION AND DISABILITY

The province is investing \$7.2 million to promote active lifestyles through the Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund. As part of this investment, the province is providing more than \$224,000 to Special Olympics Ontario for the Partners in Play program. This project will introduce young special needs athletes to sports such as track and field, basketball, soccer and swimming. Partners in Play will be delivered through 24 partners, engaging 1,300 participants in 39 communities across the province over two years. The Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund will support 123 provincial, regional and local projects in 2015-16.

<http://www.grants.gov.on.ca/GrantsPortal/en/OntarioGrants/GrantOpportunities/PRDR006918>

## Manitoba

### DISABILITY

The provincial government will take the lead as municipalities and public-sector organizations develop plans to remove barriers to programs and services for all Manitobans by the end of 2017. Under the Accessibility for Manitobans Act, beginning in 2016, the provincial government, all larger public-sector organizations and municipalities must develop a multi-year accessibility plan that will identify barriers in their policies, programs and services and propose ways to eliminate them. Smaller municipalities and public-sector bodies will have until 2017 to complete accessibility plans.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=35894&posted=2015-08-28>

### GOVERNANCE

The province is expanding its Non-profit Organization (NPO) Strategy, allowing more organizations to focus on delivering important services to the communities they assist. Two new components will be added to the strategy:

- a commitment to provide multi-year, multi-departmental funding agreements to 10 more organizations that qualified after a public application process



- a plan to expand the strategy to include organizations that receive funding from just one provincial government department.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=35893&posted=2015-08-28>

#### HEALTH

More investments for research into dementia are being made through Research Manitoba and in partnership with the Alzheimer Society of Manitoba.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=35812&posted=2015-08-18>

A new, secure treatment facility for youth with complex needs will open in September as part of the Manitoba government's long-term strategy to better help youth and children in care while moving towards a holistic wrap-around approach to service delivery.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=35815&posted=2015-08-19>

Manitoba becomes the first province to reimburse extra utility costs for patients undergoing home dialysis treatment.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=&item=35817>

## Saskatchewan

#### POVERTY REDUCTION

The Advisory Group on Poverty Reduction presented its final recommendations to the Social Services Minister. The government will now begin the process of considering these recommendations as it works to develop Saskatchewan's Poverty Reduction Strategy. The group's recommendations are organized into six key priority areas: income security, housing and homelessness, early childhood development, education and training, employment and health, and food security.

<http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2015/august/24/poverty-reduction-strategy>

## Alberta

#### BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Alberta's updated first quarter forecast reflects higher-than-anticipated costs for fighting wildfires and drought, as well as the reversal of the previous government's planned health levy and cuts to healthcare and education.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=38464303094E7-0168-FE70-68475CC56CFEEFF5>

## British Columbia

#### EDUCATION

The provincial government is providing \$20 million to help school districts extend the life of their facilities and school-based assets.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015EDUC0048-001325>

The province is offering a new \$1,200 post-secondary Training and Education Savings Grant.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015EDUC0056-001402>

#### RECREATION

Adding to the \$98.1 million in Resort Municipality Initiative funding that has been invested since 2006 to support smaller resort-oriented municipalities, the province is investing \$10.5 million in 14 resort communities for projects that support local tourism infrastructure and amenities.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015JTST0134-001376>

## Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories, Nunavut

*No updates this month.*