



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

September 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

The province launched Phase II of *Understanding Changes Everything*. This Anti-Stigma Awareness Campaign tomorrow will focus on mental illness and addictions in the workplace.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2015/health/0915n03.aspx>

New Brunswick

SENIORS

The provincial government has announced – following a commitment from seniors groups to work together to develop a sustainable aging strategy, find efficiencies and improve the quality of care in New Brunswick – that it will not be moving forward with proposed changes to the nursing home policy that were announced in the 2015-16 budget. This decision includes the consideration of assets and the rise in the daily cost for nursing home care. The government will also be creating a council on aging and has committed to work with seniors to create an aging strategy.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2015.09.0838.html

A task force has been assigned to review mental health services in the province, explore opportunities for alternative interventions and provide insight into the development of a model plan to be submitted for consideration to the government. The task force will complete its work by the end of 2016.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2015.09.0929.html

Nova Scotia

TRANSPORTATION

Connect 2, the province's sustainable transportation grant program, is supporting sustainable transportation projects on the Eastern Shore and in Cape Breton that will help connect community hubs and promote active living. More projects will be announced in the coming year, and all will be completed by March 10, 2016.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20150908004>

Prince Edward Island

CHILDREN

The room and board and clothing rates for approximately 225 children in the care of the province increased by two percent on September 1. The room and board allowance is provided to children who are living with foster parents. Children living in group and foster homes will receive the higher clothing allowance. The children in care room and board and clothing rates rose by five percent in October 2013 with an additional increase of two percent in July 2014. On August 1, monthly compensa-



tion rates for foster parents grew by \$200, bringing the rates for Levels 1, 2 and 3 to \$600, \$1,000 and \$1,400 respectively.

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?number=news&newsnumber=10342&dept=&lang=E>

EDUCATION

The Department of Workforce and Advanced Learning is expanding its Graduate Mentorship Program by adding another 50 work experiences for new post-secondary graduates. Since it was introduced in 2012, the Graduate Mentorship Program has provided mentorship opportunities for 280 graduates in sectors such as information technology, business administration, sales, marketing and the construction trades.

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?number=news&dept=&newsnumber=10350&lang=E>

The provincial government will invest more than \$235 million in K-12 programs this year to prepare close to 20,000 students for success in higher learning and the workforce. Students entering high school this fall will complete new graduation requirements that better prepare them for success in post-secondary education and the world of work. New Core French programs are being introduced in grades 4 and 5.

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?number=news&newsnumber=10356&dept=&lang=E>

FAMILIES

Through a five-year investment, the Government of Prince Edward Island is making its Triple P “Positive Parenting” Program available to all Islanders at low or no cost. It is delivered one-on-one, in groups or online.

Funding of more than \$600,000 over five years will provide Triple P training and resources for individuals who work with children, youth and families, including early childhood educators, social workers and nurses.

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?number=news&dept=&newsnumber=10398&lang=E>

HEALTH

The PEI division of the Canadian Mental Health Association and provincial government health services partners are re-launching the Island Helpline – an emotional support and crisis intervention phone service.

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?number=news&newsnumber=10363&dept=&lang=E>

SENIORS

A new guide, *Thinking About Your Future? Plan Now to Age in Place* – prepared by the Forum of Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors – is now available.

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/FHSAIP2015.pdf>

Québec

COMMUNITIES

Provincial and municipal representatives signed a Partnership Agreement for the period 2016-19. The agreement will result in increases in royalties on natural resources and the maintenance of the province’s transfer rate to municipalities, including a gradual increase for municipal bodies whose property values are low. Accountability and local governance frameworks were identified as two areas for future development under the agreement.

[Link](#)

INCOME SECURITY

The contribution rate to the Québec Parental Insurance Plan will fall by 2 percent on January 1, 2016, the first reduction since the establishment of the Plan in 2006. On January 1, the contribution rate will correspond to the following percentages of insurable earnings:

- 0.77 percent for employers
- 0.55 percent for the employees
- 0.97 percent for the self-employed.

[Link](#)

Ontario

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES, POVERTY REDUCTION

Through the [Local Poverty Reduction Fund](#), Ontario is investing up to \$529,000 in two projects in Brantford and Ohsweken that help students achieve educational and career success. [Six Nations Polytechnic](#) will use culturally relevant community-based learning to help Aboriginal students access trades training and skills development opportunities. It will identify the best ways to help Aboriginal learners build confidence, skills and feel connected to their communities.

<http://news.ontario.ca/tbs/en/2015/09/local-poverty-reduction-fund-to-invest-in-educational-programs-in-brantford-and-ohsweken.html>

Through the [Local Poverty Reduction Fund](#), Ontario is investing up to \$270,000, over three years, in the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC). The OFIFC is a network of agencies that provide culturally-appropriate services for Aboriginal peoples in more than 28 urban communities, including programs related to children and youth, health and wellness, and education and training.

[Link](#)

CAREGIVING

The province is funding up to 75 new attending nurse practitioners in long-term care homes over three years, including 30 who will take up their duties this fall.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2015/09/75-new-nurse-practitioners-to-be-hired-in-long-term-care-homes.html>



CHILDREN

To help more young people in the care of Children's Aid Societies find a permanent nurturing home, Ontario is funding up to 15 targeted adoption recruiters in partnership with Wendy's Wonderful Kids, a program run through the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. Wendy's Wonderful Kids will fund four additional Ontario adoption recruiters. The province is also requiring Children's Aid Societies to expand their use of the AdoptOntario website so that more children and youth can be matched with waiting families.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mcys/en/2015/09/ontario-helping-more-children-in-care-connect-with-waiting-families.html>

COMMUNITIES

Ontario is seeking input from across the province to develop its first culture strategy, which will set out a vision for arts and culture to build healthier, more vibrant and prosperous communities. Consultations will include First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and will run until December 7, 2015.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mtc/en/2015/09/help-develop-ontarios-first-culture-strategy.html>

EDUCATION

The province is modernizing the Ontario Student Assistance Program for the 2015-16 school year. Changes include:

- giving students more control over how much financial aid they withdraw
- ending the requirement for students to report their vehicle as an asset when being assessed for student financial aid
- helping students predict how much they are expected to contribute to the cost of their education each year by setting a fixed \$3,000 student contribution
- exempting the first \$3,000 in student assets from their financial aid assessment
- indexing student aid to inflation to keep up with the growth in student costs.

<http://news.ontario.ca/tcu/en/2015/09/ontario-modernizing-financial-aid-for-students.html>

EMPLOYMENT

Experience Ontario is a new two-year, \$20-million pilot program that will give approximately 600 students across the province work experience, career coaching and mentorship in its first year. The program will encourage graduating high school students to choose an appropriate post-secondary educational path, and will help them succeed once they enroll.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2015/09/ontario-pilot-program-provides-work-experience-and-career-coaching.html>

FOOD SECURITY

Ontario is partnering with FoodShare Toronto to help low-income Ontarians save money and eat healthier by delivering vegetables and fruit. Through the Local Poverty Reduction Fund, Ontario is investing up to \$112,000 over 18 months in FoodShare Toronto's programs.

<http://news.ontario.ca/tbs/en/2015/09/ontario-partners-with-innovative-foodshare-toronto-to-support-healthy-nutrition.html>

POVERTY REDUCTION

The province's Poverty Reduction Fund will be used to operation eight projects, run by local organizations in Southwestern Ontario, to improve the lives of people affected by poverty.

<http://news.ontario.ca/tbs/en/2015/09/province-to-help-london-and-southwestern-children-and-families-affected-by-poverty.html>

Ontario is increasing access to justice for low-income people while helping more law students gain practical experience by significantly boosting funding for the province's seven student-run legal clinics. As part of the multi-year commitment to increase access to legal aid, Legal Aid Ontario will increase the amount of funding it provides to Student Legal Aid Services Societies by \$100,000 per year for each of Ontario's six existing student legal aid clinics, which are operated by law schools at York University, University of Windsor, University of Western Ontario, University of Toronto, Queen's University and University of Ottawa.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mag/en/2015/09/ontario-enhancing-funding-for-student-legal-aid-clinics.html>

YOUTH

Through the Local Poverty Reduction Fund, Ontario is investing \$752,800 over three years to help CultureLink Settlement Services implement and evaluate a program designed to reduce the high school dropout rate of Somali youth in Toronto. The program will match youth with mentors, who will support students with individualized learning plans, monitor academic performance and classroom attendance, and work with teachers to support student success. A Somali-speaking project coordinator will also link with parents to reinforce classroom learning.

<http://news.ontario.ca/tbs/en/2015/09/province-partners-with-culture-link-on-community-based-poverty-solutions-for-toronto-youth.html>

Manitoba

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

A new partnership between the Manitoba government and educational leaders throughout the province will respond to recommendations in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report to promote and preserve Aboriginal languages.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=36130&posted=2015-09-21>



CHILDREN

The Manitoba government will invest \$375,000 to promote healthy eating for young children by encouraging positive eating environments in child care settings.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=36171&posted=2015-09-24>

COMMUNITIES

The new Rural Economic Development Steering Committee held its first meeting on September 22, with the focus on a co-operative plan to bolster economic development in rural Manitoba.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=36170&posted=2015-09-24>

EDUCATION

Students wanting to pursue teacher education in the early and middle years will now be required to take six credit hours of university-level mathematics in order to complete their program. To meet this new requirement, the University of Winnipeg has boosted its offerings with a further three-credit-hour mathematics content course for early/middle-years education students.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=35970&posted=2015-09-08>

A new online homework website and after-school tutoring pilot project will provide more opportunities for them to succeed in the classroom. The My Learning at Home website for students in Grades 5 to 8 features links to videos and engaging lessons that help explain challenging math and science concepts, which can also assist parents in helping their children with homework. As part of this initiative, a pilot project is being launched in the Pembina Trails School Division and *Division scolaire franco-manitobaine* to offer online after-school tutoring services in math for Grade 7 and 9 students. Also new for the 2015-16 school year, the province is piloting new English and French language arts curricula for kindergarten to Grade 8 students.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=35990&posted=2015-09-09>

The province announced a new Open Textbook initiative that will give post-secondary student access to a free online textbook library. Open textbooks are textbooks licensed under open copyright licenses and made available online for students, teachers and members of the public. Through the new initiative, faculty members will be able to provide content in the highest-enrolled academic subject areas. The program will be delivered by Campus Manitoba, using content currently available through BCcampus, with the province delivering funding for faculty and instructors to conduct peer reviews of the material. The current library contains more than 80 textbooks and will expand by another 50 volumes

this fall. Faculty members will be able to adapt any portion of the content and customize it for their own courses.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=36017&posted=2015-09-11>

Post-secondary students in Manitoba will soon be able to access a new, searchable online database that will ensure course credits and work experience are recognized consistently. The new credit transfer portal is expected to be up and running by spring 2016, and will list transfer arrangements between Manitoba's seven partnering institutions. The province is also providing funding for a new student advocate service to offer confidential advice to students who have questions and concerns about the assessment of transfer credit and the recognition of prior learning at Manitoba's universities and colleges.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=36024&posted=2015-09-14>

Saskatchewan

DISABILITY

In support of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) awareness and prevention in the province, the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority is providing \$160,000 to agencies that promote awareness and prevention of FASD.

<http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2015/sep-tember/09/fasd-day>

Alberta

COMMUNITIES

Funding for Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) programs that help strengthen communities will increase by \$10 million. Funding for FCSS now totals \$86 million. Approximately \$7.5 million will be distributed to all participating municipalities and Métis settlements. In addition, the remaining \$2.5 million will be distributed to the communities that have experienced substantial population growth. FCSS has been in Alberta for almost 50 years and offers a range of community-based programs and services that are preventive and enhance social well-being, such as support groups, youth mentors, home support and outreach services for seniors.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=38540A7847EA7-EF05-2430-C6117BE9C5DC0642>

EDUCATION

The province has enacted a two-year post-secondary tuition and fees freeze.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=38498C947FED3-E72C-6CA8-6297F33D57AD6D0D>



FAMILIES

Provincial Family and Community Safety Program grants will fund 76 local projects to prevent family and sexual violence and child sexual abuse. They will also deliver supports for parents, information on early childhood development and the promotion of healthy relationships. The projects target diverse populations, including Aboriginals, newcomers to Canada, gender and sexual minorities, and rural and remote communities. Grants range from \$11,840 to \$237,500 for a total of nearly \$10 million. Projects will be funded for one year with the intent to provide funding for up to two additional years.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?x-ID=385112FED5C30-0F47-5A94-10D1AEC8D62F7194>

HEALTH

The province is offering an online questionnaire to conduct a Mental Health Review. It will collect input from Albertans on how to improve the lives of those living with addiction and mental health challenges.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=38469668F72A0-E307-2A0B-A203008A635876AE>

SENIORS

A total of \$1 million in grants are available this year to help communities prevent elder abuse. Municipalities, seniors groups and community organizations are invited to apply for up to \$150,000 over three years.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=385619F205256-F62C-411A-FF5742ED597D05E3>

WOMEN

More than 70 women in leadership roles joined Status of Women Minister to mark the beginning of a province-wide dialogue around the formation of the new Status of Women Ministry.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=38502D5743AF2-DC3C-9EF9-023E44E77B5BBD7B>

The province will enhance supports for women and children affected by family violence with \$15 million in new funding. This investment will help make a broader range of supports available, including counselling or other community supports, such as help locating housing or accessing financial assistance.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=38564AAD48A1E-08F7-2F92-6BC7049E1314C909>

British Columbia

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

A new trades training program will be offered starting October 2015 to offer Aboriginal people the skills training and work experience necessary to be employed by a wide variety of general contractors and to fill the growing demand for labour in the Liquefied Natural Gas sector. <https://news.gov.bc.ca/stories/new-trades-training-program-for-aboriginal-people-in-bc-to-begin-in-fall-2015>

An investment of \$3.7 million in education and training programs and activities at 11 public post-secondary institutions in British Columbia will support Aboriginal students to access the social and economic opportunities throughout the province. Aboriginal Service Plans are developed by public post-secondary institutions in partnership with Aboriginal communities, institutes and organizations.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015AVED0056-001452>

As part of its commitment under the Provincial Domestic Violence Plan, the province is investing \$500,000 to increase access to transition house and safe-home services for Aboriginal women and children who are affected by domestic violence.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015CFD0030-001336>

Grand Chief Edward John has been appointed as senior advisor on Aboriginal child welfare to the Minister of Children and Family Development. Working with Aboriginal leaders, Grand Chief John will help more Aboriginal children and youth secure a safe, caring, permanent family outside of government care.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015CFD0032-001461>

The province announced \$2 million to encourage more Aboriginal students to pursue masters and doctoral level degrees at public universities in British Columbia.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015PREM0059-001473>

BC has reaffirmed its commitment to advancing reconciliation with First Nations through a proposed joint work plan with the First Nations Leadership Council. The Proposed Commitment Document sets out a draft agenda that, through working in partnership with First Nations, will seek to close economic and social gaps, provide for collaboration on land and resource decisions, and support First Nations being full partners in the economy of British Columbia.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015ARR0038-001516>

CAREGIVING

The province announced the release of the BC Seniors Advocate report, *Caregivers in Distress. More Respite Needed*. The report's recommendations are in line with government plans to move away from an over-emphasis on hospitals and focus on better, more integrated community- and primary care services.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015HLTH0073-001504>

COMMUNITIES

BC is instituting a \$75-million Rural Dividend to assist communities transition their economies. Rural communities struggling to reinvigorate and diversify their local economies will be supported in building and implementing their own solutions, based on their community's values and needs. The Rural Dividend will support innovative and ambitious ideas and solutions with potential for the greatest impact on rural communities.



The \$25-million per-year pilot program will run from 2016-19, and be available only to communities outside urban areas with a population of 25,000 or less. Communities will need to clearly articulate what the funds will be used for and demonstrate the need to be filled. The eligibility criteria and other program details will be finalized by March 2016. The application process will be fully operational starting 2016-17.
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015PREM0065-001594>

DISABILITY

The province has set a goal to have the highest labour market participation rate for people with disabilities of any province in Canada by 2024. This is one of the goals of Accessibility 2024, the government's 10-year action plan to make BC the most progressive place for people with disabilities in Canada. The plan was originally announced in June 2014.
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015SDSI0042-001401#read-more>

EDUCATION

Adult literacy programs in 75 communities throughout the province will receive \$2.4 million in 2015-16 to supply more citizens with the literacy skills they need to take part in the growing economy. Since 2001, the province has invested more than \$25 million in community adult literacy programs, helping approximately 100,000 adults improve their reading, writing and math skills.
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015AVED0052-001432>

Teachers have a new resource to help bring Aboriginal culture, history and perspectives into their classrooms and into the lives of students – the *Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the Classroom: Moving Forward* resource booklet.
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015EDUC0059-001458>

The province announced a new curriculum supplement for Grade 5 and students – *Bamboo Shoots: Chinese Canadian Legacies in BC*. The supplement focuses on historical wrongs and the contributions of Chinese Canadians to BC's cultural and economic foundation. It is intended to guide classroom discussions about the past and in doing so, prevent future discrimination.
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015MIT0040-001487>

EMPLOYMENT

Beginning September 1, the Single Parent Employment Initiative will remove barriers to employment for more than 16,000 single parents on income and disability assistance by providing them with supports to secure long-term and sustainable employment. Single parents may also be eligible for:

- up to 12 months of funded training for an in-demand job, or a paid work experience placement. Single parents will also be able to remain on income assistance if they attend a training program.
- child care costs during training or work placement and for the first year

of employment

- public transit costs to and from school
- exemptions for bursaries, scholarships and grants that are required for the program of study have also been extended to single parents in approved training programs
- a full suite of WorkBC Employment Services Centre services such as workshops on résumé writing and interview preparation.

In addition, through recent changes to the province's income assistance program, all families on income assistance and disability are eligible for:

- increased earnings exemption; from \$200 to \$400 per month, or \$300 to \$500 per month for individuals with a child with disabilities
- supplemental health coverage for a full year after they leave income assistance for employment (dental, optical and premium-free Ministry of Health MSP and PharmaCare).

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015SDSI0043-001405>

FAMILIES

The province has introduced changes to the *Family Maintenance Enforcement Act*. If passed, the changes will provide more time for government to collect default fees from parents who have missed two or more spousal or child support payments per year.
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015JAG0241-001618>

GOVERNANCE

BC Physical Address Geocoder web service and the iMapBC 4 Mobile application are allowing BC residents to access provincial information. iMapBC 4 Mobile offers the ability to mix and match more than 1,800 layers of public geographic information on any desktop browser or mobile device that supports internet connectivity. Users can use the tool to visualize data on schools, health services, the environment and more.
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015AVED0061-001518>

INCOME SECURITY

Modernized standards governing workplace pension plans that take effect September 30, 2015, will improve pension coverage options and security for more than 900,000 British Columbians covered by employer-sponsored pension plans. The new Pension Benefits Standards Act accommodates alternative plan designs, such as target benefit plans and plans that are jointly-sponsored by employers and employees. The new act improves plan governance by strengthening disclosure requirements and requiring that all plans are covered by a governance policy.
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015FIN0070-001615>

POVERTY REDUCTION

Two new online resources are now available to families living on low incomes and to communities working with them to ensure their needs



are met. The first is an online portal that brings together a number of federal, provincial and community-based supports and services. The one-stop site will help connect people to many of the services they may need. Also available online is the *Community Poverty Reduction Strategies 2015 Progress Report*, which reviews how seven BC communities are alleviating the effects of poverty.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015CFD0034-001580>

Yukon Territory

COMMUNITIES

The Government of Yukon awarded \$102,000 to seven organizations for projects that aim to support healthy communities through the Community Development Fund.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/15-285.html#.Vh1ErvVhHw>

Northwest Territories

No updates this month.

Nunavut

EMPLOYMENT

The Department of Family Services is launching the “Getting Ready for Employment and Training,” a 12-week Nunavut Arctic College program designed to help prepare income assistance clients for employment opportunities. The program combines course content on personal portfolio development, essential skills and work readiness. A two-week, on-the-job work experience is also included. Program participants who maintain their attendance will receive a training allowance exemption.

<http://www.gov.nu.ca/family-services/news/department-family-services-launches-great-program>