



Canada Social Report  
Provincial/Territorial  
Policy Monitor

January 2016



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

### GOVERNANCE

The Auditor General's reported noted that the province recorded a deficit of \$986 million in 2014-15, the highest in its history. Additional deficits totalling \$12.2 billion are forecast from 2015-16 to 2020-21, an amount greater than the province's entire net debt at March 31, 2015. Deficits of this magnitude are not sustainable. Measures to address the size of the deficit will have to consider opportunities to increase revenue from existing or new sources and reductions in spending.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2016/auditgen/0129n02.aspx>

## New Brunswick

*No updates this month.*

## Nova Scotia

### MINIMUM WAGE

The provincial government accepted the Minimum Wage Review Committee's recommendation to increase the minimum wage by 10 cents, to \$10.70 an hour on April 1. The minimum wage for someone who has less than three months' experience will also increase by 10 cents an hour, to \$10.20. Minimum wage rates are adjusted annually, and are based on the previous year's national Consumer Price Index.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20160127003>

## Prince Edward Island

### EMPLOYMENT

Prince Edward Island is introducing a one-year pilot program to assist Island apprentices who have begun the in-school training process but have not been able to obtain or maintain an employer connection. The program, effective immediately, will allow registered apprentices in any province to enroll in one block of in-school training offered through the PEI Apprenticeship Section, without needing an employer connection.

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?num=ber=news&dept=&newsnumber=10566&lang=E>

## Québec

### SOCIAL ECONOMY

As part of its 2015-2020 Social Economy Action Plan, the province has announced that it will spend \$40 million as follows:

- \$5 million to support the province's 21 social economy regional centers
- \$3 million to fund the nonprofit organization that promotes the social economy
- \$2.5 million to build the social economy trust fund
- \$30 million in the form of loans for collective enterprises.

[Link](#)



## MINIMUM WAGE

The province's minimum wage will be increased by \$0.20 an hour to \$10.75 on May 1, 2015. The minimum wage rate payable to employees who receive tips will be increased from \$9.05 to \$9.20 an hour.

[Link](#)

## Ontario

### CHILDREN

Ontario announced a \$1 per hour wage increase\* for eligible child care workers who qualify in the licensed child care sector, bringing the total wage increase to \$2 per hour, plus benefits. The province is also allocating an additional \$10 per day increase to home child care providers who qualify, bringing the total increase up to \$20 per day. Both increases are effective January 2016.

<https://news.ontario.ca/edu/en/2016/01/ontario-increasing-wages-for-early-childhood-educators.html>

\*Addendum: Toronto Star, January 20, 2016: "The increase will apply only to workers making less than \$26.27 an hour. In order to get the money the child care centre operators must apply to their respective municipalities and, in turn, pass it along to their employees."

<http://www.thestar.com/news/queenspark/2015/01/20/promised-wage-hike-for-ontario-child-care-workers-still-far-off.html>

### COMMUNITIES

The province has invested \$36 million toward upgrades and repairs at more than 350 community agencies; \$28 million was distributed in summer 2015 and \$8 million was delivered in December 2015.

<https://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2016/01/investing-in-ontarios-community-agencies.html>

### MENTAL HEALTH

Ontario is investing \$6 million in local mental health services to help an estimated additional 4,000 children and youth. Approximately 80 new child and youth mental health workers are being hired to provide local mental health services, including early identification and intervention, crisis services, counselling and supports for families.

<https://news.ontario.ca/mcys/en/2016/01/ontario-hiring-more-mental-health-workers-for-children-and-youth.html>

## Manitoba

### CHILDREN

The province released details of the next stage of a long-term child care strategy. Based on a report by the Early Learning and Childhood Commission, the plan will create a universally accessible child care system for Manitoba families. The new system will feature lower fees, an additional 12,000 child care spaces, and increased training and better wages for early childhood educators.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=37250&posted=2016-01-12>

### COMMUNITIES

Manitoba is helping an additional 58 non-profit organizations (NPOs) better achieve stable funding and avoid red tape, allowing them to concentrate their efforts on service delivery. Continuing a process that began in 2011, NPOs that receive funding from one or more provincial department may apply for multi-year funding. The majority of NPOs that have applied for the second phase expansion of the program had five or fewer employees.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=37315&posted=2016-01-15>

### EDUCATION

The Manitoba government is providing more than \$2 million in targeted funding to support community schools and inner-city students. The commitment includes:

- \$670,000 to increase all community schools' funding to a standard amount (\$100,000)
- \$150,000 to address attendance issues in the inner city
- \$240,000 to support family outreach coordinators at community schools
- \$900,000 in targeted funding for inner-city students who face barriers to education in the Winnipeg School Division.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=37172&posted=2016-01-06>

The Manitoba government is increasing funding for students with special needs students to \$75.5 million and making it easier for these students to get the supports they require by eliminating applications. It also announced \$10 million in new capital supports for schools to build life skills classrooms for students with special needs and to improve accessibility in schools. Louis Riel School Division will pilot a new process for allocating special needs resources in some of its schools starting in fall 2016, working in collaboration with the province, the Manitoba Teachers' Society and the Louis Riel Teachers' Association. Other divisions could voluntarily implement the new funding model the following year, with full implementation in place by fall 2018.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=37192&posted=2016-01-07>

Manitoba has added \$27.9 million to post-secondary funding, which now totals an annual investment of \$710.8 million. The province has more than doubled funding to universities and colleges since 1999, increasing supports by \$384.7 million, or 126.5 percent. Additional funds will support Indigenous culture and programming at universities and colleges, as part of the province's response to the Truth & Reconciliation Commission.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=37196&posted=2016-01-07>



## HEALTH

The province is expanding the MBTelehealth program to 16 additional locations in rural communities. The program was established in 2001 through funding from Health Canada and is an ongoing program of Manitoba eHealth. More than 500 clinician specialists from 60 specialty areas provide services through the 158 current operational sites established across the province.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=37254&posted=2016-01-12>

The province is spending \$500,000 to create a task force that will lead a coordinated, province-wide response to growing concerns over the illegal use of fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid narcotic.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=37271&posted=2016-01-13>

The government is allocating \$1 million annually for a new tobacco control initiative aimed at helping Manitobans quit smoking by providing free nicotine replacement therapy products to eligible smokers.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=37275&posted=2016-01-14>

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The Manitoba government is acting on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations on education with the release of more Indigenous student achievement data and targeted funding for Indigenous students in public schools. The province will:

- supply \$500,000 in new funding to provide transition supports for students leaving First Nations schools to attend public schools
- provide \$500,000 to increase funding to the Aboriginal Academic Achievement grant that helps Indigenous students with literacy, numeracy and culturally appropriate learning
- increase funding to \$375,000 to support the Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative and pilot a model school for First Nations students that incorporates traditional languages and targeted literacy supports.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=37170&posted=2016-01-06>

Manitoba is committing to share up to 25 percent of mining taxes on new mines with Indigenous communities. The announcement is part of a number of results out of the Minister's Mining Advisory Council, which was formed in 2013 to bring leadership from Manitoba, First Nations and industry together to strengthen Manitoba's investment climate, and develop a collaborative decision-making process to improve Indigenous participation throughout the mining cycle.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=37320&posted=2016-01-15>

## Saskatchewan

*No updates this month.*

## Alberta

*No updates this month.*

## British Columbia

### CHILDREN

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) has formalized the social work standard of only placing children and youth in care in hotels in exceptional circumstances when no other option is available. The ministry is also implementing a new practice directive that social workers must follow in these situations. The changes are a result of a joint special report by MCFD and the representative for children and youth on the use of hotels.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016CFD0001-000036>

### EMPLOYMENT

The province is investing more than \$3 million in five research projects to find new ways to help unemployed British Columbians find a meaningful job.

- YWCA Metro Vancouver is using a mentorship model to determine how successful providing mentorship can be to well-educated people with university degrees, diplomas and certificates who are having trouble finding work in their fields
- ConnectTra Society will research whether people with physical disabilities will benefit from being paired with volunteer mentors who can help guide them through steps to getting a job, or being ready for a job
- MOSAIC, a non-profit that helps immigrants and refugees, will launch an 18-month project to help well-educated immigrants better connect with work that suits their education and work experience
- BC Centre for Employment Excellence (CfEE) is investigating whether "motivational interviewing" can help people on income assistance get work, keep their job and reduce the number of people returning to assistance
- CfEE is also receiving operational funding for two more years, until July 2017. The CfEE is the first of its kind as a "what works" innovation hub for the employment services sector in Canada. Operating since 2012, the CfEE acts as a coordination point for research on employment in British Columbia. It connects the employment sector with the best and emerging information about employment and training programs, practices, resources and tools.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016SDSI0001-000088>



## HOUSING

Residents who own homes valued up to \$1.2 million may be eligible to receive a full home owner grant in 2016, while a partial grant may be available if the home is valued above this threshold. The home owner grant provides modest property tax relief. Last year, the program returned nearly \$800 million to BC residents. For 2016, more than 91 percent of homes are below the threshold.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016FIN0001-000002>

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

BC announced that more than 30 Indigenous communities – in partnership with 14 public post-secondary education institutions – are delivering education and skills training programs to help 581 Indigenous learners secure jobs in sectors facing a demand for skilled workers. In 2015-16, a total of 29 programs will be delivered to prepare participants for jobs such as language support workers, human service workers, health care translators, wildlife tour operators, fisheries technicians and health care assistants. Forty-six percent of BC's Indigenous population is under age 25. Increasing their participation in the workforce is important to supporting a strong economy.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016AVED0008-000115>

## Yukon Territory

### MENTAL HEALTH

The Yukon government, Bell Let's Talk and Northwestel announced contributions totalling \$500,000 to support the launch of the FRIENDS cognitive behaviour group-based intervention program throughout the territory. The World Health Organization has described the approach as effective in the prevention of anxiety disorders. Developed in Australia, the program is in use in countries around the world.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/16-010.html#.Vpj3UfkrLcs>

## Northwest Territories

*No updates this month.*

## Nunavut

*No updates this month.*