



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

March 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

THRONE SPEECH

With rising debt levels, the government's plan to focus on continued efforts to address its \$2 billion deficit. Social policy-related announcements include:

- the implementation of full-day Kindergarten in September 2016
- upon completion of a review and revision of the inclusion supports program, revised policies will help ensure children with diverse needs are included in the programs offered in regulated child care services
- the development of guidelines supporting equity and inclusion of all students, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender-nonconforming students
- the development of a Health Promotion and Healthy Living Strategy that will focus on two key areas: Youth, Wellness and Chronic Disease Prevention and Management
- the proclamation of the Health Professions Act for midwives, and the enactment of new midwives regulations.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2016/exec/0308n07.aspx>

New Brunswick

GOVERNANCE

Service New Brunswick will invest about \$142 million in delivering more than 300 services in 2016-17. In 2015, Service New Brunswick became a new Crown corporation, absorbing the functions of the New Brunswick Internal Services Agency, the Department of Government Services and FacilicorpNB. Service New Brunswick is expected to produce annual savings of more than \$42 million by 2020.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2016.03.0153.html

INCOME SECURITY

The two largest public sector pension plans in the province are creating an independent organization that will provide pension administration and investment services for their combined 50,000 active and retired plan members. The trustee boards of the Public Service Shared Risk Plan, which covers most employees in the provincial civil service and the New Brunswick Teachers' Pension Plan are creating the Vestcor Corporation. This corporation will provide the investment and management services to its respective plans and to a number of other public sector client plans.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2016.03.0247.html

LABOUR FORCE

The Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour will invest \$609.9 million in 2016-17 to build and strengthen the province's workforce. Among the department's investments are:



- \$14.5 million for the Education and New Economy Fund, which will support a new tuition assistance program for students in greatest financial need
- \$2.4 million to develop and implement a comprehensive literacy strategy
- the launch of the Experiential Learning and Employment Continuum to help social assistance clients acquire classroom and on-the-job training through employment placement.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2016.03.0214.html

Nova Scotia

CHILDREN

The province signed an agreement with United Way Halifax and the Nova Scotia School Boards Association recognizing their ability and expertise to work with communities and their partners across the province to address specific issues affecting children, youth and families in a coordinated and connected way.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20160331004>

Prince Edward Island

No updates this month.

Québec

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

In 2016-17, the government will work to streamline its operations, innovate, transition to a low carbon economy and attract, develop and retain talent. Social policy-related highlights include:

children

- retroactive to 2015, the government reduced the additional contribution for the second child in subsidized child care subsidized by 50 percent. The reduction will affect 30,000 families and reduce contributions by \$14 million.

education

- \$1.2 billion to improve direct services to pupils and students, and to renovate and improve schools
- \$500 million over the next three years will be devoted to educational success and higher education, specifically:
 - offering young people a stimulating learning environment and to support them to enable them to stay in school (\$300 million)
 - instilling the desire to succeed and excel, especially by encouraging physical activity and strengthening links with various civil society partners, including those in the cultural milieu (\$120 million)

- improving links between education and business to better meet labour market needs (\$80 million dollars)

health

- by the end of 2017, 4.5 million taxpayers will be exempted from the health contribution, a tax savings of \$759 million per year

housing

- the government will invest \$128 million for the construction of 1,500 new social, community and affordable housing

indigenous peoples

- the government will spend \$12 million over the next five years to address the needs of Indigenous people, particularly those in urban areas

labour market

- \$310 million over five years to will be used to encourage greater participation in the labour market. Measures include:
 - increasing premiums to work for households without children (\$209.5 million)
 - increasing the tax shield (\$43 million)
 - promoting the participation of experienced workers in the labour market (\$39.6 million)
 - promoting participation in an Employment Target Program (\$10.4 million)

women

- gender equality and the strategy to prevent and address sexual violence will receive \$5 million.

[Link 1](#)

[Link 2](#)

SOCIAL ECONOMY

The government announced a five-year renewal of the partnership agreement for the development of co-operatives. As part of the agreement, the government allocates \$20 million to the Québec Council of cooperation and mutuality. The extension is part of the Government Action Plan 2015-2020 on the social economy, released May 29, 2015. With an overall investment of \$100 million, the action plan is expected to help create or maintain 30,000 job and general \$500 million in total investments by 2020.

[Link](#)

YOUTH

Québec Youth Policy 2030 will guide departments and agencies, and identify areas of intervention of the government over the next 15 years. \$200 million will be invested in five programs:

- grants from the Youth Action Strategy 2016-2021 program will fund organizations that operate youth-related services and projects
- the Niche crossroads youth grant program will support efforts on behalf of troubled youth and local projects focusing on entrepreneurship,



volunteering and volunteerism

- funding for the consolidation of the Québec International Youth Offices will allow an expansion of their programs and membership in Quebec, Canadian territories and abroad
- a portion of the strategy's grant program will be used to implement youth action strategies for Aboriginal people
- funding will advance the development of project indicators and re-search on best practices of youth intervention.

[Link](#)

Ontario

CAREGIVING

As part of Budget 2015, Ontario is proposing to invest an additional \$75 million over three years to provide patients with more options and access to palliative and end-of-life care. This investment would improve community-based hospice and palliative care services including:

- supporting up to 20 new hospices across Ontario and increasing the funding for existing facilities
- increasing supports for caregivers that will help families and loved ones support palliative patients at home and in the community
- promoting advance care planning so that families and health care providers understand patients' wishes for end-of-life care
- establishing the Ontario Palliative Care Network, a new body to advance patient-centred care and develop provincial standards to strengthen services.

<https://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2016/03/province-strengthens-end-of-life-care-with-75-million-investment.html>

DISABILITY

Ontario is investing \$333 million over the next five years to launch the new Ontario Autism Program. It will provide children and youth with critical interventions faster and offer services that are better matched to their needs. The newly-expanded program will reduce wait times, provide more flexible services based on children's needs and serve more children and youth. It will also help children receive intensive therapy services during the key early developmental years.

<https://news.ontario.ca/mcys/en/2016/03/ontario-investing-333-million-to-improve-autism-services.html>

EDUCATION

The province is committing \$22.9 billion in education funding through the 2016-17 Grants for Student Needs – an increase of approximately \$300 million from last year. The increase will include:

- investing more than \$7 million for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit education
- fostering the development of community hubs in schools by expanding the process that school boards must follow when selling or leasing schools
- funding for higher operating costs such as utilities
- taking steps to ensure compliance with full-day kindergarten and primary (Grades 1 to 3) class size requirements.

<https://news.ontario.ca/edu/en/2016/03/ontario-increasing-education-funding-in-2016-17.html>

HEALTH

As announced in Budget 2016, the province is investing \$51.8 billion in health care. Highlights include:

- investing more than \$345 million in all publicly-funded hospitals, including a one percent increase to base funding
- creating more integrated, team-based primary care with an additional \$85 million over three years to recruit and retain qualified primary care staff
- an additional \$130 million in cancer care services over the next three years, allowing for the delivery of more services and preventive programs
- increasing funding by \$250 million to expand capacity to deliver high-quality home and community care
- making the shingles vaccine free for eligible seniors ages 65 to 70
- as part of the 10-year Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, investing an additional \$4 million for 248 new supportive housing units
- investing an additional \$75 million in community-based hospices and palliative care, for a total investment of about \$155 million over three years
- increasing annual funding for Behavioural Supports Ontario by \$10 million, building on base funding of \$44 million and other substantial increases the government has made in long-term care homes since 2003-04
- using \$5 million of increased revenues from new tobacco tax to support investments to enhance priority populations' access to smoking cessation services.

<https://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2016/03/ontario-investing-more-than-50-billion-in-health-care.html>

As part of the 2016 Budget, Ontario plans to invest \$12 billion over 10 years in hospitals to continue building modern hospital infrastructure.



The province is also providing \$50 million in new annual funding to help hospitals keep their facilities in good repair.

<https://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2016/03/ontario-investing-12-billion-to-build-new-and-improved-hospitals.html>

HOUSING

Ontario is introducing a suite of legislative and policy measures, and investing \$178 million over three years, to increase the supply of affordable housing and address chronic homelessness. The province is:

- creating a framework for a portable housing benefit that would give people who receive housing assistance the flexibility to choose where they want to live. Further, the province will invest more than \$17 million over three years to provide a portable housing benefit on a pilot basis to eventually support up to 3,000 survivors of domestic violence
- proposing legislation for inclusionary zoning that would enable municipalities to mandate the inclusion of affordable housing units in new development projects
- developing a Supportive Housing Policy Framework to improve client outcomes, and providing more than \$100 million in funding over the next three years for new supportive housing. This measure will improve access for up to 4,000 families and individuals to services like counselling, dispensing medication and life skills. It will also support the construction of up to 1,500 new supportive housing units
- providing an additional \$45 million over three years to the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative
- developing an Indigenous Housing Strategy in partnership with Indigenous communities.

<https://news.ontario.ca/mah/en/2016/03/ontario-transforming-housing-and-homelessness-system.html>

MINIMUM WAGE

Ontario will raise the general minimum wage from \$11.25 to \$11.40 on October 1, 2016.

<https://news.ontario.ca/mol/en/2016/03/province-increasing-minimum-wage-on-october-1.html>

POVERTY REDUCTION

Ontario has released its *Poverty Reduction Strategy 2015 Annual Report*. Actions taken in 2015 include:

- launching the Local Poverty Reduction Fund, a \$50 million, six-year initiative, designed to support and evaluate local efforts to prevent and reduce poverty. 41 projects in over 20 communities were funded through the first round of grants
- increasing the maximum annual benefit for the Ontario Child Benefit to

\$1,336 per child under 18, more than doubling the benefit since it was introduced in 2008. In 2015, Ontario also indexed future increases to inflation.

<https://news.ontario.ca/tbs/en/2016/03/improving-outcomes-for-ontarians-living-in-poverty.html>

SENIORS

The province is investing \$761,500 in the Alzheimer Society of Ontario's Finding Your Way program to improve training and reach more people who come into contact with persons affected by dementia. Finding Your Way is a multicultural safety campaign that helps people with dementia stay safe and active, while helping to prevent the risk of wandering and going missing. The program's training services will be enhanced this year to include first-responders as well as supportive housing and retirement homes staff.

<https://news.ontario.ca/oss/en/2016/03/ontario-improving-alzheimers-support-services.html>

Manitoba

No updates this month.

Saskatchewan

No updates this month.

Alberta

HEALTH

The Alberta Multiple Sclerosis Collaboration – a partnership among the provincial government, Campus Alberta Neuroscience and Sanofi Genzyme Canada – will advance research and innovation to improve care and outcomes for MS patients. The province and biotech company Sanofi Genzyme Canada will both contribute \$500,000 to the initiative. Alberta has one of the highest rates of MS in the world, with about 340 out of every 100,000 Albertans diagnosed with MS.

<http://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=40367D59B899D-BD4B-3950-BA7BE1489265E5C8>

INCOME SECURITY

All families earning less than \$41,220 per year in net income, including those receiving Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped and Income Support, are eligible to receive the new Alberta Child Benefit. The maximum annual benefit is \$1,100 for families with one child, and up to \$2,750 for families with four or more children.

<http://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=4140633D638DF-937E-32BE-422B20FD66AC9675>

Registered Disability Savings Plans or Registered Education Savings Plans will no longer count toward the \$7,000 asset limit for affordable housing programs. Some applicants have been denied access to housing support



because their savings plans raised their assets beyond the \$7,000 limit, even though they met the income requirements. Asset testing for housing programs is now consistent with other support programs such as the Alberta Seniors Benefit.

<http://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=414579C28C4D2-E1F3-1A23-2C11D59AF952D52D>

LABOUR MARKET

Alberta will offer the Career and Technology Foundations (CTF) program to students in Grades 5 to 9 across the province. With CTF, students develop critical thinking, collaboration and communication skills through hands-on learning within occupational, practical and community settings.

<http://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=414496E91E6D7-C8A1-2F7E-C49AFBE34F8C27DA>

THRONE SPEECH

Social policy-related highlights include:

- a new child benefit plan will help 380,000 children living in low-income households
- proposed legislation to end predatory lending
- expanded access to workforce and skills training and retraining for the unemployed.

<http://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=403556E1D8277-A6A6-1AEF-C0F5284FC98F7BB4>

British Columbia

COMMUNITIES

Community organizations working to safeguard vulnerable young people from gang involvement and protect victims of domestic, sexual and other forms of violence will benefit from nearly \$7.2 million in government grants supporting public safety priorities. More than 250 projects and programs throughout the province will receive a one-time grant. Nearly \$2 million is dedicated to gang and youth crime prevention, and more than \$3.5 million will go to community services that address violence against women and girls. The remainder will support training and education for frontline victims service workers, police training and special equipment, and restorative justice.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016PSSG0075-000446>

HEALTH

British Columbia residents who are making an effort to lead healthier lifestyles can now be rewarded with loyalty points such as Aeroplan, PetrolPoints, Scene and MoreRewards using a new mobile app called Carrot Rewards. The program is delivered through a partnership between the Public Health Agency of Canada, the BC Ministry of Health, Social Change Rewards, Heart and Stroke Foundation, Canadian Diabetes Association and YMCA Canada.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016HLTH0013-000326>

INCOME SECURITY

Child support payments will no longer affect eligibility for parents already receiving or applying for child care subsidies, starting April 1, 2016. The monthly subsidy is intended to support low-income families with the costs of child care. The amount families receive depends on the family's income and size, the ages of the children and the type of child care provided. The maximum rate a family can receive per child is \$750 per month.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016CFD0014-000477>

LABOUR MARKET

In partnership with the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, the government is investing \$2 million over three years in a skills training project that will serve more than 1,000 Indigenous people. A key component of the project is to establish Five by Five employment centres in seven Aboriginal Friendship Centres across the North. The centres will act as hubs that connect people to employment-related services.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016ARR0024-000428>

The province released the *Career Guide for Aboriginal People*. It contains a wealth of information and resources for Aboriginal job seekers, especially youth. It offers a range of tips and advice such as how to make successful school-to-work transitions and on the importance of building job-finding support networks.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016ARR0023-000416>

The government is investing \$515,000 in a pilot training program designed to support Aboriginal digital skills development and greater participation in the province's rapidly growing technology sector. "Bridging to Technology" is designed to enhance career development, refine digital skills and support First Nations in BC to access economic development opportunities and careers in the technology sector.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016ARR0025-000470>

SENIORS

Amendments introduced to BC's *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* will mean better care options and added protection for those in assisted-living residences. Currently, residents who require more than two of six prescribed services that may be offered in assisted living are expected to move to a residential-care home. Amendments remove the limit on the services, allowing assisted-living residents to remain in their home-like setting and access a variety of care. Additional amendments increase regulatory oversight for assisted-living residences.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016HLTH0014-000338>



Yukon Territory

WOMEN

The Yukon government has launched a new gender equality indicators website that provides statistical and qualitative information on the status of women in the territory. *The Shifting Territory – Indicators of Yukon Gender Equality* website features information on a wide range of themes including leadership and activism, violence and crime, childcare and parenting as well as sports and physical activity.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/16-095.html#.Vv0RefkrJD8>

Northwest Territories

No updates this month.

Nunavut

MENTAL HEALTH

Government and community partners released *Resiliency Within*, the one-year Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy Action Plan. It incorporates jury recommendations from the 2015 coroner's inquest, outlines a number of commitments for public and community engagement as well as training, programs and support provided during the 2016-17 fiscal year. Partners will work to engage communities and stakeholders in the development of a long-term, participatory action plan.

<http://www.gov.nu.ca/health/news/nunavut-suicide-prevention-strategy-partners-release-resiliency-within>

MINIMUM WAGE

On April 1, 2016, the minimum wage in Nunavut will rise to \$13 per hour. With this increase, the territory will once again have the highest minimum wage in Canada. The increase will also bring the wage to an appropriate amount to better reflect the high cost of living in Nunavut.

<http://www.gov.nu.ca/justice/news/minimum-wage-increase>