



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

September 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. 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

No updates this month.

New Brunswick

BUDGET

The deficit announced for 2015-16 is \$260.5 million. Revenues were \$78 million higher than budgeted. The consolidation of nursing home services and higher revenue from personal income tax were contributing factors, offset by the lower-than-anticipated net income of NB Power. Expenses were \$12 million higher than budgeted. Lower-than-budgeted expenses in Economic Development and General Government were offset by the consolidation of nursing home expenses and increased costs under the disaster financial assistance program. The Auditor General has provided an unqualified audit opinion of the financial statements in 2015-16.

[Link](#)

EDUCATION

Under a new 10-year education plans, the province will make the largest investment in public education in the province's history, and shift the focus to government setting goals while giving local schools and school districts the tools to reach those goals according to their own challenges and opportunities. *Everyone at Their Best (Donnons à nos enfants une longueur d'avance)* will identify objectives for the early learning and education system and establish clear expectations for standards and performance. A performance management process will be used to establish objectives and track progress.

[Link](#)

HOUSING

A new investment of \$56 million from the provincial and federal governments doubles current funding under the Investment in Affordable Housing initiative, provides support for affordable housing for seniors and victims of family violence and addresses repairs of existing social housing. Over the next two years, the federal government is contributing \$40.2 million; the province's share is \$16.4 million.

[Link](#)

LABOUR MARKET

The province released *New Brunswick's Economic Growth Plan*, setting out a framework for stimulating the economy by ensuring there is a co-ordinated effort when pursuing opportunities.

[Link](#)

LITERACY

Despite major educational progress, New Brunswick francophones continue to lag behind both their provincial anglophone counterparts and francophones from Québec, Ontario and Manitoba on proficiency tests for literacy, numeracy and problem-solving in technology-rich environments.



These difficulties raise a number of socioeconomic and demographic challenges. The findings come from a new study *The literacy skills of New Brunswick francophones: Demographic and socioeconomic issues*.

[Link](#)

MENTAL HEALTH

The Integrated Service Delivery model for providing mental health, addiction, intervention and social services to children and youth will expand to another 112 schools this fall. In all, 146 schools will be served by the model; by 2018 the model will be province-wide. Offered at the community level, the Integrated Service Delivery model ties together services from the Departments of Education and Early Childhood Development, Social Development, Health, and Justice and Public Safety. Children and youth may access the program through their school or another community service.

[Link](#)

MINIMUM WAGE

The public is invited to participate in consultations on indexing the minimum wage to inflation, employment protection for youth and coverage under the *Employment Standards Act*. Since 2014, the provincial government has increased the minimum wage twice, to \$10.65 per hour, and is committed to further increasing it to \$11 per hour by 2017 and then indexing it to the rate of inflation.

[Link](#)

Nova Scotia

LABOUR MARKET

The province launched its new employment services system, Nova Scotia Works. Government began working with service providers in November to redesign the \$23-million employment services system. The updated system includes:

- more front-line staff
- increased focus on career counselling for youth
- more effective recruitment support for businesses
- expansion of services across the province for people with barriers to employment
- support for career practitioner certification and professional development.

While the overall budget remains the same, the Nova Scotia Works system reduces administration and infrastructure costs from 53 to 27 percent. More front-line staff were hired with the savings to focus on employer engagement, client service and outreach to schools.

[Link](#)

Prince Edward Island

LABOUR MARKET

The Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET) will continue efforts to improve the transition of secondary and postsecondary students from school to work. This will include:

- the introduction of quality career education and transitioning programs and resources
- the launch of Atlantic Canada Career Week, which will take place from October 31 to November 4, 2016
- the development of a framework outlining the competencies that school and post-secondary education students need to transition to the world of work.

CAMET has undertaken an analysis of the strengths and gaps in the transition of students from public to post-secondary education. The study, to be conducted by the Canadian Career Development Foundation, will be completed in the fall 2017. The result of the study will provide evidence-based information on how to provide better access to post-secondary education for students who take an indirect route to get there, maximize the number of students who graduate, and offer more opportunities for graduating students to find work in their fields of study.

[Link](#)

MENTAL HEALTH

The Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET) agreed to collaborate in the area of mental health by promoting the sharing of best practices and creating network opportunities between and among various government departments and key stakeholders. Future plans include:

- promoting positive mental health in public schools and post-secondary education institutions
- assessing current data needs to allow evidence-based decision-making in the area of mental health.

[Link](#)

MINIMUM WAGE

The minimum wage in Prince Edward Island will increase from \$10.75 per hour to \$11.00 per hour effective October 1, 2016.

[Link](#)

SENIORS/MENTAL HEALTH

The province is expanding a specialized program of services for seniors experiencing complex mental illnesses complicated by the aging process. The Seniors Mental Health Resource Team is available to visit a senior, conduct an assessment, and work with caregivers to provide the senior with needed support with mental health problems commonly associated with the aging process, chronic medical conditions and dementia. The



team includes nurse practitioners, registered nurses, social workers, psychiatrists and consulting psychologists. Care is provided to seniors at home, in community care and in long-term care facilities.

[Link](#)

Québec

EDUCATION

Members of the province's college and university networks are being asked to express their views on the creation of the Québec council of colleges and universities.

[Link](#)

Ontario

DISABILITY

As of September 1, once individuals are deemed eligible for ministry-funded adult developmental services, they will no longer have to go through a second process to verify their disability to qualify for the Ontario Disability Support Program. Families receiving Special Services at Home (SSAH) funding for children under 18 with a developmental disability will no longer need to re-apply every year for funding. All SSAH recipients will be automatically renewed at their current level of funding until they turn 18, as long as eligibility criteria are met.

[Link](#)

Ontario launched a second call for proposals for projects that support adults with development disabilities, through the Developmental Services Employment and Modernization Fund. The province approved 38 proposals through its first call for proposals in 2014. Applications will be accepted until December 19, 2016, for funding relating to:

- employment – projects that assist with the shift towards competitive employment for people with developmental disabilities, and initiatives that enable people to pursue paid work
- modernization – projects that promote innovation and collaboration within the developmental services sector, and that build linkages with other sectors in order to make services and supports more person-centred and responsive to the needs of individuals and families.

[Link](#)

EDUCATION

With the goal of improving students' math test scores, the province is investing \$60 million to implement a renewed math strategy, awarding 2,300 Parents Reaching Out grants and supporting Homework Health – live, interactive online math help is available to students in Grades 7 to 10 in all English-language school boards. SOS Devoirs is a similar service for Francophone students in Grade 1 to 12.

[Link](#)

FAMILIES

Currently, survivors of domestic violence in Ontario are given priority access to rent-geared-to-income social housing. Survivors enrolled in the new Survivors of Domestic Violence Portable Housing Benefit pilot program will have the option to receive a portable housing benefit, so that they can immediately find housing in their community instead of waiting for a social housing unit to become available. Based on the outcomes of the pilot, Ontario will consider ways to enhance the program and extend the portable housing benefit to other communities. The federal and provincial governments are investing \$20 million over two years in the project.

[Link](#)

Ontario introduced the *All Families Are Equal Act, 2016* which, if passed, would ensure the legal status of parents is recognized clearly and equitably, whether they are LGBTQ2+ or straight, and whether their children were conceived with or without assistance. Under the current parentage law – last updated in 1978 – parents who are not biologically related to their children often need to go to court to be legally recognized as their parents.

[Link](#)

HEALTH/SENIORS

The shingles vaccine will be available free of charge across the province for people ages 65 to 70. The government is investing \$68 million over three years in order to publicly fund the vaccine.

[Link](#)

HOUSING

The province reintroduced the *Promoting Affordable Housing Act, 2016*, designed to improve access to affordable and adequate housing. The proposed changes would modernize existing social housing and increase the supply of affordable housing across the province by:

- allowing municipalities to implement inclusionary zoning so they can ensure that affordable units are included in residential projects
- exempting secondary suites in new homes from development charges to unlock more affordable rental housing and allow homeowners to earn extra income from their property
- giving local Service Managers more flexibility to administer and deliver social housing in their communities to reduce wait lists and make it easier for Ontarians to access a range of housing options
- encouraging more inclusive communities and strengthening tenant rights by preventing unnecessary evictions from social housing and modernizing how rental property standards are enforced
- supporting better program design and decision-making by requiring



service managers to track people who are homeless in their communities.

[Link](#)

The Governments of Canada and Ontario announced that the City of Toronto will be receiving more than \$154 million in social infrastructure funding, which doubles the City's allocation of the Investment in Affordable Housing Agreement and provides targeted support to housing programs for those who need it most in the City of Toronto.

[Link](#)

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The Governments of Canada and Ontario and the Chapleau Cree First Nation settled one of the first Treaty Land Entitlement Claims in Ontario. The settlement, which is the result of an unfulfilled Treaty 9 entitlement, includes \$21.5 million in financial compensation from Canada and about 4,000 square hectares of provincial Crown land from Ontario. The province is also contributing \$350,000 in financial compensation. Under the settlement, the Chapleau Cree First Nation can apply to the Government of Canada to have the lands added to its reserve in northern Ontario. The land and financial compensation will be used to meet current and future social and economic needs of the community.

[Link](#)

INCOME SECURITY

New rate increases announced in the 2016 Budget come into effect, including an additional:

- \$25 per month for single adults receiving Ontario Works
- 1.5 percent for families receiving Ontario Works
- 1.5 percent for individuals with disabilities who receive ODSP.

The rate increases come into effect in September 2016 for ODSP and in October 2016 for Ontario Works. In addition, Ontario is increasing support for parents who receive income through the Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities program by 1.5 percent.

[Link](#)

LABOUR MARKET

Ontario is implementing a new framework for broader public sector executive compensation, including capping salary and performance-related payments for hospitals, universities, colleges, schools boards and government agencies.

[Link](#)

MENTAL HEALTH

Ontario is investing \$2 million in a major expansion of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, improving access to mental health and addictions services for patients. The redevelopment will

include:

- inpatient and outpatient clinical services for people with complex mental illness, including emergency care and therapeutic supports
- research and educational facilities
- patient and family recreation and resource facilities.

[Link](#)

MINIMUM WAGE

Ontario is raising the general minimum wage from \$11.25 to \$11.40 on October 1, 2016 – the third consecutive year it has increased.

[Link](#)

THRONE SPEECH

The provincial government outlined its plans for the current legislative period. Social policy-related announcements include:

- legislation to rebate an amount equal to the provincial portion of the HST on residential, farm and small business electricity bills as of January 1, 2017. Rural electricity ratepayers would receive additional relief and commercial, institutional and industrial ratepayers would also benefit from lower electricity costs
- the creation of 100,000 licensed infant to preschool child care spaces within the next five years, starting in 2017
- an updated school curriculum that places new emphasis on math skills, expanding experiential learning
- the implementation of free tuition for thousands of low- and middle-income students and offering the support for young people need to launch start-up companies
- an investment in skills training that aligns with the job market
- further increases in nursing care hours to enhance home care, reduced wait times for specialists, and access to a family doctor or nurse practitioner to every Ontarian who wants one
- a continuation of the federal/provincial effort to enhance the Canada Pension Plan.

[Link](#)

Manitoba

CHILDREN

The province is providing additional funding for the Early Childhood Development Innovation Fund (ECDIF) to continue support of the Winnipeg Boldness Project in the Point Douglas community. The Manitoba government established the ECDIF in 2013, which is administered by the United Way of Winnipeg, in partnership with the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and other private and philanthropic investors. The Winnipeg



Boldness Project is a research and development initiative looking at early childhood development in Winnipeg's north end with the goal of improving outcomes for children and families in this area. The group analyzes knowledge and ideas collected from the community to identify opportunities for development, and partners with community organizations to help them develop new interventions.

[Link](#)

EDUCATION

In September 2010, Pathways to Education Canada partnered with the Community Education Development Association (CEDA) to launch a Winnipeg program site to provide programming in Winnipeg's North Point Douglas. The provincial government will contribute \$625,000 to this program, which reduces high school drop-out rates and increases access to post-secondary education.

[Link](#)

LITERACY

The province is increasing funding for adult learning centres and literacy programs by two percent. The increase will bring total funding to \$20,250,000 for 2016-17, up \$381,000 from last year. Grants totalling \$17,550,000 will go to 39 adult learning centres, while 33 adult literacy programs will share \$2,700,000.

[Link](#)

MENTAL HEALTH

Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living and Manitoba Agriculture are co-hosting the International One Welfare Conference in Winnipeg this month, focusing on complex social situations where human and animal health are involved. The conference focuses on issues like hoarding, on-farm animal welfare, and the links between animal and family abuse.

[Link](#)

WOMEN

Winnipeg Safe City, a Manitoba government and City of Winnipeg partnership, is launching a number of new initiatives to support safer public spaces for women. Winnipeg Safe City works with local levels of government, communities and the police to prevent and reduce harassment and sexual violence against women and girls in public spaces.

[Link](#)

Saskatchewan

DEMOGRAPHICS

Saskatchewan's population grew by 5,314 people in the second quarter of 2016, bringing the total population to 1,150,632 as of July 1st. This figure is the largest quarterly increase since the second quarter of 2013, and the third largest percentage increase among the provinces over the past quarter.

[Link](#)

EDUCATION/SOCIAL FINANCE

In partnership with the Mosaic Company Foundation and Mother Teresa Middle School (MTMS), the province is issuing a second Social Impact Bond, designed to improve school performance and graduation rates for children from economically disadvantaged homes. The Mosaic Company Foundation will provide \$1 million over the next five years to MTMS in Regina, which will use the funding to provide support for 88 students in the Grades 6-8 middle school and early high school.

Social Impact Bonds are not bonds in the traditional sense. Investors are repaid, based on the level of success that the organization receiving the funding is able to achieve. In the case of MTMS, if the school achieves an 82 percent Grade 12 graduation rate for its students, the province will repay Mosaic the principal and interest equal to 1.3 percent annually. With a 75 percent graduation rate, three-quarters of the principal is repaid, without interest. Below 75 percent, no repayment is made. The Ministry of Education will track progress annually.

This agreement can potentially save taxpayers up to \$1.7 million. Savings are based on projections of reduced costs of economic, health, and social services over five years and increased earning potential for these students over their lifetimes.

[Link](#)

MINIMUM WAGE

Saskatchewan's minimum wage will increase to \$10.72 an hour on October 1, 2016. There are approximately 23,200 minimum wage earners in Saskatchewan's workforce. The majority (56 percent) are under the age of 25 and largely work in the accommodations, food services or retail industries.

[Link](#)

Alberta

HEALTH

The province and its partners in primary care have adopted new policies that will allow Primary Care Networks (PCNs) to retain a small portion of any surpluses they might accumulate each year. The government will assume responsibility for costs a PCN might have to pay if it closes, so PCNs can direct all of their funding to patient care rather than a contingency account. Of the \$65 million currently sitting in PCN surpluses and closing reserves, \$60 million will be returned to Alberta Health to ensure continued service levels within the health system.

In future, Primary Care Networks will be permitted to retain a small portion of any surpluses they might accumulate each year, which is consistent with guidelines for other government funded entities. A detailed policy on PCN surpluses is being finalized.

[Link](#)



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The Alberta government is providing more than \$670,000 to six regional library systems and three of the large urban libraries to enable people living on First Nations and Métis Settlements in Alberta no longer have to pay non-resident fees in order to access public library services.

[Link](#)

LABOUR MARKET

In partnership with the federal government, the province is investing \$1.9 million to provide training that will prepare people to run their own businesses. The Self-Employment program is up to 26 weeks and provides instruction on all aspects of business operation including business plan development, business counseling, coaching and guidance. At the end of the program, participants are expected to be operating their business on a full-time basis.

[Link](#)

MINIMUM WAGE

Alberta's general minimum wage will increase from \$11.20 to \$12.20 per hour effective October 1. The lower liquor server rate of \$10.70 per hour will be eliminated. In addition to the 2016 increase, the general minimum wage will rise by \$1.40 to \$13.60 per hour on October 1, 2017, and a further \$1.40 to \$15 per hour on October 1, 2018.

[Link](#)

WOMEN

As a way to increase the number of women in positions of corporate leadership, the Alberta Securities Commission has proposed a rule change that would require Alberta-based, non-venture issuers, including companies listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX), to disclose the number of women on their boards and in executive management, and to describe related policies or targets.

[Link](#)

British Columbia

DISABILITY

Legislation that makes it easier for some people with disabilities to receive disability assistance is now in effect. As of September 1, people in the following provincial or federal programs will complete a simpler Persons with Disabilities (PWD) application process:

- Community Living BC (CLBC)
- The Ministry of Children and Family Development At Home Program
- BC PharmaCare Plan P – Palliative Care
- Canadian Pension Plan – Disability.

Because these people are already eligible for a comparable government program for persons with disabilities, they will only need to complete a brief application form and will not have to provide additional assessments

by medical practitioners in order to obtain the Persons with Disabilities designation. Initially, about 1,000 people each year will benefit from the change, most of whom will be youth transitioning into CLBC services.

[Link](#)

A new study will create access to engineering and tech jobs for people with disabilities in Lower Mainland. Through surveys of at least 125 employers who hire tech-related employees, employer workshops and focus groups with people with disabilities, the final report will feature good practices to support hiring people with disabilities as well as specific training and educational needs.

[Link](#)

EDUCATION

September marks the second year of a three-year process of phasing in a new curriculum. Kindergarten to Grade 9 classes will use the new system, while draft Grades10-12 curriculum is available to teachers for their feedback and optional use in classrooms.

[Link](#)

Explicit references to sexual orientation and gender identity are being added to the anti-bullying policies that school districts and independent schools are required to have in place.

[Link](#)

EDUCATION/INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Eleven public postsecondary institutions are receiving funding for additional programs and services to improve the educational outcomes of Aboriginal learners, strengthen partnerships between postsecondary institutions and Aboriginal communities, and increase the relevance of postsecondary institutions for Aboriginal learners.

[Link](#)

EMPLOYMENT

Since September 2015, the Single Parent Employment Initiative has served nearly 3,400 single parents. About 400 people are currently in training programs, close to 500 participants have already found employment and others are working with a case manager to best determine their future career path. Dozens of people are joining the program every week.

[Link](#)

FOOD SECURITY

The province is providing funding of up to \$25,000 each for 10 communities, so they can work directly with their local residents to help them grow their own food. The goal of the Grow Local BC pilot project is to provide a deeper connection between BC food, BC communities and local residents. By encouraging British Columbians to grow their own fresh fruit and vegetables, they will strengthen local food supply security. Urban and semi-rural local government and community organizations



are encouraged to apply. The funding can be used to build educational activities, including workshops, to encourage and support residents in growing food at home and in the community.

[Link](#)

HEALTH

The *Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act* is now in effect. Designed to protect youth from the unknown effects of e-cigarette vapour and from becoming addicted to nicotine, the Act treats e-cigarette use exactly the same as tobacco, with the same bans and restrictions. There are no restrictions on adults buying e-cigarettes.

[Link](#)

The province is cancelling a planned four percent increase to Medical Services Plan premiums. Those eligible for Regular Premium Assistance will see a four percent reduction of their premium beyond what was announced with Budget 2016.

[Link](#)

HOUSING

The province is spending \$500 million to increase access to affordable rental housing. The amount is the largest housing investment in a single year by any province. A total 2,900 rental units will be created, in partnership with non-profit societies, local governments, government agencies, community organizations and the private sector. This amount is in addition to \$355 million announced in February to create 2,000 additional new units of affordable rental housing, bringing the province's total investment announced this year to \$855 million.

[Link](#)

Foreign investment accounted for nearly 6 percent of the approximately 48,000 residential real estate transactions in British Columbia between June 10 and August 31, 2016. The property transfer tax was announced on July 25 and took effect August 2, 2016, applying an additional 15 percent tax on transfers of residential real estate involving foreign purchasers in Metro Vancouver. The period August 2-31 saw 60 transactions in Metro Vancouver that involved foreign nationals. The value of the properties transferred was \$46.9 million – less than 1 percent of total Metro Vancouver transactions during that period.

While it will take more time to determine the impact of the additional property transfer tax on foreign buyers upon the real estate market, the collection of real estate transaction data is allowing the province to monitor any changes in the market. This information will help government assess the impact of the additional property transfer tax on Metro Vancouver's real estate market and other parts of the province.

[Link](#)

INCOME SECURITY

On October 1, 2016, the province will make Employment Insurance (EI) maternity and parental benefits and EI benefits for parents caring for critically ill children fully exempt for people on income and disability assistance. These changes will benefit about 200 parents on income and disability assistance each year and provide additional financial support while they are caring for a newborn, newly adopted or critically ill child. BC is the second province after Québec to exempt EI maternity and parental benefits from monthly social assistance.

[Link](#)

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES/LABOUR MARKET/YOUTH

The province and the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres have been working together on two labour market projects aimed at helping more youth join British Columbia's workforce and recruiting others who want to work in Aboriginal non-profit organizations.

[Link](#)

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES/LABOUR MARKET

The province is providing \$2.5 million over three years to support the continued development of the First Nations Sustainable Economic Development Strategy by the BC Assembly of First Nations. BCAFN's economic development strategy supports the BC Jobs Plan, which has a goal of increasing the participation of First Nations in the economy. BC's Skills for Jobs Blueprint has an overall goal of adding 15,000 more Aboriginal workers to the provincial workforce within 10 years.

[Link](#)

LITERACY

The province is providing \$500,000 to this year's Raise-a-Reader campaign to support community-based literacy programs for children and families throughout British Columbia. (Raise-a-Reader was launched in 2005.) A new \$600,000 partnership between the Ministry of Education, the Provincial Office for the Early Years and the BC School Superintendents Association will give early years professionals the tools they need to better support children entering Kindergarten. Province-wide sessions will enable teachers and early childhood professionals to network and share strategies to address the needs of young learners – thereby making for a smoother transition from pre-school to Kindergarten.

[Link](#)

MENTAL HEALTH

To bolster the efforts underway to prevent illicit drug overdoses and related deaths. The province is providing \$10 million to support a British Columbia addiction treatment research and training centre, and to fund strategies identified under the Joint Task Force on Overdose Prevention.

[Link](#)



MINIMUM WAGE

The province's minimum wage is increasing by 40 cents to \$10.85 per hour on September 15; the liquor server minimum wage will rise to \$9.60. These new rates include the 10 cents scheduled for the 2015 Consumer Price Index (CPI), plus an additional 30 cents. A second increase – effective Sept. 15, 2017 – will be 30 cents plus an amount based on the 2016 CPI (currently estimated to be 10 cents) and will bring the general minimum wage rate to at least \$11.25 and the liquor server minimum wage to \$10. The 2016 CPI will be available from Statistics Canada by March 2017.

[Link](#)

POVERTY REDUCTION

On January 1, 2017, the borrowing rates of high-cost, short-term cash loans – payday loans – will be lowered from \$23 to \$17 for every \$100 borrowed. The province also announced plans to consult with stakeholders to determine how to strengthen consumer protection and whether more affordable options exist.

[Link](#)

WOMEN

The province will provide \$250,000 this year to support the work of the Moose Hide Campaign, a growing movement of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal men dedicated to ending violence against women and girls. Over the next four years, the Moose Hide Campaign will be expanded through community engagement and action projects to create a measurable impact to ending violence on a personal, community and organizational level. A complementary goal is to create a Moose Hide Campaign book as a tool to foster discussion and action against violence.

[Link](#)

Yukon Territory

EDUCATION/INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Territorial and Carcross/Tagish First Nation representatives signed a new four-year education agreement in Whitehorse. The Territory now has education agreements in place with six Yukon First Nations. The new education agreement outlines joint communication and participation on curriculum development, school programming and staffing on Carcross/Tagish First Nation Traditional Territory. The next step will be the development of a three-year implementation plan, to be in place by February 28, 2017.

[Link](#)

Northwest Territories

No updates this month.

Nunavut

No updates this month.