



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

October 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

No updates this month.

Nova Scotia

CAREGIVING

All home support waitlists for Victorian Order of Nurses have been eliminated throughout the province. VON provides home support to 2,900 Nova Scotians; more than 14,000 residents receive home care services on any given day. Those services include personal care, respite care, housekeeping, meal preparation and nursing. Over the past three years, government has added \$59.1 million to home care spending. The province now spends more than \$255 million on these services.

[Link](#)

EDUCATION

The province launched a sexual violence awareness campaign. Aimed at youth between the ages of 14 and 20, the campaign consists of 30- and 60-second videos featuring bird-and-bee-type characters animated in the style of popular shows. The episodes deal with situations of sexual violence that youth told us they are facing in today's world. The first 60-second video takes place at a house party and explores the issue of alcohol and consent. The campaign is a key commitment of the Sexual Violence Strategy, launched in June 2015. The strategy is a three-year commitment with a total budget of \$6 million.

[Link](#)

INCOME SECURITY/EDUCATION

The province's Community Services department introduced two programs to improve post-secondary supports for vulnerable residents. The Career Seek Program provides eligible clients, who are financing their own education, with ongoing shelter and personal allowances while they attend a postsecondary program. The program's financial supports are expanding to include one year of tuition, all student fees and all book costs, as well as an expansion of personal allowances to include child care and transportation, student fees, Internet access, and incidentals to help with integration into campus life.

The Educate to Work Program allows eligible clients to stay on Income Assistance and pays tuition and textbook costs for programs at the Nova Scotia Community College or a private career college. The program has been expanded to include some financial supports for eligible dependents of clients. Eligible dependents will receive funding for half the cost of tuition and full funding for text books, student fees, and health and dental insurance for core Nova Scotia community college programs.



The department has also launched a pilot project with Phoenix Youth Program to support 10 at-risk youth in postsecondary programming. These youth will already be supported by Phoenix programs – half will also be Income Assistance clients and half will be youth who are not otherwise attached to the department.

[Link](#)

SOCIAL ECONOMY

The Invest Nova Scotia fund's board of directors is investing \$1.5 million over three years in the Social Enterprise Network of Nova Scotia to create an incubator that will help entrepreneurs build their business abilities. The Invest Nova Scotia Fund fosters innovation and collaboration to advance Nova Scotia's economy and create jobs. Investments support projects that benefit sectors or regions, not individual businesses. Projects must be measurable, sustainable and support the ONE Nova Scotia Coalition goals. Decisions are made by a board of directors independent of government.

[Link](#)

THRONE SPEECH

The provincial government outlined its support for existing and new social policy-related initiatives.

Existing programs:

- investment in child care rose by \$6.6 million, which will include an increase to the parent subsidy
- an additional \$59.1 million will be spent on home care
- educational spending will go up by \$65 million.

Newer investments include:

- expanding the domestic violence court beyond the current pilot project in Sydney
- additional investments to reduce wait lists for affordable housing
- expanding the Graduate to Opportunity program
- launching a down payment assistance program for first-time home buyers
- removing the General Education Diploma testing fee to help adult learners
- enabling departments to purchase from small- and medium-sized businesses that need early stage customers
- creating Research Nova Scotia to better align research, and leverage funds from federal and private partners
- increasing investments for specialists in classrooms, such as speech language pathologists and school psychologists

- expanding school breakfast programs with community partners.

[Link](#)

Prince Edward Island

No updates this month.

Québec

CHILDREN

To provide care and social pediatric services to 20,000 children living in vulnerable situations, the province awarded \$20 million over four years to the Dr. Julien Foundation. The funds will pay for the development of a network of social pediatric centres.

[Link](#)

HEALTH

The results of the Québec Health Survey 2014-2015 population were released by the Institut de la statistique du Québec. While cigarette use has declined since 2008, the proportion of people using illicit drugs has increased. Lifestyle was among the new topics covered in this second edition of the survey, revealing that 30 percent of Québécois are sedentary and almost a fifth of the population consumes sugary drinks daily. The study reported an increase in obesity rates, which now affects 19 percent of Québécois ages 15 and older compared to 16 percent in 2008. Stress levels are also rising, particularly among women; almost a third report high levels of stress.

[Link](#)

Québec launched a government health prevention policy aimed at improving health status and reducing the social inequalities that affect health. The government will invest \$76.1 million over the next 10 years and has set targets in a number of areas, including affordable housing, home care, smoking and physical activity. More details can be found at: [Document Link](#)

[Link](#)

HOMELESSNESS

The intersectoral action plan on homelessness in the Montréal region 2015-2020 released a first year progress report.

[Link](#)

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES/HOUSING

The province has launched the Urban Aboriginal Assistance program. It will allocate \$ 8.9 million over five years to community organizations to:

- provide and develop culturally appropriate and safe direct services to meet the needs of Aboriginal people in vulnerable situations in cities
- support the development of community organizations' response capabilities serving Aboriginal women living in urban areas or who are



transient

- encourage the establishment of collaboration among community organizations and the Québec network of health and social services
- contribute to improving the socioeconomic status of Aboriginal people
- renew and improve the infrastructure of community organizations serving the Aboriginal clientele in urban areas.

Funding for the program has two phases: the first – \$5 million over five years – will focus on improving direct services. A second phase of funding will deliver \$3.9 million over four years to renew and improve organizational infrastructure.

[Link](#)

Ontario

BUDGET

Ontario's Annual Report and unaudited Consolidated Financial Statements for 2015-16 show that the province's deficit is \$3.5 billion lower than the \$8.5 billion projected in the 2015 Budget, with the province's deficit for 2015-16 at \$5 billion. This is \$0.7 billion lower than the \$5.7 billion in the 2016 Budget interim projection.

[Link](#)

CHILDREN

Ontario's new Living and Learning Grants will provide support to adoptive families with a child enrolled in a full-time postsecondary program, helping to remove financial barriers and give more youth the opportunity to pursue higher education. In addition, 15 new adoption recruiters will start work across Ontario this November to connect more Crown wards with adoptive families.

[Link](#)

HEALTH

Ontario is implementing its first comprehensive Opioid strategy to prevent opioid addiction and overdose by enhancing data collection, modernizing prescribing and dispensing practices, and connecting patients with high-quality addiction treatment services.

[Link](#)

The province is recruiting more non-physician primary health care professionals including nurse practitioners, social workers and registered dietitians. They will work at 445 primary care organizations – community health centres, nurse practitioner-led clinics, family health teams, Aboriginal Health Access Centres and nursing stations – that serve nearly four million people, including those living in high-need and remote communities.

[Link](#)

HOMELESSNESS

The province is providing \$632 million to municipalities over two years to help families and individuals at risk of homelessness stay in their homes or get the housing they need, through a wide range of services and homelessness prevention programs that meet local needs. These include:

- emergency financial assistance to prevent eviction
- long-term and transitional housing
- integrated supportive housing to help people with specific needs access suitable housing.

Last year, this initiative helped an estimated 40,000 families and individuals experiencing homelessness obtain housing, and helped more than 115,000 families and individuals at-risk of homelessness remain in their homes.

[Link](#)

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The province and the Algonquins of Ontario signed a historic Agreement-in-Principle (AIP). This is a key step toward a modern-day treaty to resolve a long-standing land claim that covers an area of 36,000 square kilometres in eastern Ontario. The non-binding AIP paves the way for continued negotiations toward a final agreement that will define the ongoing rights of the Algonquins of Ontario to lands and natural resources within the settlement area.

[Link](#)

POVERTY REDUCTION

Thirty projects are being funded through Ontario's Local Poverty Reduction Fund. The fund supports innovative, community-led programs that help groups disproportionately affected by poverty – including women, single parents, people with disabilities, youth, newcomers, visible minorities, seniors and Indigenous Peoples – get into housing, develop skills and find employment.

[Link](#)

Manitoba

EDUCATION/YOUTH

Proposed changes introduced to the Advanced Education Administration Act and the Private Vocational Institutions Act would require all universities, colleges, the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology, degree-granting institutions and private vocational institutions to have appropriate policies and procedures in place to prevent and respond to sexual violence on campus.

[Link](#)



Saskatchewan

LABOUR MARKET

A change to *The Workers' Compensation Act, 2013* was introduced that will expand workers' compensation coverage to workers experiencing psychological injuries. The amendment establishes a rebuttal presumption for all forms of psychological injuries, which means that it is presumed that a worker has a work-related injury and would not have to prove that it occurred in the workplace. While other provinces have established a rebuttable presumption for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Saskatchewan is the first jurisdiction to enact legislation that covers other forms of psychological injury that workers could experience as a result of being exposed to traumatic events or situations at work.

[Link](#)

Alberta

HOMELESSNESS

The province is supporting three rural community projects to help people experiencing homelessness or housing instability as a result of the 2016 wildfire in northern Alberta. Projects in Cold Lake, Anzac and Fort Chipewyan will each receive \$70,000. Funding will be administered by the Alberta Rural Development Network, which works to support and enhance the well-being of rural communities through collaboration and partnership.

[Link](#)

British Columbia

CHILDREN

A report was issued by the representative for children and youth that investigates sexualized violence against children and youth in care.

[Link](#)

DISABILITIES/EDUCATION

The province is providing an extra \$1 million to boost its support for special needs students attending specialized independent schools in BC. The funds are more than doubling the number of designated Special Education Schools (SES) from six to 15, and providing \$2,000 to support each qualified student. Each of the 15 SES schools is unique, and provides specific and focused environments for students with special needs to learn vital academic, communication, social and life skills, tailored to their abilities.

[Link](#)

HOUSING

Following the September 2016 announcement of a \$500-million investment in affordable rental housing, the British Columbia government has announced details of eight new provincially-funded housing projects in the region, totalling 510 units. The province has committed more than \$45 million in capital funding toward the projects.

[Link](#)

YOUTH

The province announced changes to the Agreements with Young Adults (AYA) program which will come into effect on November 30, 2016. Previously, AYA was available for former youth in care from their 19th to their 24th birthday. The changes raise eligibility to the age of 26 and increase the length of time a young person can receive benefits from 2 years to 4. The AYA program covers costs like living expenses, child care, tuition and health care while a former youth in care is attending school or a rehabilitation program. AYA is also being expanded to include life skills programs.

[Link](#)

Yukon Territory

No updates this month.

Northwest Territories

No updates this month.

Nunavut

CHILDREN

The Department of Health is giving baby boxes to parents of every newborn in the territory over the next year. Nunavut's infant mortality rate is nearly five times higher than the national average. The baby box is a concept borrowed from Finland, where it originated in 1939. Finland's infant mortality rate was 90 in 1,000 live births, and has seen a dramatic drop to less than two in 1,000 births due to its famous Finnish Maternity Package (baby boxes). The Department of Health is delivering more than 800 boxes to Nunavut's 25 community health centres in 2016-17. The boxes contain written materials that encourage early prenatal care and promote safe sleep environments and breastfeeding as well as products for babies and parents.

[Link](#)