



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

April 2017



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

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Budget 2017 continues toward a government plan for a Budget surplus by 2022-23. Social policy-related highlights include:

caregiving

- through the Canadian Health Accord, Newfoundland and Labrador will receive an additional \$87.7 million over 10 years for home and palliative care with an initial investment of \$2.9 million in 2017
- \$2.5 million to establish a Home First Program to provide enhanced supports for home and community-based care

children

- \$2 million to be added to the base amount of \$12.5 million to broaden the eligibility for the Child Care Subsidy Program, which will reduce costs for low- to middle-income families
- \$1.3 million increase to the Early Learning and Child Care Supplement

communities

- \$115.2 million to be provided to community groups for operational funding, as well as support for projects and programs that they deliver to residents. This allocation includes a commitment to maintain core funding for 2017-18 and develop a multi-year approach for community grant funding

education

- \$13 million annually for full-day Kindergarten
- an increase of \$500,000 for additional student assistant hours to further support the Inclusive Education Initiative
- employment
- \$7.6 million from the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Job Fund Agreement to help residents find and secure stable employment
- \$6.7 million for student employment programs which enable employers to hire high school and post-secondary students

income support

- \$120 million to maintain the Income Supplement and Seniors' Benefit programs that benefit approximately 155,000 individuals and families annually

labour market

- \$110 million from the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Labour Market Development Agreement to provide employment and training programs
- \$14.1 million in provincial funding, with a further \$4 million from the federal government, for employment preparation and maintenance programs, including those to assist persons with disabilities



mental health

- through the Canadian Health Accord, an additional \$73 million over ten years for mental health initiatives

[Link](#)

Additional Budget highlight documents [Link](#)

MENTAL HEALTH

The province announced federal funding for a new program to help survivors of sexual assault. The Sexual Assault Response Pilot Program will provide free independent legal advice on criminal matters to help victims make informed decisions about the court process. The provincial Department of Justice and Public Safety will receive \$250,000 per year, for three years, to support the program.

[Link](#)

New Brunswick

LITERACY

The province is investing more than \$140,000 in early literacy programs. Born to Read/*Le goût de lire* programs provide parents of each new-born with a free gift bag of children's books. It also contains information describing and promoting the importance and benefits of early childhood literacy.

[Link](#)

Nova Scotia

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Budget 2017-18 focuses on the economy, health and reducing taxes. Social policy-related highlights include:

caregiving

- \$5.1 million more for home care, including increases for the self-managed care and the caregiver benefit programs

children

- \$1.2 million increase to further support foster parents

education

- \$3.7 million to add 30 new pre-primary sites with early learning programming for 4-year-olds with a plan to extend it province-wide in four years
- \$1.7 million more for the Graduate to Opportunity program and \$1.7 million to fund a new program for employers to hire recent Master's and PhD graduates
- \$1.3 million to eliminate the tuition apprentices pay for technical training
- \$2.1 million for coding and computer skills and to expand the Reading Recovery Program to 73 more schools
- \$1.8 million to increase community and mental health supports for

students through the SchoolsPlus program

- \$1.4 million for additional school psychologists and speech language pathologists
- \$800,000 to support families with children with autism through a pilot program offered at regional centres

health

- \$6 million to advance new collaborative care teams across the province

income security

- reducing taxes for more than 500,000 people by increasing the basic personal amount by up to \$3,000, effective January 1, 2018
- poverty reduction
- \$2 million to create and begin to implement a plan to address poverty in Nova Scotia

mental health

- \$3.2 million to enhance mental health programs
- \$1.1 million to continue work to address sexual violence
- disability
- \$3.9 million to support more people with disabilities to live independently in the community.

seniors

- \$395,000 to establish a social innovation lab focused on aging
- \$50,000 for a community Internet/digital literacy training project
- \$30,000 to promote entrepreneurship for older adults
- \$3.2 million to increase food budgets and enhance recreational programming for residents in long-term care facilities
- \$250,000 more for the Seniors Safety and Age-Friendly Community grant programs
- \$7.9 million to meet the needs of those age 65 and older enrolled in the Seniors Pharmacare Program

[Link](#)

DISABILITY

With the passage of the *Accessibility Act*, Nova Scotia has set a goal to be accessible by 2030. Government will work with persons with disabilities, and the public and private sectors to create six accessibility standards.

[Link](#)

HEALTH

The government is investing \$3.6 million to fund 23 new nursing positions in 12 communities across the province. Up to 14,000 residents will gain access to primary care.

[Link](#)



HOUSING

The Nova Scotian and federal governments are investing \$18 million to fund 440 new rent supplements over the next two years.

[Link](#)

Prince Edward Island

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Social policy-related highlights include:

education

- supports for students and post-secondary institutions
- increase K-12 expenditures by \$5.5 million
- new funding for student well-being

families

- an increase of \$6.6 million in support of Islanders in need
- new funding for Child Care Subsidy

health

- health expenditures increased by 5.8 percent
- new Women's Wellness Program
- universal influenza immunization program
- hiring of additional physicians to decrease wait times

seniors

- nursing home monthly comfort allowance levels increased for those who qualify.

[Link](#)

CAREGIVING

Health PEI's new online [advance care planning workbook](#) guides users through the key steps to clearly communicate and outline their wishes for health and personal care.

[Link](#)

CAREGIVING/SENIORS

The 2017-18 provincial operating budget increases the comfort allowances for subsidized residents in community care and long-term care as well as social assistance clients. The comfort allowance will increase from \$120 to \$140 per month, helping 550 subsidized residents in community care and 700 social assistance clients. In addition, the allowance for 820 subsidized residents in long-term care is increasing from \$103 to \$123 per month.

[Link](#)

EDUCATION/MENTAL HEALTH

New school-based mental health professionals, nurses, youth workers and occupational therapists will work with students to support their social and emotional development and their success in school. When fully

implemented in all families of schools by 2019, the Student Well-being Initiative will be supported by annual funding of more than \$5 million.

[Link](#)

Québec

HEALTH

Québec launched In *Québec we move!*, a physical activity, sport and recreation initiative. By 2027, the government wants to increase the proportion of people who are physically active by 10 percent, and by 20 percent in the 6-17 age group. Sixty-four million will be allocated over three years for programming and \$507 million will be invested in sports and recreational facilities.

[Link](#)

MENTAL HEALTH

The province is investing an additional \$ 26.5 million to accelerate the implementation of the Mental Health Action Plan 2015-2020. Funds will allow an additional 5,560 people with severe mental disorders to benefit from local services in their own homes or living environments. Allocations include:

- \$15 million to implement 21 new teams offering intensive follow-up services in the community
- \$10 million to develop 15 support teams for early intervention services (i.e., as soon as an initial psychotic episode occurs)
- \$1 million to improve the networking of institutional social services and consolidate the Crisis Support Service
- \$500,000 to the National Center of Excellence for Mental Health, dedicated to the reintegration of people with severe mental disorders into the community.

[Link](#)

Ontario

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The province released *2017 Ontario Budget: A Stronger, Healthier Ontario* focuses on health care and education. Social policy-related highlights include:

caregiving

- \$250 million to expand home and community care programs, including home nursing, personal support and physiotherapy services
- introduction of the Ontario Caregiver Tax Credit
- Ontario's new Dementia Strategy will improve and better coordinate services for those living with dementia and their caregivers by providing more than \$100 million over three years. This will include funding to expand province-wide access to community programs and other



investments to enhance access to care, information and support when a diagnosis is made

education

- \$6.4 billion over three years to continue full-day kindergarten programs and the expansion of the Ontario Student Assistance Program to provide free postsecondary education to 210,000 students

employment

- \$190 million over three years to create 40,000 new work-related opportunities for students and recent graduates

health

- OHIP+: Children and Youth Pharmacare, a new drug benefit program that fully covers the cost of prescription medications for everyone age 24 and under, regardless of family income
- \$11 billion dollars over three years to improve access to care, expand mental health and addiction services, and enhance the experience and recovery of patients. Funding includes \$1.3 billion to reduce wait times.

[Link](#)

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS/INCOME SECURITY

The government is increasing limits on cash and other liquid assets. These limits will be increased for single individuals receiving Ontario Works from \$2,500 to \$10,000, and from \$5,000 to \$15,000 for couples. For ODSP recipients, the cash and other liquid asset limits will rise from \$5,000 to \$40,000 for single individuals, and from \$7,500 to \$50,000 for couples. Increases to asset limits will take effect by January 2018.

Recognizing that people receiving social assistance may also rely on the support of family or friends, the income exemption for cash gifts will go up from \$6,000 up to \$10,000 per year in both ODSP and Ontario Works. In addition, gifts in any amount will not reduce the amount of social assistance people receive if the funds are used to pay for first and last month's rent, purchase a principal residence or buy a vehicle. These changes will take effect in September 2017.

[Link](#)

CAREGIVING

The province announced more respite services to allow people to take a break from their unpaid duties, increased education and training opportunities for caregivers, and a streamlined Ontario Caregiver Tax Credit.

[Link](#)

CHILDREN

The government is increasing access to licensed child care and by making it more affordable for families:

- 24,000 more children up to 4 years old will have access to child care in 2017-18. This addition is part of the province's plan to help 100,000

children access child care over five years, as announced in the 2016 Ontario Speech from the Throne

- parents will receive more financial support to increase affordability, including subsidies for approximately 60 percent of new child care spaces.

The province is working with families and experts to develop a child care affordability strategy that will identify further measures to lower costs and support parents.

[Link](#)

EDUCATION

Ontario is launching eight pilot projects to provide more reading support for students with learning disabilities, with participating schools in Cambridge, London, Sudbury and Windsor. These projects are intended to help students with learning disabilities get the support they need closer to home and improve their reading skills. Provincial and Demonstration School consultations in 2016 recommended putting a focus on early recognition of learning disabilities, making greater use of technology and better supporting children's reading, emotional and social needs.

[Link](#)

The province is instituting "Career Kickstart" to help young people prepare for successful careers. The program will create 40,000 work-related learning opportunities over three years for K-12 and postsecondary students as well as recent graduates.

[Link](#)

HEALTH

The province is providing grants for 15 new projects that will improve care at home and in communities.

[Link](#)

Ontario is launching a call for applications for the new Anti-Human Trafficking Community Supports Fund. It will support community-based solutions for helping human trafficking survivors and increasing protection for people at risk of being trafficked. The Community Supports Fund will provide up to \$18.7 million over three years.

[Link](#)

Ontario is expanding access to naloxone, a life-saving drug that can temporarily reverse an opioid overdose, by providing it free of charge to anyone in need in more than 200 cities and towns across the province.

[Link](#)

HOUSING

Ontario introduced the Fair Housing Plan. This set of 16 measures seeks to help more Ontarians find an affordable home, while bringing stability to the real estate market and protecting the investment of homeowners. Measures include a 15 percent Non-Resident Speculation Tax on



non-Canadian citizens, non-permanent residents and non-Canadian corporations buying residential properties containing one to six units in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

[Link](#)

The province introduced new legislation – *The Rental Fairness Act, 2017* – to address rising rental costs by expanding rent control to all private rental units, including those occupied on or after November 1, 1991.

[Link](#)

POVERTY REDUCTION

Details of the three-year Ontario Basic Income Pilot project were announced. The three-year study will test how a basic income might expand opportunities and job prospects of those living on low incomes while providing greater security for them and their families. A basic income supports people to begin or continue working or to further their education. Participants in the pilot will be able to increase their total income by combining a basic income with 50 cents from every dollar they earn at work.

Three regions will take part – Hamilton, Thunder Bay and Lindsay. Eligible participants will receive:

- up to \$16,989 per year for a single person, less 50 percent of any earned income
- up to \$24,027 per year for a couple, less 50 percent of any earned income
- up to an additional \$6,000 per year for a person with a disability.

[Link](#)

Manitoba

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Budget 2017 includes a 2.1 percent increase to core government spending in 2017-18. Measures focus on addressing key challenges, protecting and improving front-line services, and rebuilding the economy. Social policy-related highlights include:

education

- funding for Manitoba Education and Training, with an increase of \$36 million including measures that will focus on reducing barriers to post-secondary education for low-income students, increases to direct bursary support and the transformation of the Manitoba Bursary Program into a grant available to students earlier in the course of their studies
- an investment of \$1.3 billion for the kindergarten to Grade 12 education system including a guarantee that no school division will receive less than 98 percent of its prior year's funding

families

- investments in Manitoba Families, increasing the department's budget by more than \$105 million, a 5.4 percent increase over last year
- support for 501 new licensed child care spaces and 50 new home-based child care spaces this fiscal year
- increased operating grants for home-based child care providers

health

- investment in Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living including \$107.5 million in new spending with targeted investments in primary health care services including:
 - an increase of \$1.7 million for universal newborn hearing screening
 - an additional \$8.8 million for expanded dialysis treatment
 - \$1.6 million more to support mental health services

housing

- \$12.8 million for projects that will improve the supply and quality of affordable housing
- \$85 million to support Employment Income and Rental Assistance programming clients including an increase of nearly \$12 million to continue to index RentAssist benefits to 75 percent of the median market rate.

[Link](#)

HOUSING

Over the next two years, more than \$19 million will be invested in renovations to affordable and social housing properties owned by non-profit organizations across the province. The funding is part of the joint Canada-Manitoba Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) agreement. In November, the federal and provincial governments announced an expanded two-year commitment to the IAH, resulting in \$89.4 million to be invested by governments into housing priorities. Before this increase was announced, the federal and Manitoba governments had already made an eight-year, \$166-million commitment to affordable housing through the IAH agreement.

[Link](#)

MENTAL HEALTH

The *Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention Act* takes effect and applies to all universities, colleges, the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology, degree-granting religious institutions and private vocational institutions. The legislation sets out two main responsibilities for all post-secondary schools in Manitoba. The first is to take a proactive role in raising awareness on campus and improving education about sexual violence. Second, all institutions must have appropriate policies and procedures in place to respond when a student reports an incident of sexual



violence. The legislation also sets out a definition of sexual violence, which includes harassment on social media.

[Link](#)

Saskatchewan

EDUCATION

Provincial amendments to *The Education Act, 1995* will result in shifts in governance that will allow for the implementation of a sector purchasing and services initiative. This change will achieve efficiencies in the areas of transportation, bulk purchasing and common salary grid for senior school division administrators. The updated Act will standardize board member costs, reinforce the value of school community councils and provide the Minister with oversight on student success targets and financial decisions.

[Link](#)

FAMILIES

The Victims of Interpersonal Violence Act and *The Residential Tenancies Act, 2006* will be amended to allow a tenant to end a fixed-term rental agreement with 28 days' notice if they or their family members are being abused by another resident or former resident.

[Link](#)

LITERACY

The province announced that it will be restoring funding for Saskatchewan libraries back to the 2016-17 funding levels to ensure that regional and municipal libraries and the interlibrary loan services remain operational. This action will provide \$4.8 million in addition to the \$3.5 million that was announced on budget day, March 22.

[Link](#)

Alberta

CHILDREN

Twenty-two pilot Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Centres will receive funding to demonstrate the importance and viability of \$25-a-day child care in Alberta. ELCC Centres will offer an estimated 1,300 affordable, quality child care spaces. The pilot centres also respond to a number of gaps in the existing child care system, including affordability, diverse needs of children and flexible hours for parents.

[Link](#)

COMMUNITIES

The Alberta government is continuing to help communities in rural Alberta create jobs and diversify their local economies through the Community and Regional Economic Support (CARES) program. Following the first CARES application intake in 2016, the program evaluated 88 applications from regions and communities, representing approximately \$10.5 million in requested grants.

[Link](#)

WOMEN

The Status of Women grant program will make available more than \$1.5 million to community projects working to in boost women's safety, economic security and leadership. The government had originally budgeted \$500,000 for grants but has tripled the amount to more than \$1.5 million in fiscal year 2016-17.

[Link](#)

British Columbia

CAREGIVING

The province is providing \$1.746 million for palliative and hospice care. Funding will be used for patient care quality and caregiver support; patient and health-care worker safety; education, tools and resources; improved continuity of patient care; and equipment to support delivery of patient care.

[Link](#)

DISABILITY

The province is providing CanAssist at the University of Victoria with \$4.5 million to expand its services for seniors living with dementia, and children and youth with special needs. CanAssist develops unique technologies that enhance independence and quality of life. The unit will receive \$3 million in one-time funding to continue the CanStayHome initiative, which has two components:

- the development of innovative technologies
- the completion and launch of Ability411, a web-based assistive technology information service for seniors, their families and other caregivers.

[Link](#)

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The province and the Tsartlip First Nation have reached an interim reconciliation agreement, setting the stage for comprehensive reconciliation negotiations over the next two years.

[Link](#)

MENTAL HEALTH/HOUSING

The province has committed \$65 million to support the purchase and renovation of 364 units of affordable rental housing for low- to moderate-income individuals with mental health or substance use issues. The 18 projects will be operated by partner non-profit societies in each community.

[Link](#)

YOUTH

Smart phones are being made available to up to 1,000 current and former youth in care through a \$2 million fund jointly administered by the Province and TELUS. First priority will go to young people who are



enrolled in school or training through the Agreements with Young Adults (AYA) program. Youth leaving care who are attending post-secondary training will also be eligible to receive a new Lenovo laptop computer thanks to a partnership between IBM, the Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services. Under the \$150,000 provincial funding agreement, 369 young adults will receive a laptop this spring, including 19- and 20-year-olds with an AYA agreement who are pursuing post-secondary studies. IBM will provide laptop support services.

[Link](#)

Yukon Territory

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The total budget for the territory in 2017-18 is \$1.44 billion. The operations and maintenance budget is \$1.13 billion and the capital budget is \$309 million. For the first time, the budget was tabled at the same time as the Yukon Economic Forecast, allowing residents to see the economic facts that support budget decisions. Social policy-related highlights include:

education

- \$422,000 to implement a new school curriculum
- \$4 million to increase school staffing
- expanded training opportunities
- \$145,000 towards operational and activity funding related to the cultural component of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation Learning Centre

health

- \$1.6 million to support the implementation of eHealth programs and services
- \$771,000 towards enhancements in home care
- begin planning for a bilingual primary health care clinic
- funding for 11 new full-time addiction and mental wellness workers in eight communities
- \$150,000 for land-based healing program planning
- \$650,000 towards the purchase of four new ambulances

indigenous peoples

- \$100,000 annually to host the Yukon Forum four times per year
- \$150,000 to support Indigenous women's organizations
- \$325,000 to support the Yukon Aboriginal Sport Circle in delivering training to communities and to Team Yukon attending the North American Indigenous Games
- \$1.5 million for the First Nation Housing Program for new housing, renovations and rent supplements

youth

- \$200,000 in additional core funding for Yukon youth groups.

[Link](#)

MENTAL HEALTH

A bill was tabled that aims to protect transgender and other gender-diverse Yukoners from discrimination. Amendments to the *Vital Statistics Act* will remove the requirement for sex reassignment surgery before a person can change the gender on their birth registration. Amendments to the *Human Rights Act* will prohibit discrimination on the grounds of gender identity and gender expression.

[Link](#)

THRONE SPEECH

The Speech from the Throne outlined the government's four key priorities:

- creating good jobs in a sustainable economy, with a focus on strengthening and diversifying the economy and protecting the environment.
- taking a people-centered approach to wellness
- investing in communities with a priority on community-led solutions
- fostering government-to-government relationships, and restoring respectful relationships with First Nation governments.

[Link](#)

Northwest Territories

No updates this month.

Nunavut

No updates this month.