Newfoundland and Labrador

CHILDREN

The province announced an increase to the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Supplement Program. Budget 2017 includes a $1.3 million increase to the annual ELCC supplement budget to reflect an hourly pay rise for early childhood educators in 2017-18.

The province will be issuing a supplement increase for:

- Early Childhood Educators (Child Care Centre or Family Child Care) – eligible full-time early childhood educators with levels one to four certification will see pay raises (based on their level of certification) between $2,840 and $5,340 annually
- Child Care Centre Operators – eligible full-time early childhood educators with levels two to four certification will see an increase (based on their level of certification) between $2,500 and $3,500 annually
- Family Child Care Agency Home Visitors – eligible full time early childhood educators with levels two to four certification will now be eligible to apply for the ELCC Supplement (effective April 1, 2017).

Link

New Brunswick

CHILDREN

The federal and New Brunswick governments have signed a three-year, bilateral early learning and child care agreement, under which the federal government will invest close to $30 million to improve early learning and child care for preschool-aged children in the province. The province will contribute $41 million for a total of $71 million. Investments will transform at least 300 current child care providers into designated New Brunswick Early Learning Centres, which will provide more quality spaces, have lower fee structures, and implement inclusion policies and guidelines for Francophone minority communities. Funding will also be used to provide professional development opportunities for early child care educators and to support other initiatives to improve early learning and child care in the province.

Link

DISABILITY

The provincial government has changed the name of the Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons to the Premier’s Council on Disabilities. The new name better reflects appropriate disability language, bringing New Brunswick in line with other jurisdictions. It also provides a more complete picture of the council’s work.

Link

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Thousands of Indigenous artifacts are being returned to the Metepenagiag Mi’kmaq Nation. The items will be housed in the Metepenagiag

Monitors can be searched on the Canada Social Report website by date, jurisdiction and category.
Prince Edward Island

CHILDREN

The federal and Prince Edward Island governments reached a three-year, $10.5 million bilateral agreement that reaffirms their commitment and support of the unique early learning and child care needs of the province. The Island’s funding focus will be on early learning and child care access for vulnerable children such as infants, preschoolers, children whose parents work seasonally or non-standard hours, and underserved populations including newcomer families and Acadian- and French-speaking communities. Funding will also be directed towards professional training for early learning and care educators with the aim of improving the quality and richness of experiences for children.

FOOD SECURITY

The Community Food Security and Food Education Program will help community groups, schools, early child care centres and other organizations teach Island children about where local food comes from and how it is produced. The program was announced in the province’s 2017-18 operating budget with a commitment of $100,000. The program will look to connect consumers and producers, and will help increase the amount of local food on the menus of schools and licensed early childhood centres.

Québec

EDUCATION/DISABILITY

The province will spend an additional $2.6 million to support the integration of children with significant needs in early childhood education. This funding will facilitate access to, or maintain the integration into subsidized child care children with disabilities with significant needs. For the year 2017-18, the budget allocated to this measure will be $4.7 million, representing an increase of $2.6 million. Eligible child care services have until October 13, 2017, to submit their application.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES/COMMUNITY

Eight projects from Nunavik will receive support from the Northern Plan Initiatives Fund. The selected economic, social and environmental files represent a total investment of $1 million.

MENTAL HEALTH

The province introduced the Intervention Strategy to Prevent and Combat Sexual Violence in Higher Education. It will make available $23 million available over the next five years to fund 19 measures, including:

- supporting the establishment of a ‘one-stop’ service in each educational institution to welcome victims of sexual violence and refer them to resource persons
Ontario is increasing the exemption limits on compensation awards for loss or injury for people who receive support from the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Ontario Works. This change will allow individuals to benefit more from these awards without reducing their income support.

Compensation awards for pain and suffering are now fully exempt as income and assets for individuals receiving ODSP and are exempt up to $50,000 for individuals receiving Ontario Works.

These changes are part of a larger set of social assistance improvements that will be effective on September 1, 2017, which include:

- an increase in the monthly maximum deduction for disability-related employment expenses under ODSP from $300 to $1,000
- changes to health benefits available under the Transitional Health Benefit to include batteries and repairs for mobility devices
- a full income exemption under ODSP of all donations received from a religious, charitable or benevolent organization for any purpose.

INCOME SECURITY/DISABILITY

EDUCATION
Ontario is proposing to create a new French-language university, the first of its kind in the province, giving French-speaking students more opportunities to study in French. In consultation with the Francophone community, the French-language University Planning Board has provided recommendations to the government for the creation of a French-language university in Central and Southwestern Ontario, governed by and for Francophones.

Ontario has appointed two new experts to guide transformation in the province’s publicly funded education system in areas such as equity and Indigenous education.

HEALTH
The province is investing $222 million over three years to enhance Ontario’s Strategy to Prevent Opioid Addiction and Overdose. It will add more front-line harm reduction workers, expand the supply of naloxone and create new rapid access addiction clinics in every region of the province.

HOUSING
The province will invest up to $657 million for repairs and retrofits to social housing apartment buildings over five years, contingent on carbon market proceeds. The City of Toronto will receive approximately half of this total investment.

WOMEN/HEALTH
Ontario is giving women more choice over their reproductive health by making Mifegymiso, a safe and effective medical alternative to surgical abortion, available at no cost. Mifegymiso is taken to medically terminate an early pregnancy. It is a non-invasive alternative to a surgical abortion.
that women can administer themselves. By making it available at no cost, Ontario is giving women more autonomy around their reproductive health, removing a financial barrier and increasing equity of access to abortion, particularly in rural and remote areas.

Alberta
COMMUNITIES
The province’s Education Minister has met with more than 60 community organizations to gather their ideas on how to combat racism and build a more inclusive Alberta. Meetings with community groups will continue through the early fall. A public survey is available at alberta.ca/inclusive-alberta and will remain active until September 22.

Link

EDUCATION
An Act to Reduce School Fees, proclaimed in June 2017, eliminated fees for textbooks, workbooks, photocopying, and printing and paper. Transportation fees for eligible students residing more than 2.4 kilometres from their designated schools were also removed. In addition, through Budget 2017, funding is being provided to school boards to help offset any potential revenue loss as a result of this legislation.

Link

FAMILIES/MENTAL HEALTH
The province is investing $600,000 in five community projects that help newcomers who may be affected by family violence. The community agencies receiving the grant funding, through the Family and Community Safety Program, have developed culturally appropriate services that include providing education, increasing awareness, supporting victims, and engaging men and boys.

Link

GOVERNANCE
The Alberta government and the cities of Edmonton and Calgary have signed an agreement that brings the three governments together to tackle local issues, like housing and transportation planning. Work on a charter regulation and a new fiscal framework are under way.

Link

British Columbia
EDUCATION
The province is eliminating tuition fees on Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English Language Learning (ELL) programs, reversing a 2015 decision to impose tuition fees for these courses. Under that 2015 policy, ABE and ELL Learning fees were set by each institution up to a maximum of $1,600 per semester of full-time studies.

Link

POVERTY REDUCTION
Starting February 15, 2018, changes to The Payday Loans Regulations will result in a reduction in the maximum allowable cost a payday lender can charge on a loan and a reduction in the fee if there is a dishonoured payment. The maximum cost of borrowing will be reduced from 23 to 17 percent of the loan amount. This change will match British Columbia and Manitoba’s rules for payday loans.

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Link
Yukon Territory

WOMEN
The Government of Yukon has awarded $300,000 to six organizations to support the prevention of violence against Indigenous women and girls. The funding comes from the Prevention of Violence Against Aboriginal Women Fund and the Aboriginal Women’s Initiative Fund.

Northwest Territories

No updates this month.

Nunavut

No updates this month.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES/WOMEN
The Minister’s Advisory Council on Aboriginal Women has drawn on the expertise of many respected Indigenous women. This year, it will enhance its youth voice as part of its mandate to advise government on how to improve the quality of life for Indigenous women in BC.

MINIMUM WAGE
Effective September 15, 2017, the province’s minimum wage will increase to $11.35 per hour from $10.85 per hour, giving BC the third-highest minimum wage among Canada’s provinces, up from seventh position. The liquor servers’ wage is also rising by 50 cents to $10.10 per hour. Other minimum wage provisions in the employment standards regulation will also receive increases in line with the general minimum wage increase of 4.6 percent. This change includes the daily rate for live-in home support workers and live-in camp leaders as well as the monthly rates for resident caretakers and the minimum farm worker piece rates for harvesters of certain fruits and vegetables.