



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

August 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

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



Heritage Park, which also received combined funding of \$300,000 from the provincial and federal governments.

[Link](#)

POVERTY REDUCTION

The provincial government is putting new rules in place for payday lenders that will ensure better protection for the consumer. The new rules will:

- require anyone offering, arranging or providing a payday loan in New Brunswick to obtain a license from the Financial and Consumer Services Commission
- establish requirements for licensees and allow the commission to take action on unlicensed activity and those not in compliance with the legislation
- help consumers by requiring payday lenders to provide disclosure on the cost of borrowing, setting maximum rates and fees that can be charged, as well as providing consumers with cancellation rights.

The Financial and Consumer Services Commission is responsible for the enforcement of the new rules, which will be in place in January 2018.

[Link](#)

SENIORS/COMMUNITIES

Moncton has been named the first age-friendly community in New Brunswick, after successfully establishing policies and providing services to promote healthy aging and wellness. The provincial government's Age-Friendly Communities Recognition Program was developed to encourage communities to take sustainable action in order to become more age-friendly. The award acknowledges the success of New Brunswick communities in establishing policies and services to promote healthy aging and wellness.

Another 21 communities in New Brunswick are on their way to becoming age-friendly. To receive recognition, communities must have completed four milestones developed by the World Health Organization:

- have a resolution passed by local government
- establish an age-friendly committee in the community
- conduct an age-friendly assessment of the community
- develop and implement an action plan.

[Link](#)

Nova Scotia

No updates this month.

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.

[Link](#)

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.

[Link](#)

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.

[Link](#)

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.

[Link](#)

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



- assisting educational institutions in the implementation of academic accommodations for the victim following the unveiling of sexual violence
- helping each educational institution develop a code of conduct and a policy to address sexual violence, targeted to all staff and students.

[Link](#)

Ontario

CAREGIVING

The province has appointed an experienced judge of the Ontario Court of Appeal to lead an independent public inquiry into the policies, procedures and oversight of long-term care homes. As part of her mandate, Justice Gillese will review the accountability measures in place to ensure they meet the objectives of the *Long-Term Care Homes Act* and provide recommendations to improve the safety and well-being of residents.

[Link](#)

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.

[Link](#)

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.

[Link](#)

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.

[Link](#)

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.

[Link](#)

INCOME SECURITY/DISABILITY

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.

[Link](#)

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES/EDUCATION

The Government of Canada and 23 Anishinabek Nation First Nations signed the historic Anishinabek Nation Education Agreement. It recognizes Anishinabek control over education on reserve from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 in 23 Participating First Nations in Ontario. The Agreement is the first of its kind in Ontario and is the largest education self-government agreement in Canada due to the number of First Nations involved. It supports the Anishinabek Nation's vision of a quality Anishinabek Education System that promotes Anishinabe culture and language and improves education outcomes for Anishinabek students.

[Link](#)

The federal government is investing \$4.6 million over three years and Ontario is investing \$5.5 million for the 2017-18 school year to address the immediate needs of Nishnawbe Aski Nation students attending school in Thunder Bay. This funding brings the total amount of new federal support for students who leave their communities to \$14.3 million. The goal of these investments is to ensure that students have safe and healthy school choices in an environment that offers culturally relevant and appropriate learning in the immediate term.

[Link](#)

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.

[Link](#)

Manitoba

COMMUNITIES

The Manitoba government has revamped its community development programs and created a single portal for intake, assessment and awarding support. Priority will be given to new applications focused on accessibility, green space and active transportation, and newcomer support. Applications will be accepted for funding from Community Places, Community Planning Assistance, Hometown Manitoba, Neighbourhoods Alive! – Community Initiatives, Neighbourhoods Alive! Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and Partner 4 Growth.

[Link](#)

HEALTH

Manitoba has secured an additional \$10.9 million in federal health funding and commitments to support key provincial priorities. For the 2017-18 fiscal year, the federal government will provide Manitoba with targeted funding of \$7.27 million in funding for home and community care, and \$3.63 million for initiatives to address mental health and addictions.

[Link](#)

INCOME SECURITY

As a result of *The Pooled Registered Pension Plans (Manitoba) Act* and regulations coming into force on August 1, the province is moving forward to make another retirement savings option available to Manitobans. Pooled registered pension plans (PRPPs) are defined contribution-style plans set up and administered by federally-licensed providers. The Manitoba legislation and regulations set out rules and processes to establish these plans in the province. The final step is signing a multilateral agreement with the federal government and several other provinces, including Québec, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Nova Scotia and Ontario this fall. Once Manitoba signs onto the multilateral agreement, licensed providers will be able to offer PRPPs in the province.

[Link](#)

Saskatchewan

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.

[Link](#)

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](#)

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES/MENTAL HEALTH

Preliminary data point to emerging trends that First Nations peoples are overrepresented in the current overdose health emergency, similar to other health indicators driven by the social determinants of health. The document [Overdose Data and First Nations in BC Preliminary Findings](#) provides a snapshot in time of First Nations overdose events from Janu-



ary 1, 2015, to November 30, 2016, and First Nations overdose deaths between January 1, 2015, and July 31, 2016.

First Nations leaders and health experts in BC propose four broad action areas to guide a systems-wide provincial response to address the opioid overdose emergency in partnership, starting from the highest level of acuteness:

- prevent people who overdose from dying
- keep people safe when using
- create an accessible range of treatment options
- support people on their healing journey.

All actions must include culturally safe and trauma-informed responses as they are implemented.

[Link](#)

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.

[Link](#)

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.

[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.

[Link](#)

Northwest Territories

No updates this month.

Nunavut

No updates this month.