



Canada Social Report  
Provincial/Territorial  
Policy Monitor

September 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

### CAREGIVING

The province is increasing the base monthly subsidy rate it provides to personal care home operators by \$80 for each subsidized resident, bringing the total monthly subsidy up to \$2,375 per person. It is the third rise in three years for a total additional investment of \$16.3 million. The monthly subsidy covers the cost of care and accommodation for individuals who require assistance with the activities of daily living. Rate increases reflect the rising costs of providing quality care in personal care homes.

[Link](#)

## New Brunswick

### LITERACY

The provincial government is investing \$2.25 million to support improved reading among Grade 2 students through programming by Elementary Literacy Inc. The organization offers the Elementary Literacy Friends program to Anglophone schools and the Communautés littératie enfants francophones in Francophone schools. Funding over a five-year period will assist Elementary Literacy Inc. deliver volunteer-based reading programs in schools across the province.

[Link](#)

### HEALTH/SENIORS

In response to system pressures created by a growing number of seniors, the province is integrating three primary health care resources – Ambulance New Brunswick, the Extra-Mural Program and Tele-Care 811. Combining these resources will result in better coordination and collaboration among healthcare providers. The new system will permit residents to stay in their own homes as long as possible, receive greater help navigating the healthcare system and experience greater continuity of care.

[Link](#)

### MENTAL HEALTH

A team approach to mental health pilot tested in Moncton since 2013 is being expanded province-wide. Flexible Assertive Community Treatment teams use a multidisciplinary approach to support people with mental health issues. Teams will emphasize resiliency during the ups and downs of the recovery process, adapting the intensity of support to each person's needs. Improving access to mental health and addiction services is a component of the federal-provincial healthcare funding agreement reached last December. It will provide an additional \$229.4 million in targeted healthcare funding over the next 10 years, including \$104.3 million to support mental health initiatives.

[Link](#)

A mental health docket will be reintroduced to the provincial court in Saint John in early November, four years after the last case of the former mental health court program was heard. The new model of service delivery for the mental health docket is based on past practices as well as



an existing model in Nova Scotia. It has also been informed by research at the University of New Brunswick on best practices for addictions and mental health courts.

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The Integrated Service Delivery model for providing mental health, addiction, intervention and social services to children and youth has been expanded to all public schools in the province. As part of the expansion, the government is investing \$8.8 million, which includes the hiring of more than 100 new front-line staff in addition to the more than 200 existing staff. Through the model, government departments, schools, community agencies and service providers have come together to help children and youth who have emotional, behavioural, mental health or addiction needs. Services are available in schools and other community settings.

[Link](#)

### SENIORS

The government has accepted the recommendations contained in a strategy developed by the Council on Aging and will implement 77 action items. The province will establish an aging secretariat and create a roundtable on aging to oversee the implementation of the recommendations. The secretariat will provide support to the provincial roundtable and government departments on issues related to seniors.

[Link](#)

## Nova Scotia

### DISABILITY

Nova Scotia's first *Accessibility Act* has been proclaimed, part of government's commitment to be accessible by 2030. The legislation puts in place a process to establish and meet standards for accessibility, and to remove and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities.

[Link](#)

### EDUCATION/LABOUR MARKET

The province will pay the cost of tuition for apprentices returning for technical training this fall, a \$1.3 million investment. The training is a requirement of the apprenticeship program and is needed for apprentices to progress to certification. Apprentices typically complete a six to ten-week block of technical training after every 1,800 hours of on-the-job training, until certification. The removal of tuition will save apprentices up to \$900 per year. Approximately 2,200 apprentices receive technical training each year. This number is expected to increase with the removal of tuition.

[Link](#)

### HEALTH

Life-saving naloxone kits are now available in 240 community pharmacies across the province.

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### HEALTH/WOMEN

The provincial government is supporting more choice for women by making Mifegymiso, commonly known as the abortion pill, available to Nova Scotia women at no cost.

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### INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The province will support families and communities through the emotional challenges expected when the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls comes to Nova Scotia next month. In partnership with the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association and the federal government, three community outreach specialists who have experience in dealing with trauma have been hired to provide cultural support to families and community members until March 31, 2019.

[Link](#)

### THRONE SPEECH

The government committed to building an inclusive, innovative and entrepreneurial province where everyone has the opportunity to succeed. The fall legislative agenda will include:

- amendments to the *Workers Compensation Act* to make it easier for emergency response workers diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder to access benefits
- amendments to the *Pre-primary Education Act* regarding the implementation of pre-primary programming
- amendments to the *Municipal Government Act* and *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* that will support the province's municipalities and villages in being more open and accountable for expense reporting
- the *Adult Capacity and Decision Making Act*, which replaces the *Incompetent Persons Act*
- the *Intimate Images and Cyber Protection Act*, which replaces the *Cyber-safety Act*.

[Link](#)

## Prince Edward Island

### CHILDREN

An increase in the province's child care subsidy program of \$300,000 will benefit more than 1,600 children. Rates for before- and after-school child care and private sitters will increase, and the monthly subsidy will go up by \$120 for eligible families whose income is below a particular level. The paperwork required to confirm income has also been simplified; parents now need to only confirm income once a year instead of every month. This subsidy rate increase will complement enhancements coming later this year related to federal funding to Education, Early Learning and Culture to enable access to the child care subsidy program for some



pre-school children whose parents are not in the workforce or in training.  
[Link](#)

## Québec

### SENIORS

The Government of Québec is providing \$5,774,966 to support financially initiatives that promote the well-being of seniors in the Montréal region.

[Link](#)

## Ontario

### CHILDREN

More than 80 percent of schools across Ontario are now offering before- and after-school programs for 4- to 12-year olds. As of September 1, 2017, Ontario now requires school boards to provide before- and after-school programs for children up to age 12, in all publicly funded elementary schools serving students up to Grade 6, where there is sufficient demand.

[Link](#)

### DISABILITY

Ontario has established a new Employers' Partnership Table to advise the government on innovative ways to connect more people with disabilities to jobs and businesses to talent.

[Link](#)

### DEMOGRAPHICS

Ontario is investing in the vitality and sustainability of Francophone communities across the province through *Programme Franco*, a new Francophone community grant program geared towards community groups, municipalities and not-for-profit organizations.

[Link](#)

### EDUCATION

Ontario is investing in new and expanded well-being programs for students, including:

- funding for active transportation, such as walking school buses and biking to school programs that create more physical activity opportunities for students
- doubling funding for school boards to support local well-being priorities, including school breakfast programs, bullying prevention, recreational activities and staff professional development
- increasing funding for School Mental Health ASSIST – a provincial support team that provides leadership, resources and other support to help boards promote student mental health and well-being
- new and expanded programming to support staff well-being and

violence prevention in the classroom.

[Link](#)

Ontario is taking steps to give students and parents better information about a child's progress and launching a multi-year initiative to modernize curricula and assessment tools from Kindergarten to Grade 12. The goal is to improve student achievement in core skills such as math, and focusing more on transferable life skills, such as communication, problem-solving, critical thinking and global citizenship.

[Link](#)

The province released the [Education Equity Action Plan](#), a new three-year strategy to reduce systemic barriers and ensure that all students in Ontario can reach their full potential. The strategy includes:

- introducing a renewed approach to Grade 9 in which all students are better able to explore pathways to work, college, apprenticeship and university
- identifying and addressing disparities in suspension, expulsion, and exclusion rates among certain student populations
- enhancing other school and classroom practices to ensure they reflect and respond to student and staff diversity, including more culturally relevant teaching resources, curriculum and assessment
- enhancing diversity in hiring and promotion, and tying accountability for equity to the performance appraisals of principals, vice-principals and directors, to ensure that the diversity of teachers, staff and school system leaders reflects the diversity of students
- collecting and analyzing demographic data to more precisely address the systemic barriers to student success through data-informed decision-making
- applying an equity, inclusion and human rights perspective to internal organizational structures, policies, programs and practices.

[Link](#)

### EMPLOYMENT

Ontario is supporting employers and employees by raising awareness of workplace rights and responsibilities through the new Employment Standards Training and Education Program. The program will provide grants to non-profit organizations that will develop projects that educate vulnerable workers or small- and mid-sized businesses on their rights and duties under the [Employment Standards Act](#).

[Link](#)

### GOVERNANCE

Ontario is creating additional ridings in Northern Ontario. Adding the ridings of Kiiwetinoong, Mushkegowuk, Timmins and Kenora-Rainy River would result in a total of four ridings in Ontario's far North where



currently there are two.

[Link](#)

### HOMELESSNESS

Ontario is partnering with municipalities across the province to provide more supportive housing and other services for those in need, to reduce poverty and end chronic homelessness. It will invest in local, innovative approaches to get people experiencing chronic homelessness into housing and provide them with the support they need to stay there. This work expands on the supportive housing program announced in March 2017 and is part of the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy update.

[Link](#)

### HOUSING

The Condominium Authority of Ontario is now operational and aims to better protect condo owners and residents. It will help ensure condo owners and residents are equipped with the tools and information they need by:

- providing owners and purchasers with information about their rights and responsibilities
- creating an accessible and affordable dispute resolution service, which will take effect on November 1, 2017
- providing important tools and information about living in a condo
- offering mandatory training for condo directors beginning on November 1, 2017.

[Link](#)

The province is placing new requirements on the circumstances in which landlords can evict tenants. Effective September 1, 2017, when landlords end a tenancy so that they or a family member can use a rental unit, landlords must:

- provide one month's rent to the tenant as compensation or offer the tenant another acceptable rental unit
- express intent to occupy the unit for at least one year. If the landlord advertises, re-rents or demolishes/converts the unit within one year, she or he will be considered to have acted in bad faith unless they can prove otherwise, and could face a fine of up to \$25,000.

[Link](#)

There are 600,000 college and university students going back to school this fall, and Ontario has taken steps to protect those renting off-campus from unfair rent increases and evictions. As part of its Fair Housing Plan, Ontario has expanded rent control to all private market rental units across

the province to protect tenants from unfair rent increases. Students living off-campus, including in condominiums, basement apartments and houses will have their rent capped at the annual rent increase guideline of 1.8 percent in 2018.

[Link](#)

Ontario is unlocking surplus provincial land to create more than 2,000 new rental housing units in Toronto.

[Link](#)

### INCOME SECURITY

Ontario is enhancing the province's social assistance programs by:

- boosting social assistance rates by two percent for all people receiving social assistance
- helping people who live in remote and northern communities – who often pay more for basic needs like groceries and transportation – by increasing the Remote Communities Allowance
- raising limits on cash and other assets so that people can better manage financial setbacks
- increasing the income exemption for cash gifts, to better recognize that people receiving social assistance may also receive support from family or friends
- streamlining rules.

[Link](#)

### MINIMUM WAGE

Ontario is increasing the general minimum wage for the fourth consecutive year, which will bring the wage up to \$11.60 on October 1, 2017.

[Link](#)

## Manitoba

### COMMUNITIES

The governments of Canada and Manitoba announced five transportation projects in rural communities. The work is being funded through the province's Small Communities Transportation Fund, which is supported federally using a portion of Manitoba's annual federal Gas Tax Fund allocation.

[Link](#)

### MINIMUM WAGE

Manitobans will see a minimum wage increase on October 1 as a result of *The Minimum Wage Indexation Act*. The increase of 15 cents per hour will raise the current minimum wage to \$11.15 from \$11.00.

[Link](#)



## Saskatchewan

### EDUCATION

New data from the 2016-17 school year shows that the high school graduation rate has increased to 76.5 percent. This is up from 75.6 percent in 2015-16, and the highest it has been in the last 20 years.

[Link](#)

### MINIMUM WAGE

Saskatchewan's minimum wage will go up from \$10.72 to \$10.96 on October 1, 2017. The 2.2 percent rise was calculated based on a weighted average of the increases to the Consumer Price Index and the average hourly wage for Saskatchewan.

[Link](#)

## Alberta

### CHILDREN/INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The province celebrated the opening of the first provincially licensed on-reserve child care centre. Licensing of the child care program in the First Nation community in Grouard, in northern Alberta, means parents can apply for the provincial child care subsidy and the child care program can apply for accreditation funding.

[Link](#)

### MINIMUM WAGE

The province's minimum wage rate increases on October 1, 2017, to \$13.60 from \$12.20. This is the third step in the Government of Alberta's gradual phase-in of a \$15-per-hour minimum wage by October 1, 2018.

[Link](#)

### WOMEN

The province launched a pilot program in Calgary to help remove barriers and expand leadership opportunities for women. The six-month program matches women with mentors who are leaders in the areas of engineering, construction, finance, academics and business development.

[Link](#)

## British Columbia

### BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The province's new government released a budget update. It will focus on the priorities outlined in the Throne Speech: making life more affordable, improving services and building the economy.

[Link](#)

### EDUCATION/YOUTH

Young people leaving foster care now have access to free tuition at all 25 of British Columbia's public post-secondary institutions. Students accessing the program must be:

- from British Columbia
- be between the ages 19 and 26
- have been in care for a minimum of 24 months.

[Link](#)

### GOVERNANCE

The BC government's Startup in Residence (STIR) program, the first of its kind in Canada, is helping local startups do business with the Province while improving services to residents.

STIR is a pilot project that has made the provincial government a reference customer for five BC technology companies to test and co-develop solutions to public sector challenges. The cutting-edge program combines innovation from tech companies with public sector expertise, to co-develop and launch solutions during a 16-week residency that will culminate in the improvement of provincial services.

From providing social workers with real-time available housing options for children in need, to helping school districts analyze complex data to better understand trends and patterns that affect educational outcomes, each company is tackling a specific tech challenge identified by the province.

[Link](#)

### HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS

A new program will provide hundreds of new modular housing units to help municipalities tackle homelessness. The BC government has committed \$66 million toward 600 units of modular housing, which will be situated on land provided by the City of Vancouver. The modular units will be staffed 24/7 by non-profit housing providers and will include support services to help people in need stabilize and rebuild their lives. This is part of the Province's plan to construct 2,000 modular units over two years throughout BC by working in partnership with interested communities. The first 1,000 units are expected to be in operation by early 2018. In addition to modular housing, BC Housing is working with communities to finalize plans to build 1,700 new units of affordable rental housing that were announced in the 2017 Budget Update.

[Link](#)

### INDIGENOUS PEOPLES/COMMUNITIES

All BC First Nations as well as Métis-serving agencies will share \$6.4 million to keep Indigenous families together and improve outcomes for children and youth. Each of the 203 First Nations and the seven agencies that serve Métis people in the province are invited to apply for \$30,000 by October 20, 2017. The application must include a proposal outlining their community's prevention and family support needs and how the funding can help them address those needs.

[Link](#)



## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES/GOVERNANCE

The co-chairs of the Aboriginal Justice Council, Attorney General and Minister for Public Safety and Solicitor General signed a BC Indigenous Justice Strategy Memorandum of Understanding. The BC Indigenous Justice Strategy will focus on reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, decreasing the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in the justice system, addressing violence against Indigenous peoples – especially women and girls, improving access to justice and justice services for Indigenous peoples, and designing services for Indigenous peoples that are culturally relevant and appropriate.

The ministries will be providing capacity funding of \$400,000, to sustain the BC Aboriginal Justice Council's participation in this work and to enable joint development of the strategy over the next two years.

[Link](#)

## MENTAL HEALTH

The BC government is launching a community crisis fund and scaling up rapid access to addiction treatment as part of a province-wide plan to stem the overdose emergency and help save lives.

[Link](#)

## THRONE SPEECH

The provincial government set out three priorities for the coming legislative session:

- make life more affordable for British Columbians. Combined with with action already taken to remove bridge tolls, increasing income assistance and disability assistance rates and making university and college tuition free for former children in care, the government will:
  - make housing more affordable by closing fixed-term loopholes on leases to abolish unfair rent increases and increase the stock of affordable housing around the province
  - establish a fair wages commission with the goal of delivering a \$15-an-hour minimum wage
  - fix significant problems at ICBC and BC Hydro, while holding down costs to residents
  
- improve services by:
  - restoring proper funding to schools to give students the resources and supports they need to succeed
  - promoting and protecting quality public health care, including tackling BC's overdose crisis and expanding treatment for people living with addictions
  - providing people with disabilities access to the transportation supports they need, including an annual bus pass for those who want one, and working with communities and the federal government on new transit and transportation projects

- build a strong, sustainable economy, where all British Columbians share in the benefits of the province's resources, innovation and talent by:
  - continue to sustainably support traditional industries, including forestry, mining, agriculture and aquaculture as well as natural gas development
  - make BC a world leader in engineered wood products and value-added resource innovation
  - deliver a new capital investment plan that will focus on building new schools, hospitals and roads, and create well-paying jobs throughout the province.

[Link](#)

## Yukon Territory

*No updates this month.*

## Northwest Territories

### INCOME SECURITY

As of September 2017, the Senior Citizen Supplementary Benefit is increased. NWT senior citizens who are receiving the federal Guaranteed Income Supplement automatically receive the NWT Senior Citizen Supplementary Benefit on the same cheque. Previously \$160 per month, the benefit is now \$196 per month and will support 1,200 seniors.

Through a joint initiative with the Department of Finance, NWT Child Benefit rates increased in July 2017. More families are now able to access this benefit, as the family income threshold for eligibility has increased to \$80,000. Some 2,200 families are benefiting from these changes.

[Link](#)

### MENTAL HEALTH

The government tabled the Child and Youth Mental Wellness Action Plan. [Link](#)

## Nunavut

### GOVERNANCE/INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

In an effort to support employees to use the Inuit Language as a working language of the public service, the Government of Nunavut (GN) approved the Inuit Language Incentive Policy, which will be implemented beginning October 2, 2017. GN employees who demonstrate proficiency will be paid an annual allowance based on their proficiency level: fluency – \$1,500; fluency plus reading and writing – \$2,400; and language expert – \$5,000. Language testing to assess proficiency level will be done by Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit.

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