



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

October 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

No updates this month.

New Brunswick

CHILDREN

A new government program will help offset some costs for residents who adopt children. The one-time \$1,000 grant will be available to those who have adopted a child under the age of 18 in the 12 months prior to their funding application. The adoption must meet the province's adoption requirements and the adoption order must be issued and/or recognized by the Province of New Brunswick. The adoptee must be living permanently with the adoptive family in the province.

[Link](#)

POVERTY REDUCTION

An awareness campaign, *Small Acts, Big Impact*, challenges New Brunswickers to choose a small but meaningful act of volunteerism to help overcome poverty in the province. By visiting [smallacts.ca](#), participants can choose their own small act, such as reading to a child, joining a food box program or volunteering for a ride-sharing program. They can also find contact information for local organizations that are looking for help, volunteers or donations.

[Link](#)

Nova Scotia

CHILDREN/RECREATION

Starting in December 2017, foster families will receive automatic payments to help cover recreational activities for children and youth in the care of the province. The quarterly payments will be \$90 for children who are 4 years old or younger, and \$150 for children and youth from ages 5 to 18 years. The annual amount for recreation per child will be \$600; an increase of \$100. The Recreation Automatic Payment brings the total cost of this year's additional investments to \$1.6 million. In July, the province increased the per diem rate per child, as well as the babysitting rate, and introduced a \$50 monthly automatic payment for mileage.

[Link](#)

DISABILITY

Nova Scotia has introduced a new act that will recognize the autonomy and independence of adults who have diminished capacity while protecting those who cannot make certain decisions for themselves. The *Adult Capacity and Decision-making Act* recognizes the individual's right to live their own life and make their own decisions. Where that isn't possible because of an impairment in the individual's capacity, the act offers an avenue for someone to represent them and make necessary decisions on their behalf. The bill ensures protection of the adult's well-being and financial interests. It aligns with Canada's interpretation of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

[Link](#)



FAMILIES

The province is updating the *Solemnization of Marriage Act* to make it more inclusive, to align with federal legislation and to provide enhanced security to those who are marrying.

[Link](#)

Amendments passed in fall 2016 to strengthen the province's ability to collect court-ordered child and spousal support are now in effect.

[Link](#)

Prince Edward Island

CHILDREN

An increase in the province's child care subsidy program of \$300,000 will benefit more than 1,600 Island children. Rates for before- and after-school child care and private sitters will increase, and the monthly subsidy will increase by \$120 for eligible families whose income is below a designated level.

[Link](#)

LABOUR MARKET

The federal Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour and the Newfoundland and Labrador Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour announced the harmonization of apprenticeship requirements for six new Red Seal trades. In total, 16 Red Seal trades will now be harmonized across Atlantic provinces as the result of a new federal investment of \$960,000. It is expected that 15,000 apprentices per year across Atlantic Canada will benefit as a result of this harmonization.

[Link](#)

Québec

No updates this month.

Ontario

CAREGIVING

Ontario is strengthening home and community care by increasing access to services by 2.6 million additional hours and developing new patient- and family-friendly supports. The province will also create innovative self-directed care models, launch a new caregiver organization, introduce a new framework for home care assessments and planning, and provide additional funding for community supports.

[Link](#)

CHILDREN

The province will be providing school boards with funding for transportation services for children and youth in care. Funding will also be allocated to Ontario's children's aid societies, including Indigenous societies, to connect children and youth in care with an educational liaison. The liaison agencies will assist students in navigating the school system and

developing educational plans and goals, and coordinate available supports within the school and community.

[Link](#)

COMMUNITIES

The province released its [second progress report](#) describing the establishment and action taken by local community hubs. Report highlights include:

- the unveiling of the online Community Hubs Resource Network, which offers practical tools, data including GIS mapping and advice to help communities at all stages of hub development
- the launch of the Surplus Property Transition Initiative, a new and innovative application-based program designed to provide a better opportunity for community organizations to acquire surplus provincial, school board or hospital properties.

[Link](#)

COMMUNITIES/LITERACY

Building on a commitment made in the [Ontario Culture Strategy](#), the province is investing \$3 million through the Improving Library Digital Services fund to support up to 307 libraries and library organizations across the province. The funding includes \$1 million for rural, remote and First Nation public libraries.

[Link](#)

EDUCATION

Using a six-week competition format, Ontario is encouraging entrepreneurs and students to offer their technical expertise and innovative ideas to develop digital solutions to help high school students navigate their education-to-career transitions.

[Link](#)

The province is launching a new autism pilot project in 18 school boards in the 2017-18 school year. The pilot program will:

- provide dedicated spaces for external practitioners of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) to deliver on-site autism services
- give education assistants access to voluntary 40-hour online targeted training and professional learning sessions
- give funding to hire an ABA expertise professional with Board Certified Behaviour Analyst certification/qualification or equivalent qualification.

[Link](#)

EDUCATION/HEALTH

By fall 2018, all school boards across Ontario will be required to have policies in place to improve the safety of students with anaphylaxis, asthma, diabetes and epilepsy. Boards will be required to provide students



who have medical conditions with a plan of care, which outlines contacts and procedures tailored to individual needs.

[Link](#)

INCOME SECURITY

Four hundred people from Hamilton, Brantford, Brant County, and Thunder Bay and the surrounding area will be receiving a basic income this month as part of the Ontario Basic Income Pilot. The three-year, 4,000-participant pilot is testing whether a basic income can better support vulnerable workers, and improve health and education outcomes for people on low incomes. As part of the next phase of the pilot, engagement will continue with First Nations and provincial and territorial organizations on a First Nations basic income pilot.

[Link](#)

LABOUR MARKET

To bolster provincial competitiveness, the government plans to increase the number of postsecondary students graduating in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines by 25 percent over the next five years. This initiative will boost the number of STEM graduates from 40,000 to 50,000 per year.

[Link](#)

MENTAL HEALTH

Ontario is expanding psychotherapy programs across the province, in an effort to support more than 100,000 people with conditions such as anxiety and depression. The province will invest in the following programs:

- in-person individual and group psychotherapy counselling programs coordinated through Ontario's four specialty mental health hospitals
- Bounce Back, a coaching program managed by Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario, which helps people learn skills to address problems related to moderate depression and anxiety
- online mental health self-management tools coordinated by the Ontario Telemedicine Network.

These programs will be offered province-wide over the next three years. They and other mental health supports can be accessed by speaking to primary care providers, visiting local community mental health and addictions centres or by contacting [ConnexOntario](#).

[Link](#)

SENIORS

Ontario is now accepting applications from organizations interested in opening new Seniors Active Living Centres, to develop up to 40 new centres across the province over the next three years. The province currently supports a network of 263 centres whose programs help seniors

to remain independent, healthy and active, safe and socially-connected. These centres serve more than 100,000 people each year.

[Link](#)

WOMEN

Ontario passed legislation that will protect a woman's right to choose and access abortion services without fear of interference, intimidation or harassment. The *Safe Access to Abortion Services Act, 2017* allows for safe access zones to be established around facilities that offer abortion services as well as the homes and offices of regulated abortion providers.

[Link](#)

YOUTH

The province launched *YouthVoiceON*, a new online platform that will make it easier for youth in Ontario, ages 14 to 29, to talk directly with government about policy development. Every month, *YouthVoiceON* will feature a new topic with questions to spark new conversations, and feedback will help shape the design of future government programs. The first topic will cover post-secondary education and will ask youth about the barriers they may face as they consider university, college or an apprenticeship after high school.

[Link](#)

YOUTH/LABOUR MARKET

The Industry-Led Career Initiative will help Black youth with postsecondary education prepare for their careers and increase their representation in sectors such as engineering, insurance and finance. The effort is part of the [Ontario Black Youth Action Plan](#), a four-year, \$47-million commitment to help reduce disparities for more than 10,000 Black children, youth and families in communities across the province.

[Link](#)

Manitoba

CHILDREN

The province launched a new plan to end the crisis in the child welfare system and create better outcomes for children. It will address four essential areas of reform:

- development of a community-based prevention model
- creation of lifelong connections for children through reunification and permanence
- an outcomes-based funding model that will replace the old system of offering incentives for larger caseloads and longer stays in care
- reform of legislation including the creation of a legislative review committee to modernize *The Child and Family Services Act*.

[Link](#)



SOCIAL FINANCE

The Manitoba government is partnering with Canada's Social Impact Bond (SIB) proponent to guide the implementation of a made-in-Manitoba strategy. MaRS Centre for Impact Investing, a non-profit initiative of MaRS Discovery District, was selected following a competitive request for proposals. MaRS will help implement the SIB strategy by early 2018 by providing expertise and mediation between the government, social service providers and investors.

[Link](#)

Saskatchewan

No updates this month.

Alberta

MENTAL HEALTH

Edmonton and Lethbridge are the first cities in Alberta approved to offer supervised consumption services to people at risk of overdosing.

[Link](#)

POVERTY REDUCTION

The Alberta government launched the [Action on Poverty](#) website featuring provincial initiatives that help prevent and reduce poverty.

[Link](#)

SENIORS

New legislation would give residents of long-term and licensed supportive care facilities more say in their quality of life and how their homes are run. The Resident and Family Councils Act would guarantee residents and families the right to establish self-governing councils at any long-term care and licensed supportive living facilities with four or more residents.

[Link](#)

British Columbia

DISABILITY/TRANSPORTATION

Beginning January 1, 2018, annual bus passes will be available to people on disability assistance through a new transportation supplement. People who have the Persons with Disabilities designation can use the new supplement for an annual bus pass or for other transportation needs, such as HandyDART. As individual needs can change over time the supplement will also provide flexibility. People can apply for the BC Bus Pass at any time during the year. They can also cancel their bus pass at any time and use the supplement for other transportation costs.

[Link](#)

EDUCATION

Teachers, school districts and post-secondary institutions will have one more year to prepare for the implementation of the new Grade 11-12 curriculum.

[Link](#)

GOVERNANCE

The provincial government tabled the *Electoral Reform Referendum 2018 Act*, which sets out the terms for a province-wide referendum on proportional representation. The government also introduced legislation to amend the *Constitution Act* to reduce the number of seats required for recognized political party status from four to two; to change the fixed date election to a Saturday in October; and to strengthen the institutional stability of government in the event, for example, of a natural disaster.

[Link](#)

HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH

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

[Link](#)

MINIMUM WAGE

The province launched the Fair Wages Commission. Functioning at an arm's length to government, it will develop a plan to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and make recommendations to address the discrepancy between the minimum wage and living wages. Members will also be considering and making recommendations around other wage rates under the Employment Standards Regulation.

[Link](#)

The provincial government announced the names of a 27-person Advisory Forum on Poverty Reduction that will shape BC's first Poverty Reduction Strategy. Forum members include poverty advocates, people with lived experience, Indigenous people, academics and representatives of the labour and business communities.

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Yukon Territory

HEALTH/GOVERNANCE

The Government of Yukon tabled Bill No. 11, which will amend the *Health Act* to disband the Health and Social Services Council. The council is an independent advisory body that was established in 1990 to review major policy, legislative and program initiatives, and make recommendations to Cabinet in the areas of health, justice and education. Although the council has been a valuable resource, new technology will allow the government to interact more easily with residents.

[Link](#)



The Government of Yukon tabled Bill No. 7, the *Act to Amend the Dental Profession Act*, which will authorize dental hygienists to offer services that are not permitted under the current Act. At present, only dental therapists are authorized to provide dental care to children through the Yukon Children's Dental Program.

[Link](#)

HOUSING

A new website, *Looking for Housing?*, has been launched by the Yukon Housing Corporation. It provides information on where and how to find housing in the territory and forms part of the Housing Action Plan for Yukon. For residents without internet access, information cards are available at nonprofit service providers and public places, including emergency shelters and public libraries.

[Link](#)

MENTAL HEALTH

Proposed changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act would permit the territorial government to introduce regulations to protect the mental health of Yukoners in their workplaces and prevent psychological injuries, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, from occurring.

[Link](#)

Northwest Territories

No updates this month.

Nunavut

No updates this month.