

Campaign 2000 e-Bulletin

Summer 2016



Happy Canada Day! Campaign 2000 Welcomes the New Canada Child Benefit

With child poverty reduction on the federal government's agenda, Campaign 2000 has been engaging its networks, the media and governments at all levels in order to win the long overdue measures needed to end child and family poverty for good. Our Summer 2016 e-Bulletin provides a snapshot of our coalition members' anti-poverty work in each province and territory and our collective work at the national level to secure the strong federal leadership required to eradicate poverty.

A New Partner in Ottawa

In December 2015, we were pleased to receive an invitation from the Prime Minister's Office to attend the Speech from the Throne. The speech sought to set a new course for social policy making in Canada, which was then outlined in very ambitious mandate letters, particularly to the new Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Jean Yves Duclos. Campaign 2000 first met the Minister with our national childcare partners in January 2016 and was pleased to receive a phone call post-budget to share [our coalition's reactions and recommendations for further action](#).

The New Canada Child Benefit

[Campaign 2000 Welcomes the New Canada Child Benefit](#)

The new Canada Child Benefit (CCB) just arrived as of last Friday, Canada Day. The bolstered, tax-free and progressively-delivered income transfer is projected to reduce child and family poverty significantly. The design of the benefit is very similar to proposals [Campaign 2000 has put forward since 2012](#) and our network recognizes it as a historic step forward in the battle against child and family poverty.

[Working to Stop Clawbacks to the Canada Child Benefit](#)

In order to optimize the CCB's poverty reduction potential, we have drawn attention to five key areas of improvement (read [our recent letter to federal Finance Minister Morneau](#) for more details). We want to ensure the most vulnerable, lowest income families can access the CCB to the fullest amount. Our partners have advocated to the federal, provincial and territorial governments against any potential claw backs of the CCB from families on social/income assistance. With families in receipt of assistance already living at destitution levels, additional income from the federal government intended to support children must reach all low-income families. So far, Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, North West Territories, Yukon, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia have confirmed they will not be clawing back the CCB. We continue to advocate against clawbacks and await confirmation from Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, and Nunavut. Read and download [our New Infographic](#) and join our call for no clawbacks.

Improving Access to the CCB and Optimizing its Impact

We have also called for government action to ensure that Status First Nations children - 60% of whom live in poverty on reserve— can access the tax-delivered CCB. Depending on their source of income, Status First Nations people are not required to file taxes and as a result are at risk of losing access to significant additional income. Similarly, we have called for changes to the CCB's eligibility criteria to ensure more children from immigrant families can access it. Currently, parents without regularized status, including failed refugee claimants who have applied for humanitarian and compassionate consideration and a separated sponsored spouse with conditional permanent residence cannot claim the benefits for their children despite filing taxes.

Budget 2016 delayed indexation of the CCB until 2019-20. Campaign 2000 and others, including [the Caledon Institute](#), have called for government to implement annual indexation immediately to keep pace with real-time, rising costs that families face. Finally, we have called for the base amount of the benefit to be increased to such a level that reduces child poverty by 50% by 2020, according to the Low Income Measure, After Tax.

CCPA's New Study on Shameful Indigenous Child Poverty in Canada

In May this year, CCPA (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives) released a new study on child poverty for Indigenous communities. It reveals that as many as 60% of First Nation children on reserve live in poverty. Indigenous children in Canada are more than twice as likely to live in poverty as non-Indigenous children.

Entitled ***Shameful Neglect: Indigenous Child Poverty in Canada***, it is available on the [CCPA website](#).

Landmark Ruling

In a landmark ruling released on January 26, 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal found that the Canadian government is racially discriminating against 163,000 First Nations children and their families by providing flawed and inequitable child welfare services (FNCFS Program) and failing to implement Jordan's Principle to ensure equitable access to government services available to other children.

In 2007, the Caring Society and the Assembly of First Nations filed a human rights complaint against the federal government, alleging that Canada's failure to provide equitable and culturally based child welfare services to First Nations children on reserve amounts to discrimination on the basis of race and ethnic origin. After several unsuccessful efforts by the federal government to have the case dismissed on legal technicalities, a hearing on the complaint began in February, 2013 at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and was completed in October, 2014.

Find out full details about this on the [I Am a Witness campaign site](#).

Securing a Strong National Poverty Eradication Plan

Campaign 2000 has continued its advocacy for federal leadership through a robust national poverty eradication plan that is secured by legislation and guided by targets and timelines. The Minister of Families, Children and Social Development has been mandated to develop a Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy (C-PRS). At present, details of how and when the PRS will be developed are unclear.

With recent investments in the CCB and GIS/OAS, the development of a national early childcare education and care framework promised and forthcoming development of a national housing strategy, we see the great potential of federal leadership against poverty taking root. Campaign 2000 will continue to work to ensure strong federal accountability for poverty eradication.

There is clearly a strong appetite among Canadians for bold government action to make poverty history. The evidence is in the growing interest in the concept of basic income to reduce poverty, community-level living wage organizing, calls for a \$15/hour minimum wage and newly-secured pension reform. These movements are strong indications of the growing urgency for rebuilding the social safety net. Campaign 2000 will continue to play a national

leadership role to keep child and family poverty eradication at the top of the national agenda while supporting the work of our partners and sister coalitions.

Remembering Marvyn Novick - A Friend, Leader and Visionary

Campaign 2000 was deeply saddened by the sudden passing of our coalition co-founder, Marvyn Novick. Marvyn was a visionary in the development of Canadian Social Policy. His sudden passing is a great loss to our movement and to all of us, especially those of us who knew him well and worked with him closely over the years.



Marvyn dedicated his knowledge, his thinking and his efforts to develop the Campaign 2000 network and to work with Campaign 2000 partners across Canada. As the lead author of several Campaign 2000 policy discussion papers, he put forward many sound and truly remarkable policy proposals for Canada's children and families, including the child benefit system that is one of the key pillars of social policy in Canada's fight against child poverty. His endless work alongside Campaign 2000 and many other partners has influenced and shaped the newly integrated and redesigned national

child benefit that just came into effect on July 1. A private funeral was held on June 24th, and there are plans for a more public memorial celebrating his life and work. We continue our work in tribute to Marvyn and his vision of a country where no child goes hungry and where there is no more child poverty. (Photo: Courtesy of John MacLennan)

Donate to Campaign 2000

With poverty reduction strategies in place or being developed in most provinces and territories, we're continuing to make progress. Your ongoing support is crucial at this time of the year -- with your renewed support, we can keep the momentum going. Please send your donation today to **Campaign 2000, c/o Family Service Toronto**, 202-128A Sterling Road, Toronto, ON M6R 2B7 or donate online through Canada Helps at

<http://www.campaign2000.ca/aboutus/donate.html> **Thank you for your support!**

Updates from Regional Partners

British Columbia

Living wage and minimum wage

April 2016, Port Coquitlam city council voted unanimously to become a living wage employer. As part of its work to reduce child poverty, First Call hosts the [Living Wage for Families Campaign](#). The campaign's [joint report](#) with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-BC Office, released April 2016, noted decreases in the living wage rate from 2015 [around the province](#) due to the impact of the [enhanced Canada Child Benefit](#). In May 2016, the Living Wage for Families campaign organizer connected with living wage campaigns from across Canada at a conference in Ontario.



A living wage means "I can pay my rent, buy healthy food & save a little."

At \$10.45/hr, BC has the lowest minimum wage in Canada. In May 2016, the BC government announced an inadequate 40-cent increase to \$10.85/hr effective September 15, 2016. Anti-poverty advocates continue to [take part](#) in the continent-wide [Fight for \\$15 campaign](#), led in this province by the BC Federation of Labour.

Community advocacy

2017 is an election year in BC, and leading up to it, the [BC Poverty Reduction Coalition](#) (BCPRC), [Raise the Rates](#) and other groups are mobilizing to raise poverty issues and public support for a provincial poverty reduction plan, through campaigns including the [#RethinkPoverty campaign](#), [Poverty Mythbusters videos](#) and the [Welfare Food Challenge](#).

The [outcry continues](#) over the BC government's bus pass clawback for people on disability assistance, announced in the BC budget February 2016. More than 160 organizations signed on to BCPRC's [open letter](#) to Raise the Rates, Leave Our Bus Pass Alone.

The petition for the [\\$10aDay child care plan](#) reached over 10,000 signatures, and the campaign launched an updated 2016 edition of the plan and translated their [fact sheet into five languages](#).

The Community Legal Assistance Society (CLAS) has [filed a human rights complaint](#) challenging the clawback of EI maternity benefits from disability assistance on the basis of gender discrimination.

Budget cuts and new fees at community colleges are affecting immigrants' and refugees' access to English language classes, leaving people unable to afford the classes they need or languishing on long wait lists, especially if they need child care in order to attend.

Early June 2016, the BC government [announced](#) that more than 2,800 single parents on income and disability assistance are getting supports to find employment through the Single Parent Employment Initiative (SPEI), [first introduced](#) in March 2015.

Community conversations and research focusing on foster kids

Vancouver Foundation's [Fostering Change](#) initiative addresses the upstream issue that 40-50% of homeless youth come from foster care by working to increase support for foster youth beyond the cut-off age of 19. The initiative is gathering signatures on a [petition](#) to demonstrate public support.



January 2016, SPARC BC, First Call, Simon Fraser University and Single Mothers' Alliance BC released a [new report](#), *Walking the Line to Put Their Families First: Lone Mothers Navigating Welfare and Work in British Columbia*, that shares the stories of single-parent families.

First Call's Adrienne Montani participated in [Fostering Change's](#) Write the Future campaign launch May 2016

Alberta

The Alberta NDP Government continues to move forward with several initiatives to reduce poverty in the province. Despite its challenging fiscal situation, the government's 2016-17 budget includes \$147 million for the Alberta Child Benefit, which will provide up to \$2,750 per year to families with the lowest incomes in the province and will help an estimated 235,000 children. The government has repeatedly reaffirmed its promise to implement a \$15 per hour minimum wage by 2018 despite immense pressure from many employers and their lobby organizations to break their election promise. In May, the government also announced funding to support low-income transit passes in Edmonton and Calgary. After decades of little to no action from Alberta Governments to address poverty, these initiatives represent a welcome change in our province.

Alberta's biggest challenge is its limited fiscal capacity to make other improvements. The government projects a budget deficit of more than \$10 billion this year, and its fiscal projections rely on steady increases to the price of oil to get closer to balance. Previous governments in similar situations have made reckless cuts to public services that hit vulnerable families the hardest, so we have applauded the new government for protecting front-line services. However, in the long term, Alberta requires some ambitious changes to substantially increase tax revenues to protect and improve our public services like health care, education, and supports for our most vulnerable residents. Until such changes are made, Alberta's fiscal situation will remain our biggest barrier to addressing child and family poverty.

New Reports and Other Resources:

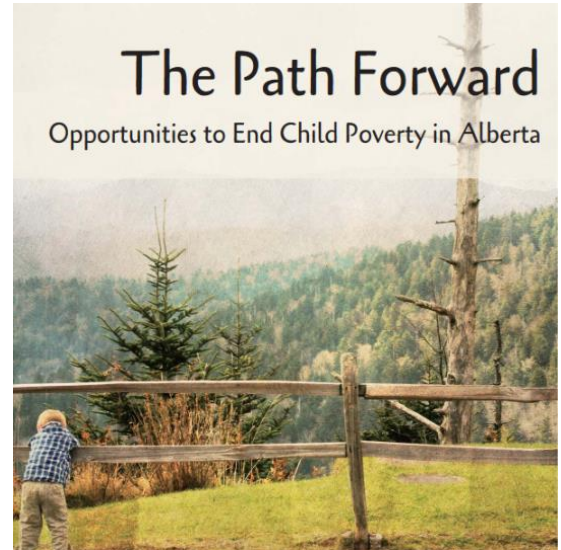
Alberta's 2016-17 budget: <http://alberta.ca/Budget.cfm>

Alberta's minimum wage increase:

<http://work.alberta.ca/employment-standards/minimum-wage.html>

2016 Alberta child poverty report:

<http://pialberta.org/2016ChildPovertyReport>



Saskatchewan

The 2016-17 Saskatchewan Budget envisages \$16.7 million for at-risk and medically fragile children/youth and \$14.9 million for enhanced programming for people with disabilities. The Budget also plans an increase to the Canada-Saskatchewan Job Grant of \$2.4 million to \$6.4 million to provide training that aligns with employer needs, and an increase of \$9.7 million, \$210.1 million in total, for the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disabilities.

On the other hand, the Budget includes spending decisions that might have a negative effect on families, seniors and people living in poverty. Such decisions include the increased cost of the Children's and Seniors' Drug Plans by \$5

per prescription, the elimination of the Active Families tax credit, and the removal of the grandfathering provision from the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement that enabled families who were already in the program to receive support for children over the eligible age of 12 years.

The Budget also does not include a reference to the Saskatchewan Poverty Reduction Strategy.

In February 2016, following recommendations from the Advisory Group on Poverty Reduction's [report](#), the Saskatchewan government released "Taking Action on Poverty: The Saskatchewan Poverty Reduction Strategy". The Strategy sets a goal of reducing poverty by 50 per cent for those who experience poverty for two years or more by 2025. This goal is to be achieved through focus on 6 priority areas:

- Income Security;
- Housing and Homelessness;
- Early Childhood Development and Child Care;
- Education, Skills Training and Employment;
- Health and Food Security; and
- Vulnerable Families and Individuals.

The full document is available [here](#). However it is worth noting that the SK poverty reduction plan released in February 2016 is silent on many of the recommendations contained in the advisory committee report which preceded it in August 2015. You can find a copy of the advisory committee report here: <http://www.povertyfreesask.ca/>

This advisory committee report will continue to be the basis of advocacy efforts by anti-poverty organizations in Saskatchewan. It represents what's actually required in a poverty reduction strategy.

The Government of Saskatchewan has also developed [a Saskatchewan's Early Years Plan 2016-2020](#). This plan outlines goals to help all children be safe, healthy and develop to their full potential in strong families and supportive communities, focusing on:

- Prenatal and early childhood support for mothers and children;
- Better access to high quality early learning and child care options;
- Support for families in their role as parents and caregivers;
- And programs that make sure children and families receiving support don't "slip through the cracks."

The Saskatchewan government promised a policy review after two homeless men from the province said they were refused a place in a shelter and were given one-way bus tickets to British Columbia.

In its 2015 annual report, Saskatchewan's children's advocate criticized the Saskatchewan Poverty Reduction Strategy for being silent on recommendations that require immediate attention, as well as for being vague and lacking target dates. The report also states that two-thirds of Aboriginal children on reserve live in poverty and Saskatchewan has the highest rates of child users of the food banks across Canada. Read the [2015 annual report](#) for more details.

In April 2016, [Upstream](#) organized the event Closing the Gap Canada: Action for Health Equity in Ottawa with keynote speakers including Dr. Cindy Blackstock, Sir Michael Marmot and Health Minister Jane Philpott. The event is available to watch [here on their website](#). The event also served as a book launch event for Sir Michael Marmot's "The Health Gap: The Challenge of an Unequal World".

Upstream is working with Living Wage YXE to provide accreditation options to Living Wage employers in the Bridge City, and spread awareness for the benefits of paying a Living Wage to employees. Their report "The Business Case for a Living Wage in Saskatoon" is available [here](#). Upstream also published a series on Food Security available [here](#).

On May 13, 2015 the YMCA of Regina and community partners came together to conduct the first-ever [Point-in-Time Homeless Count](#). Over 150 volunteers and 34 organizations participated in the count. The count found 235 people living a homeless life of which 37 per cent were children under 18.

Manitoba

The Social Planning Council of Winnipeg (SPCW) has been providing research along with logistical and policy support to the Make Poverty History Manitoba (MPHM) coalition. MPHM decided to concentrate on mobilizing widespread community support around the need to raise Employment and Income Assistance rates in Manitoba, particularly to better reflect social housing costs. As a result of the work of the coalition, the Manitoba government announced an historic increase in EIA Rent Assist rates in Budget 2015. It also expanded the program to assist low-income families not on EIA. Josh Brandon, an SPCW community animator, developed a short primer on what the changes will mean to share with frontline workers and anyone else interested, [Rent Assist for non-EIA recipients: Changes to Manitoba Budget 2015](#). The goal is to circulate the report to increase uptake of the new benefits amongst families who are struggling to balance the rent versus food conundrum.

Building on the success of this strategy and an updated poverty reduction plan by the CCPA's Manitoba office, *The View from Here*, MPHM, with the continued organizational support from the SPCW, has developed another targeted strategy to ensure that poverty reduction will be addressed during our 2016 provincial election.

Equity in Education

The 2015 Provincial Report Card on Child and Family Poverty states that 1 in 3 (29%) of Manitoba's children live in challenging socioeconomic circumstances (Campaign 2000, 2015). Schools and school systems are just one part of a broader social support network for children and families, but they can have a significant and direct impact on the quality of a child's daily life and future life outcomes. For that reason it is important to consider, among other factors, the work of schools and school divisions in promoting equity as a means to support the well-being of students and families. Read more details [here](#).



April 2016 Provincial Election

After almost 17 years of NDP rule, Manitobans in April 2016 elected Progressive Conservative Leader Brian Pallister as their new premier, handing Greg Selinger defeat. The NDP has dominated politics in the province since the 1960s, but Mr. Selinger struggled during his seven years as premier, according to news reports.

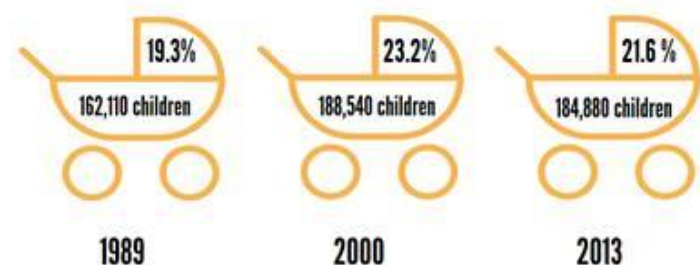
New 2016 Provincial Budget

The first provincial budget posted by the new Progressive Conservative government calls for modest increases in spending for most provincial departments. Based on [news reports by CBC](#), the new budget that was announced shortly after the PC government won the election is more or less a "stay-the-course" budget. Chris Adams, political scientist at St. Paul's College at the University of Manitoba, described the budget that does not include any major surprises. Adams said the budget is noteworthy for what it *does not* highlight: child care, Indigenous Manitobans, labour and training, all of which were priorities for the previous NDP government.

Ontario

Ontario Campaign 2000 has been busy continuing to support and advocating on a number of initiatives ranging from child supports and benefits, social assistance and workplace reviews. A brief 2015 Report Card update will be released shortly providing recent data on several key indicators. Below are further initiatives and key issues that have been happening in Ontario.

Ontario Child poverty, Children Under 6



Source: Statistics Canada, Income Statistics Division T1 Family File, 1989, 2000, & 2013

Basic Income Initiative

In Budget 2016, Ontario announced that it will evaluate a Basic Income pilot. Further details have not been announced but the province is expected to share more information in the fall of 2016. We will be watching for any developments and ways to be involved with this process to ensure a clear focus on poverty reduction.

Anticipating the Canada Child Benefit

The Ontario government announced on Thursday June 16, 2016 that it will not be clawing back the new Canada Child Benefit from families on social assistance. We welcome this announcement and are encouraging any other provinces or territories that have not yet confirmed their plans to do so immediately.

Child Support Payment

The Ontario government has formally announced that it will not claw back child support payments from lone-parent families receiving social assistance. This is a great win for all the people who have been working on this issue and we expect that families will be able to keep 100% of child support payments intended to support vulnerable children.

Changing Workplaces Review

We are continuing to support the Fight for \$15 and Fairness Campaign to raise the minimum wage to \$15 in Ontario and win important protections for vulnerable, low wage, non-unionized workers. We have also been active in the Make It Fair Campaign initiated by the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL), to put pressure on the Ontario government to make meaningful changes to the Employment Standards Act (ESA) and Labour Relations Act. The Ontario government was to release an interim report on the Changing Workplaces Review in the month of June 2016. We have planned to meet with a few MPPs to discuss the importance of this review and how changes to the ESA and LRA can have an important impact on reducing poverty. <http://www.makeitfair.ca/>

Health and Income Report

There was a new report entitled 'Income and Health: Opportunities to achieve health equity in Ontario' by Health Quality Ontario about the health risks of being poor. The report findings state that the poorer you are in Ontario the more likely you are to have key health risks, less likely to get quality health care and the more likely you are to have worse health outcomes.

<http://www.hqontario.ca/Portals/0/documents/system-performance/health-equity-report-en.pdf>

Project with youth and parents discussing poverty through arts-based workshops

Family Service Toronto and Campaign 2000 are hosting a few arts based workshops with youth and parents to discuss the impacts of poverty on people's lives. The workshops will possibly help in articulating the policy changes that would particularly help youth and parents living in poverty. The project is running from June-August 2016.

Social Assistance

We are continuing to push for increases in social assistance amounts and also to work with other provincial groups to drive changes in social assistance rules which further entrench poverty and stigmatize people living in poverty.

Quebec

The New Bill 70

Since the introduction of Bill 70 in November, 2015 in the National Assembly, le Collectif pour un Québec sans pauvreté has led the campaign NON au projet de loi 70 sur l'aide sociale. The campaign includes anti-poverty activists and a wide range of allies including academics from across the province in the battle against a proposed law which would bring major changes to social assistance and amend other legislation so as to erode the important social protections that le collectif and other civil society groups fought for over decades and achieved in *An Act to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion* passed unanimously in 2002. The proposed law will require all those receiving social assistance to participate in *Objectif Employ* which aims "to allow a better match between training and jobs and to facilitate labour market entry." In summary, the new bill provides a monthly financial incentive of several hundred

dollars to new applicants for social assistance who enter job programs quickly and remain employed for one year. Those who do not participate in this initiative would receive reduced benefits of \$308/month. (Current benefits are \$618 plus a tax credit that results in a total of \$747.) Current recipients of social assistance will not be affected.

As Vivian Labrie, research associate with IRIS, a Montreal-based progressive think tank, explains, even with the basic benefit supplement, the amount is less than the MBM which Quebec has chosen as its official measure of poverty. In these workfare-style program requirements, applicants will be obliged to accept jobs that are offered, travel to jobs in areas needing labour and even move to other areas to help meet “alleged labour needs or face a decrease in benefits”. Labrie goes on to comment that the \$50 million saved from the implementation of Bill 70 will cost considerably more in lost health. Passed in principle in March, 2016, the bill was then referred to the Committee on Labour and the Economy.

Early Childhood Education and Care

In the child care sector, mobilization was also the main focus of parents, staff and service providers who pressured the provincial government to abandon its austerity agenda including cuts to funding for non-profit child care services. The Quebec Association of Early Childhood Centres (AQCPE), the network of non-profit child care centres and coordinating offices, bemoaned the cuts to child care programs especially in the face of the \$2 billion surplus shown in the provincial budget. As its press release explains, “The AQCPE set in motion a broad mobilization campaign last winter in an attempt to change the government’s austerity attitude to educational childcare services for young children.” Despite a petition signed by over 200,000 people to denounce the cuts and some 50,000 people who participated in one of the many large gatherings or human chains, the government has always claimed that the financial situation of Quebec “commanded significant cuts in education services for our youngest citizens.” It is estimated that \$450 million has been cut from the budgets of CPE’s since 2006. At the same time, support to commercial child care centres, primarily through the tax system, has increased. The cuts in funding to CPE’s has resulted in both reduced resources for the child care programs and increased fees for parents.

Nova Scotia

Income Assistance

After consultation, much debate and revisions to the proposed legislation, the Province passed new Child Welfare legislation in fall 2015. Dalhousie Legal Aid and groups representing African Nova Scotian and Mi’kmaq child welfare groups and social workers objected to changes in the legal process and attention to cultural issues in the legislation. CSEP-NS (Community Society to End Poverty Nova Scotia) supported these groups but was particularly concerned that the legislation at first reading included reference to adequate food in a clause defining child neglect. Since Mount St. Vincent University’s Food ARC (Food Action Research Centre) food costing had definitely demonstrated that a single parent with 2 children on Income Assistance (IA) could not afford a healthy food basket, we made the case that either the welfare rates change or this reference be omitted. The wording of the legislation changed due to our advocacy work.

The Nova Scotia government claims to have balanced the budget this year. It announced increased spending on childcare and wage increases for child-care educators to bring them up to the 2012 average in the rest of the country (Read the [news article](#) in Halifax Chronicle Herald). After a 2-year rate freeze, it also increased the basic IA personal allowance by \$20 a month. With the ever-increasing cost of food—especially produce—this was a welcome change; but as many income recipients and advocates pointed out was barely enough to cover the increased food costs since the last increase in 2013.

We have learned that through Housing First initiatives, plans are now being formulated for the additional new money from the federal government. People in Nova Scotia seem to be pleased with the new plan.

In the meantime, the Special Needs program which provides allowances for health, medical, or employment needs that are not covered in the basic IA program has been curtailing access since regulations were changed in 2011. Advocates lobbied hard during the last election (2013) to get the old regulations restored. Although some were restored, an open ended clause was not. Moreover internal departmental policies became much more restrictive and remain contrary to regulations; requests now require more paper work on the part of physicians and advocates (e.g., a requirement that a client have 12 doctor's appointments a month to qualify for a transportation allowance). Requests for telephone and special diet allowances are routinely turned down. CSEP-NS and our allies



advocated for a hearing on the issue by the Legislative S.C. on Community Services. The 3-hour hearing occurred on June 7 with several MLA motions asking the Department of Community Services to appear before the Committee to account for the cuts and changes. CSEP-NS and our network allies intend to follow the outcome closely (Read the [CSEP Brief](#) and [report](#)).

Our local partner who coordinates CSEP-NS was invited to attend a small conference organized by the United Way as part of their initiative towards working on poverty reduction. There were some excellent talks in the morning session, but the afternoon took us off course so there was little discussion of the implications and actions that might be required as a result of the morning session. See presentations on website below: <http://www.unitedwayhalifax.ca/poverty-healthy-living/opportunities/poverty-summit-resources.html>

CSEP-NS is considering organizing its own Network Congress in the fall to discuss some of these issues.

New Brunswick

In May the provincial government introduced legislation which will make tuition free for New Brunswick students from low-income families. A new Tuition Access Bursary will provide upfront financial assistance to qualifying students from families with an annual income of \$60,000 or less and who are enrolled full-time in an undergraduate degree, diploma or certificate program at a publicly funded university or college in New Brunswick. The provincial government will pay the difference between the federal low-income or middle-income grant provided to an eligible student and the amount owing for that student's tuition.

The proposal came in for criticism because it will be funded, in part, through the cancellation of a tuition rebate program and the removal of income tax credits for tuition and education expenses. The absence of a sliding scale in determining income eligibility was also noted by critics. It is likely that the program will be tweaked in coming budgets.

The province has also approved the implementation of pay equity adjustments for one of its largest groups of employees. The group consists of more than 3,000 workers in the education sector including educational assistants, administrative support, secretaries, library workers and intervention workers - at least 98 percent are women.

In June the New Brunswick Liberal government announced a major cabinet shuffle. As part of its midterm re-boot they also reorganized the Department of Social Development. According to the government:

"The Department of Social Development remains as a single department with a single deputy minister and senior management team, however due to the complexity and importance of its files, the department will be jointly administered by two cabinet ministers. The minister of families and children will be responsible for child welfare and youth services, income security, housing services and wellness; while the minister of seniors and long-term care will be responsible for long-term care, nursing home services and the council on aging."

In the meantime, the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation, created by statute in 2010 to “develop, oversee, coordinate and implement initiatives to reduce poverty” continues to report to a Minister who also has responsibility for Service New Brunswick and Aboriginal Affairs.

Prince Edward Island

PEI Coalition for a Poverty Eradication Strategy

The Coalition was pleased with the media coverage given the release of the Child Poverty Report Card. We were pleased as well that we made important breakthroughs with statistics on the extent of Child Poverty on PEI and in Canada. This was all due to the great research done by Campaign 2000.

The Coalition has continued its program of public education. We are working with a new Premier and Cabinet and are pleased to say that we have made an important breakthrough with the Minister of Family and Human Services. So far the only progress to report is that the Minister wants to continue to work with us. We are encouraged that the government promised in the Speech from the Throne that they would not claw back the Canada Child Benefit.

In addition, following our meeting with the new Minister, she put together an excellent resolution to be read in the Legislature asking that the benefit not be clawed back from people on Social Assistance. Unfortunately, the budget took so much discussion that the Legislature closed before her resolution was read. We were not so happy with the government raising the HST from 14% to 15% because those in poverty pay the most. The tax reduction program, the basic personal income increase and the low income tax program in the budget do not make up for the increase in the HST. There were other areas of concern, especially the low HST rebate. However, on the brighter side, we have a compassionate Minister we can work with, who has her door open and we believe we can make progress with her.

Newfoundland and Labrador

The 2016 Budget of Newfoundland and Labrador increased all personal income tax rates, the general corporate income tax, the Harmonized sales tax, as well as a broad array of other taxes. The Budget also includes an annualized investment of \$76.4 million to ensure the impact of the tax burden is lessened on the most vulnerable including low income seniors, individuals, families and persons with disabilities. The two envisaged measures are the Newfoundland and Labrador Income Supplement and the enhanced Seniors' Benefit, and they will replace the provincial HST credit and home heating rebate program.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Initiatives Budget 2015-2016 plans an investment of \$190.4 million for over 120 initiatives, including \$29.7 for early Childhood Development.

The Provincial Government is developing a 10-year plan to end homelessness in Newfoundland and Labrador, with several initiatives already in the works. The Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation and the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development, co-lead the development and implementation of the plan, informed by the independent consultant's report “A Roadmap for Ending Homelessness in Newfoundland and Labrador”. The current initiatives include among others:

- An \$800,000 investment from NLHC for a two-year emergency shelter pilot operation (Out of the Cold) in Happy Valley-Goose Bay;
- The development of two more supportive housing units by NLHC in partnership with the Nunatsiavut Government, one each for Nain and Hopedale;
- A \$100,000 investment to improve the coordination of housing and homelessness data with service providers;
- An \$88,000 investment this year, for End Homelessness St. John's and the Rapid Re-Housing component of its Intensive Case Management (ICM) program.

The Provincial Government launched a new website with a searchable database of all regulated child-care services in Newfoundland and Labrador as well as information on violation orders. The directory is part of the Government's 10-year child care strategy launched in 2012.

Starting from September 2016, full day kindergarten will be provided in 190 schools in Newfoundland and Labrador. Over \$30 million have been allocated for the program implementation in the first three years.

New Reports and Resources:

- [Poverty Reduction Strategy Initiatives Budget 2015-2016](#)
- [A Roadmap for Ending Homelessness in Newfoundland and Labrador](#)
- [Growing Homes! End Homelessness St. John's](#)

The Territories

YUKON

New Provincial Budget

The Government of Yukon Budget for 2016-2017 envisages \$525,000 for the Women's Directorate, including:

- \$271,000 over 3 years for the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre to host a new Legal Advocate for women;
- \$84,000 for the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre to support A Safe Place low-barrier drop-in program that provides for women and children;
- New gender equality indicators website provides statistical and qualitative information on the status of women in the territory;
- \$150,000 for Aboriginal Women's Initiatives to support Aboriginal women's organizations in developing projects;
- \$20,000 for the Violence Prevention Initiative to complete work on three deliverables:
 - a toolkit to help managers address domestic violence in the work place;
 - a style guide insert for communicating violence accurately and clearly; and
 - an online training model to introduce response-based practices to Government of Yukon professionals that work directly with clients.

In terms of housing the Budget also plans \$7.264 million investments in Affordable Housing; \$450,000 for rental assistance to working households paying more than 30% of their household income toward shelter which include children in the household as well as \$416,000 for housing improvements and programs that benefit victims of violence.

In April, the Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon Planning Group on Homelessness and various volunteers led the first Point-in-Time (PiT) Homeless Count in Whitehorse. The project is funded by the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy. The PiT Count included a focus on youth and aboriginal homelessness. The results from the PiT Count will be publicly available, with the intent to improve the national response to homelessness.

New Reports and Resources:

- Homelessness Partnering Strategy Coordinated Point-in-Time Count
<http://homelesshub.ca/pitcounttoolkit>
- Vulnerable People at Risk: Forum and Business Roundtable Summary A joint initiative of the City of Whitehorse and Kwanlin Dün First Nation
<http://www.city.whitehorse.yk.ca/home/showdocument?id=6096>

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Alternatives North and YWCA, members of the **No Place for Poverty Coalition** obtained funds from the anti-poverty fund to promote a living wage campaign. The living wage for Yellowknife was calculated as \$20.68 for a family of four with both parents working. A series of meetings with local employers identified 9 employers who were offering a living wage and their names were announced during a presentation at the anti-poverty round table in March 2016. Materials were created to explain and promote a living wage and to recognize local living wage employers.



Members of the **No Place For Poverty coalition** participated in the anti-poverty round table organized by the Government of the Northwest Territories and continue to work with government on the action plan to reduce poverty. The department is working on an evaluation process for the strategy. The \$500K anti-poverty fund continues and deadline for submissions to fund grassroots anti-poverty efforts is set for mid-June. Alternatives North (and likely YWCA) is submitting a proposal to continue the campaign on the Living Wage. A new advisory committee for the Anti-Poverty strategy is being struck with Yellowknife Mayor Mark Heyck as chair.

NUNAVUT

Government of Nunavut: No More Clawback of NCBS (National Child Benefit Supplement)

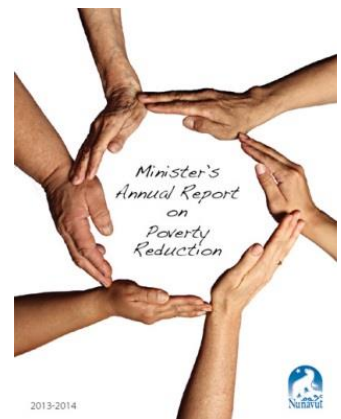
Local media reports announced in early April that the Government of Nunavut would no longer claw back National Child Benefit Supplement payments from Nunavut families with children who collect social assistance. The move would benefit about 2,500 low-income families and put up to \$6.8 million more into the pockets of social assistance recipients, according to the Government of Nunavut. We don't know their plans for the new CCB (Canada Child Benefit) that came into effect on July 1 this year, but would assume they will not claw it back, given their recent decision on the NCBS.

Nunavut Roundtable for Poverty Reduction

The fourth community gathering of the Roundtable took place December 1-3, 2015 in Cambridge Bay. The theme this year is on income assistance, and it brought together government, community organizations, youth and elders to discuss next steps to income assistance reform. At this time, more detailed reports on the gathering are not yet available.

Recent Government Review on Poverty Reduction Initiatives

The poverty reduction division of the Government of Nunavut's family services department appeared before MLAs in the legislative assembly May 31 and June 1, 2016 during a review of the department's 2013-14 annual report on poverty reduction. Based on a local news report on June 8th by [Nunatsiq News](#), the department's first report on poverty reduction outlines 65 programs and policies developed by different government departments, with a total budget of \$254 million.



Many of these initiatives flow from the Government of Nunavut's [Makimanig Plan](#), released in 2012, and poverty reduction legislation drafted to monitor long-term progress on the plan. But, as the report itself acknowledges, it's been hard to determine their impact on the territory.

Nunavut's department of Family Services says it's working on a list of indicators to measure the effectiveness of programs aimed at reducing poverty across Nunavut. Those indicators should help paint a much clearer picture of if

and how the territory's broad array of programs are helping alleviate poverty in Nunavut, where 4 in 10 residents rely on social assistance as a primary source of income.

Back in 2013, a report prepared by Nunavut's Anti-Poverty Secretariat proposed the territory's income security system be rebuilt and focused on a system called Basic Income, a type of guaranteed living wage, along with better child benefits and a refundable cost of living allowance.

The news report quoted Lindsay Turner, who serves as director of the government's Poverty Reduction Division, as saying that "Basic income is not something that has been considered at this time up until now for the Income Assistance Program."

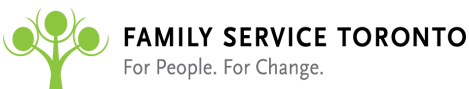
Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is widely reported to be at a crisis level in Nunavut. Various policies, programs, and initiatives have been proposed to tackle the problem, with increasing interest in developing a system of country food markets (CFMs) similar to Greenland. The Greenland experience indicates that CFMs can provide access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food on a regular basis, and can diversify locally available foods. These benefits are transferable to Nunavut, although knowledge gaps, regulatory and institutional conditions, and concerns over how CFMs might affect the cultural basis of food systems, underlies apprehension over their development in the territory. The [Nunavut Food Security Coalition](#) concluded that Nunavut is not currently in the position to develop CFMs, but the role of such markets in potentially strengthening food systems should not be discounted

+ Special thanks to all the contributors

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