

**Budget Paper E**

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**REDUCING POVERTY AND  
PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION**

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**Manitoba** 

# REDUCING POVERTY AND PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION

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## ■ ALL ABOARD: MANITOBA'S POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGY

In 2009, Manitoba launched All Aboard, the province's Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy. Two years later, in 2011, *The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act* was passed. Manitoba is one of four provinces and one territory with poverty reduction legislation. However, Manitoba is the only province that requires the government to table a budget paper linking the Poverty Reduction Strategy to the annual budget.

Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy is guided by the All Aboard Committee, which consists of cabinet ministers and community representatives. The committee advises government on the development and implementation of poverty reduction initiatives, monitors the implementation of the Strategy and facilitates community involvement in this work.

The 2012 All Aboard Strategy established seven priority areas for action:

- Building blocks for employment
- Targeted supports for those most in need
- Food security
- Housing
- Closing the gap for Aboriginal Manitobans
- Creating opportunities for youth
- Early childhood development and parenting supports

Action Plans are being developed for each priority area. Five have been published so far. They are available at: [http://www.gov.mb.ca/allaboard/resources\\_publications.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/allaboard/resources_publications.html)

## ■ IN PARTNERSHIP WITH COMMUNITY

Manitoba has many strengths. Respecting and building on the knowledge of communities across our province has been a long-standing government priority. Since 1999, community members have been engaged in providing strategic advice to government on best approaches to supporting our communities. In 2001, Manitoba approved a Community Economic Development (CED) Policy Framework and a CED Lens to assist government departments in aligning their programs and policies to support local communities, with a clear recognition of the value of community-based capacity and decision making, as well as the potential of the government to bring Manitobans together to better reach our province's collective potential.

All Aboard, when launched in 2009, continued this tradition, by prioritizing community consultations to assure that Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy builds on knowledge, experience and insights from community-based organizations working across our province. When enshrined in legislation in 2011, the All Aboard Committee was specifically tasked with facilitating community involvement in the development and implementation of the Strategy.

### All Aboard Vision and Guiding Principles

The Manitoba Government:

- envisions a future where people are socially included, connected to their communities, participating in the economy and contributing to Manitoba;
- acknowledges that poverty is complex and goes beyond having enough money to live each day;
- strives to create the conditions that allow people to participate fully in society as valued, respected and contributing members; and
- believes that everyone benefits from a society that helps all individuals to participate and to prosper.

The most recent round of consultations was focussed on the development of the seven action plans, one for each of the priorities in the Strategy. Hundreds of Manitobans attended consultations, filled out surveys, provided written submissions, and shared their advice about how to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion in the province.

Budget 2015 supports a number of the items from the recently published, community based poverty reduction plan, *The View from Here*<sup>1</sup>, including: full implementation of Rent Assist; expanded support for Adult Learning and Literacy programs; continued support for new and existing social housing; creating new child care spaces; expanding parent-child programs in community schools; and expanding the province's Non-Profit Organization Strategy. The Premier's Advisory Council on Education, Poverty and Citizenship will be working with community organizations to help move additional recommendations of *The View from Here* forward (such as family support workers in community schools, an Aboriginal community based Labour Market Intermediary, and a pension-type income support for low-income persons living with severe and prolonged disabilities) as part of All Aboard, the Provincial poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy.

## ■ MEASURING PROGRESS

*The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act* requires that the Manitoba Government set indicators to measure progress in reducing poverty and increasing social inclusion. These 21 indicators, included in regulation since 2012, are listed in Appendix 1. They cover critical areas such as low income, employment, earnings, income inequality, education, housing, labour force participation, early childhood development, health and social engagement. The data collected provide an annual picture of progress and help identify trends over time.

### Low Income Rates – At-Risk Groups, Manitoba, 2012

	Market Basket Measure (MBM)		
	Number	Rate (Per Cent)	Rank**
<b>Overall</b>	<b>145,000</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>4th</b>
Persons in Single Parent Families*	30,000	38.2	5th
Youth-Led Families (persons 24 years or less)*	20,000	37.5	5th
Unattached Persons (non-elderly, aged 45 to 64)	13,000	26.6	3rd
Aboriginal Manitobans (off-reserve only)	22,000	26.3	6th
Children	44,000	16.9	6th
Persons with a Disability	37,000	15.0	3rd
Seniors*	7,000	4.3	2nd

\*Use data with caution. \*\*Rank: 1 = best; 10 = worst

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Income Survey, 2012, custom tabulation

Note: In 2012, Statistics Canada changed the way in which it calculates low income in Canada. As a result, the 2012 data cannot be compared with those from earlier years. Statistics Canada is expected to release revised data for the years 2002 to 2012 in December 2015.

<sup>1</sup> *The View From Here* is a community-based and supported poverty reduction plan, sponsored by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Manitoba and the Canadian CED Network and endorsed by 87 community-based organizations. The report is available at: <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/view-here-2015>.

Each year, the province publishes the All Aboard Annual Report, showing Manitoba's progress in reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion. The most recent annual report is available at: [www.manitoba.ca/allaboard](http://www.manitoba.ca/allaboard).

In 2012, 12.2% of Manitobans lived in low income, lower than the Canadian average of 12.9%. Manitoba had the fourth-lowest low-income rate among the provinces.<sup>2</sup>

This is the fourth annual Reducing Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion budget paper. A status report on the implementation of the budget commitments from 2012, 2013 and 2014 is presented in Appendix 2.

## ■ LEVERAGING ECONOMIC STRENGTH

Manitoba's investments in our communities, and in the services on which Manitobans rely, are yielding results. While some other provinces have reacted to economic uncertainty with cuts to services, Manitoba has created jobs and protected front-line services that families count on. The Manitoba Government has focussed on steady growth and good jobs, with record investments in infrastructure, education and training. The result has been continued economic prosperity and new opportunities for Manitoba families.

From March 2014 to March 2015, Manitoba had the strongest labour market performance in the country, ranking first in four key indicators:

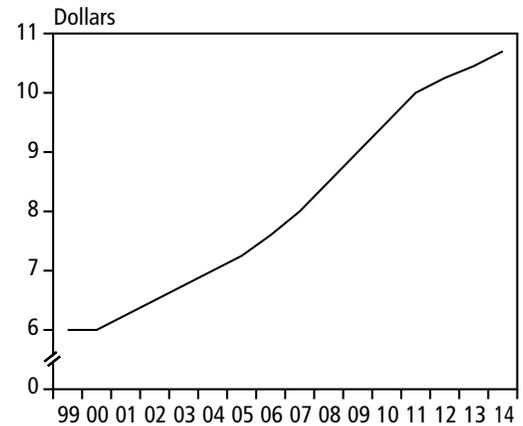
- Manitoba's labour force grew by 20,000 or 3.0% (national average 0.6%).
- Total jobs rose by 19,200 or 3.1% (national average 0.8%).
- Private sector employment increased by 13,900 or 3.0% (national average 0.5%).
- Full-time employment increased by 16,200 positions or 3.2% (national average 0.8%).

Manitobans are also earning more. After adjusting for the effects of inflation, real average weekly earnings have increased by about 5% and the minimum wage has been increased by 26% since 2008.

Budget 2015 includes other substantial new initiatives to help Manitobans find pathways out of poverty. The Manitoba Government is continuing to take action so that all Manitobans have the opportunity to benefit from our province's economic growth.

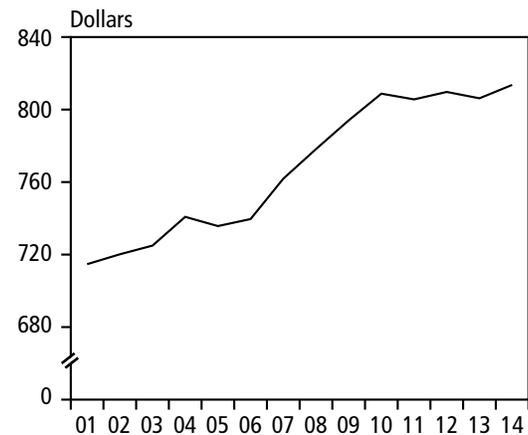
<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada, Canadian Income Survey, CANSIM Table 206-0003, using the Market Basket Measure.

### Minimum Wage, Dollars Per Hour, 1999-2014



Source: Manitoba Jobs and the Economy

### Average "Real" Weekly Earnings in 2014 Dollars, 2001-2014



Note: Earnings adjusted to account for inflation  
Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

Manitoba is committed to an approach that links community economic development, training and education together with significant new investments in income supports. These supports, like Rent Assist, are designed to support transitions into new and better jobs. The Premier's Council on Education, Poverty and Citizenship is also partnering with the Premier's Economic Advisory Council and the Minister's Advisory Council on Workforce Development to leverage major infrastructure projects into opportunities to train Manitobans facing barriers to employment.

### **Bridging to Opportunity: Training and Employment Services' Skills Development Program**

Manitoba Jobs and the Economy's Training and Employment Services' Skills Development Program assists people with training to gain access to the labour market. Participants receive counselling and assistance to develop an employment plan and may be eligible for a range of services including academic upgrading, apprenticeship training, essential skills training, English language training and/or post-secondary education.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Susan's Success Story**

Susan, a single mother, living in Northern Manitoba, with three children all under the age of five, always wanted to take a small motor repair course, but did not think she would ever have the opportunity. Her EIA Case Coordinator referred her to Training and Employment Services where a Career Development Consultant worked with her to develop an employment plan.

With financial assistance to attend school, she moved to Winnipeg even though she had never been to the city before, got a babysitter for her children and attended Red River College where she successfully completed the Small Motor Repair Technician Program. After graduating, she moved back to Thompson and is employed full time as a Small Motor Repair Technician and is no longer dependent on income supports. This young woman is definitely a role model for all single parents out there who have participated in Empowered to Change.

#### **Elaine's Success Story**

Elaine endured a long recovery following a debilitating stroke. She came to Training and Employment Services hoping that she could go back to school and find meaningful employment. Her motivation stemmed from wanting to take control of her life and become independent of income supports. After going through the Sustainable Employment Pathway, she completed school and obtained a full-time position as an Administrative Secretary. Six months later she was promoted into a senior administrative position.

"Getting a post-secondary education and getting a job gave me so much confidence and motivation. I became so excited about life again" said Elaine. "I am now independent and enjoying my new beginning in the workforce and although I still have a few health scares once in a while, I always have the positive thought and motivation to get better and to get myself to work."

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<sup>1</sup> All names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

## ■ MANITOBA'S STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT AND A STRONGER LABOUR MARKET

In 2013, Manitoba launched the Strategy for Sustainable Employment and a Stronger Labour Market (Strategy), renewing the government's focus on helping people, particularly those who are more distant from the labour market, to gain the knowledge, skills, qualifications and supports that they need to succeed. Included in the Strategy are programs that:

- support parents on Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) with young children;
- support people with disabilities;
- increase apprenticeship opportunities;
- support youth transitioning from the care of Child and Family Services; and
- supporting reintegration after incarceration.

### Support for Parents on EIA with Young Children

#### Empowered to Change

Manitoba's Empowered to Change initiative has demonstrated the potential of parents of young children who receive EIA to move into training or employment with the right supports.

Empowered to Change sessions have been engaging parents, with children between the ages of two and five, who have been assessed as having employment potential. These parents are invited to information sessions to discover how supports provided through the Manitoba Government and other partners can help them to move toward independence. Presentations by peers who have successfully moved toward independence and supportive employers/sector councils are featured in these informal sessions.

There have been over 40 Empowered to Change sessions since the initiative started in 2013, and as of December 2014, almost 200 young parents have left EIA for training and/or employment, with a number of others leaving EIA but remaining connected to health benefits.

### Supports for People with Disabilities

#### Manitoba Works! Reaching E-Quality Employment Services

The province works with Reaching E-Quality Employment Services (REES), business, labour and non-profits to help people with disabilities access meaningful employment. This year, REES will work with up to 30 people with disabilities in receipt of EIA, to complete résumé preparation, job search workshops, pre-employment and essential skills training as well as co-op placements with participating employers.

#### Karen's Success Story

Karen, a young woman with a disability in receipt of EIA, came to Training and Employment Services to look into funding options to further her education. After a few appointments with a Career Development Consultant, Karen had made significant progress in developing an employment plan. Karen worked with a MarketAbilities worker and attended career exploration workshops. After a referral to Training and Employment Services, Karen realized she had an aptitude for the skilled trades. Karen began the Aircraft Maintenance program at Red River College and excelled in this program. Her confidence increased significantly as a result. Karen got a job directly related to her chosen career path shortly after graduation. Karen is an excellent example of how Manitoba's Sustainable Employment Strategy assists individuals to overcome adversity and achieve their goals.

## Helping Young People with Autism

In 2015, Manitoba Family Services, in partnership with The Winnipeg Foundation, St. Amant and The Ability Hub will be launching a new Building Independence pilot project, to deliver life and work-skills programming to up to fifty 16 to 25 year olds with autism.

## Transforming Futures

This Red River College pilot project, supported by the Manitoba Government, provides an opportunity for 20 adults with intellectual disabilities to learn in an inclusive, supportive environment and to examine career options based on personal skills and interests, advancing their academic and career essential skills development.

### Manitoba Works! Co-op Program Participants Speak

"I have learned the skills about how to be in the workplace. Changing the way I handle things and putting my priorities in order."

"I stayed with it, stuck with it and saw it through all the way, even when things were difficult! And it's paid off. I love my work. I love going home and telling my daughter about my day and what I do. I am confident in the direction I am going career-wise, I have made a commitment to lead a healthier life and for the first time in 14 years, I am off EIA and completely self-sustaining!"

"I'm not second guessing myself so much and realizing that maybe I am actually good at this! I'm keeping my motivation and my confidence has grown. I'm able to say what I want and need, set boundaries and ask for help."

"My work experience has contributed to my personal and professional development. The experience has helped me to learn how to complete tasks more efficiently and on time. I feel that I grew up a lot this past summer working for the government."

"This employment experience has helped me gain confidence in speaking directly to others in the professional workplace, whether it was with fellow staff or a client. Working has motivated me to do well in school. The job duties that related to my career goals were communicating, computer skills, and helping others out."

## Increasing Apprenticeship Opportunities

### Northern Construction Trades Training Program

Delivered in partnership with the Northern Manitoba Sector Council (NMSC), the Northern Construction Trades Training Program provides pathways for Aboriginal people with limited opportunities to become apprentices in three trades: Industrial Electrician, Industrial Mechanic and Steamfitter/Pipefitter. This project allows participants to complete their training all the way to their Red Seal and prepare for well-paying jobs with northern industries, Manitoba Hydro and other construction employers. Because of the involvement of the Sector Council, the apprentices can move among employers during their practical training, ensuring that they are exposed to the full scope of their trade.

This \$3.3 million five-year project represents a significant partnership among the NMSC, Manitoba Hydro, Workplace Education Manitoba, and Manitoba Jobs and the Economy. The NMSC will also work closely with First Nations partners, the Manitoba Metis Federation, University College of the North, as well as industry and employers. The project began in January 2015. It builds on the successful Northern Apprenticeship Training Co-op Pilot Project that concluded in July 2014, which focused on Heavy Duty Equipment Technicians. Three-quarters of those participants successfully completed the program.

### Gateway Programs

These pre-apprenticeship co-op programs provide under-represented participants the opportunity to gain exposure, confidence and skills necessary to be successful in the trades. Projects have been implemented by Prairie Arctic Regional Council (carpentry) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (electrical) to help individuals gain a Level 1 credit in their trade, including 30 participants in 2014/15.

### **Manitoba Works! Co-operative Work Experience Program**

Manitoba Works! assists those with minimal to no previous work experience, particularly participants in receipt of EIA, to connect with employers. The program incorporates industry specific pre-employment, essential skills and employability skills training followed by a paid work experience. The goal is to increase the long-term employment prospects of individuals, support the transition to financial independence and meet employer demand for skilled workers in Manitoba.

### **Building for Tomorrow Youth Program**

This summer program, launched as a pilot in July 2014 will be offered again in summer 2015. It offers youth from grades 7 to 11, from groups under-represented in the skilled trades (Aboriginal people, new Canadians, women, persons with a disability, and EIA recipients) with an opportunity to have fun while gaining hands-on experience in various skilled trades hosted by community organizations and training institutions across Manitoba. In 2014, 120 participants attended the camps across Manitoba. The goal of the program is to provide an introduction to the trades and opportunities in apprenticeship, provide career development, and connect youth to education and employment partners.

### **Support Youth Transitioning from the Care of Child and Family Services**

#### **Financial Support for Post-Secondary Students**

Manitoba is committed to assisting youth aging out of the care of Child and Family Services (CFS) agencies, helping them to gain a post-secondary education. Since 2013/14, the EIA program has provided financial supports to youth leaving care, or youth previously in care, who are enrolled in post-secondary education, and not eligible for extended CFS care. In addition to tuition waivers provided by Manitoba's post-secondary institutions, this provides these youth with living allowances, text books and school supplies.

#### **Manitoba Civil Service Summer Internship Pilot**

This program is a partnership between Manitoba Jobs and the Economy and the Civil Service Commission to facilitate three-month summer work experience placements within the Manitoba Government for youth engaged in the child welfare system and facing barriers to work.

The initiative started in June 2013. Nineteen students have participated in the pilot since its inception. Jobs have included Administrative Assistant, Case Co-ordinator Assistant and Apprenticeship Quality Assurance Officer Assistant.

### **Supporting Reintegration after Incarceration**

#### **Winding River START Pilot Program**

In response to the need for better supports for individuals reintegrating into the community after incarceration, the departments of Justice, Jobs and the Economy, Housing and Community Development, and Family Services came together to develop a pilot program, using an integrated service model to improve individual outcomes, and to reduce recidivism rates.

The partners worked to augment the Winding River Therapeutic Community, a voluntary residential program within the Headingley Correctional Centre, by contracting with Red Road Lodge to develop a suite of post-release supports that would be accessible to participants upon release into the community. The START program is showing early success and incorporates assessment services, probations services, access to income supports, housing, training and employment programming as well as ongoing retention supports such as addictions counselling, mental health supports and life coaching.

### **BUILD**

BUILD is a Winnipeg social enterprise non-profit contractor and a training program for people who face barriers to employment. BUILD trains people with limited experience in the formal labour market, many of whom are ex-offenders, to retrofit housing stock in a fashion that reduces poverty and recidivism, and improves the environment. Social enterprises like BUILD are an important part of Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy. Since 2007/08, Manitoba Housing has used BUILD's services to repair, retrofit and maintain Manitoba Housing's stock, investing approximately \$9 million in improvements.

## ■ INCREASING AFFORDABLE AND SOCIAL HOUSING

Safe, stable and affordable housing is a necessary prerequisite for individuals and families to escape poverty. Without such a foundation, individuals are unlikely to succeed in training and employment, to be able to have a healthy lifestyle, or address other challenges they may face.

The Manitoba Government remains committed to increasing the supply of social and affordable rental housing. In 2013, the Manitoba Government announced the Manitoba Housing – Three-Year Housing Plan. This plan includes providing Manitobans with access to more affordable housing by developing 500 new social housing units and 500 new affordable housing units in partnership with the non-profit and private sectors. These units will provide new affordable housing options for families, seniors and vulnerable Manitobans, including those who are not housed, inappropriately housed, or precariously housed and who may live with multiple health and social barriers.

Manitoba also benefits from private sector investment in affordable housing. In 2013, Manitoba launched a new financial incentive, the Rental Housing Construction Tax Credit, to help address the persistent shortage of rental housing in Manitoba. This provides developers with a tax credit of up to 8% of capital construction costs if at least 10% of units constructed have affordable rents. Developers have taken advantage of the tax credit in 13 projects since 2013, with total eligible tax credits of over \$6 million. These 13 projects represent 406 new affordable rental units. Because of its success, this program has been extended to 2019.

## ■ FOOD SECURITY

Access to reasonably-priced healthy food is essential to health and well-being, especially in northern and remote areas of Manitoba, where food prices are high. Recent information from Statistics Canada shows that food security improved in Manitoba from 2007/08 to 2011/12. In 2011/12, 7.9% of Manitoba households reported food insecurity, ranking Manitoba second best among the provinces. Manitoba's goal is for a province in which all have food security.

Initiatives to support food security that have received support from the Manitoba Government include:

- Investing in community-based strategies to expand local production of healthy foods, such as Meechim North Inc., a local-food social enterprise operating in Garden Hill First Nation.
- Increasing funding to the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba (CNCM). Since 2008, the Manitoba Government has been helping the CNCM to support more than 200 nutrition programs in northern, rural, urban and First Nations communities. Additional funding of \$450,000 in 2014/15 helped to fund 32 new programs.
- Supporting Winnipeg's first Community Food Centre (a project of the NorWest Co-op Community Health Centre), offering cooking classes, nutrition education, volunteer opportunities, free meal programs, a low-cost food market, access to community gardens and a commercial kitchen.
- Investing in the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative, which has provided various supports to 96 communities to date. For example, the Ithinto Mechisowin project, located in O Pison Na Piwin Cree Nation, is focused on intergenerational knowledge transfer around traditional hunting, fishing and harvesting from the land. Youth engagement is a critical component for developing community health and this program allows for the transfer of important skills, both practical and cultural, that are directly related to improving community food security levels.
- Through Neighbourhoods Alive! providing over \$339,000 in funding for community gardens, community kitchens and food clubs.
- Building all-weather roads to formerly isolated communities through the Eastside Road Authority (ESRA). In fall 2014, the Bloodvein River Bridge was completed, providing year-round access to the Bloodvein First Nation, with work continuing towards Behrens River for 2019. ESRA has created over 600 jobs for local residents and invested over \$80 million in Eastside First Nations through Community Benefit Agreements.

## ■ SUMMARY OF KEY ALL ABOARD INITIATIVES IN BUDGET 2015

Budget 2015 makes major strides in addressing the root causes of poverty in Manitoba, with the following investments:

- **Rent Assist:** Manitoba's portable shelter benefit for low-income Manitobans, will increase to a maximum of 75% of median market rent this year, two years ahead of schedule.
- **Social and Affordable Housing:** Continued progress on creating 500 new social housing units and 500 affordable housing units over three years.
- **Adult Learning and Literacy:** Increased investments and a new full-time literacy program at the Manitoba Jobs and Skills Development Centre in downtown Winnipeg, responding to increased interest and demand from social assistance participants.
- **Early Learning and Child Care:** Nine hundred newly funded child care spaces and continued support for higher wages for the child care workforce.
- **Supporting Skilled Newcomers:** Doubling funding to Recognition Counts! to help more newcomers get their credentials recognized and get better jobs.
- **Supporting Parents in Community Schools:** Support for two new parent-child programs in high-need communities to help improve child educational outcomes.
- **Early Childhood Development:** New Early Childhood Development Hubs, in areas of high need, and \$500,000 for innovative early childhood development initiatives.
- **Mental Health:** A new \$2 million Children and Youth Mental Health Strategy.
- **Manitoba Youth Jobs Strategy:** More paid work and on-the-job training opportunities for young people through the creation of a new Manitoba Youth Jobs Fund.
- **Social Enterprise Strategy:** Promoting training and work opportunities for low-income Manitobans.
- **Improving Food Security:** Supporting better access to affordable, healthy foods.
- **Non-Profit Organization Strategy:** Reducing the administrative burden for more non-profit organizations, allowing them to focus on serving people in need, and new supports for Aboriginal organizations working with families.

Taken together, these initiatives offer practical pathways out of poverty. They are founded on the recognition that low-income Manitobans want to build better lives for themselves and their children. This approach acknowledges that the only way to successfully reduce poverty in our province is by working together with community-based organizations, Aboriginal organizations, businesses, labour groups, other governments and most importantly, with low-income Manitobans.

### Driver's Education

Sometimes it's hard to get work without a driver's license or a bank account, or even personal identification. Launched in 2012, the Citizens' Bridge program in Winnipeg helps people to establish bank accounts and personal identification, in addition to obtaining a driver license. Working in partnership with Manitoba Public Insurance, each participant has access to driver's education for \$50, the same price paid by Manitoba high school students. Since 2013, Citizens' Bridge has helped more than 100 participants obtain a driver's learner's license in Winnipeg. In 2015, this program has been expanded to northern Manitoba, working with other community agencies, giving participants an important skill to compete for jobs in high-demand occupations, including the resource industry.

## ■ FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF RENT ASSIST TO 75% OF MEDIAN MARKET RENT

In 2014, Manitoba began implementing ground-breaking changes to income supports for low-income working and unemployed families, with the launch of Rent Assist, a single low-income rent assistance program for all Manitobans living in private rental housing.

Manitoba's Rent Assist initiative is one of the most comprehensive reforms of income assistance undertaken in any Canadian province in the last several decades, and puts Manitoba at the front line of efforts to reduce poverty and reinvent the income security system. Budget 2015 invests \$22 million to fully implement Rent Assist, bringing many above the poverty line and reducing the depth of poverty for those unable to work. It provides significant increases to families with children and will reduce the number of children living in poverty. Paired with training, education and financial literacy supports, it sets out a path for low-income Manitobans that leads to choice, opportunity and social inclusion.

### Helping Manitobans Living on Social Assistance

Budget 2015 completes Manitoba's commitment to increase shelter benefits for EIA participants, through Rent Assist, to 75% of Median Market Rent (MMR). Because of Rent Assist, Manitobans who receive EIA benefits, and who live in private rental housing, will see monthly rate increases of up to \$271 per month in 2015.

When those relying on social assistance are ready and able to move into employment, they should be supported in doing so. A large increase in social assistance rates on its own raises the "welfare wall", and can make people worse off when they get a job. Benefits for low-income Manitobans outside of social assistance, such as Rent Assist, help promote transitions off of welfare and into employment, as people have better income supports when they leave welfare for work. Rent Assist assures that people who leave social assistance for work can continue to receive a shelter benefit as they move towards economic independence.

### Helping More Low-income Families

Rent Assist moves away from the old concept of a single, stand-alone welfare program where families had to lose everything before they could get help, providing benefits available to all low-income Manitobans living in private rental accommodation. Rent Assist provides the income supports low-income working Manitobans need to access safe and affordable housing, without having to rely on social assistance.

Budget 2015 raises maximum Rent Assist rates for non-EIA participants to 75% of MMR, resulting in significant potential increases of up to \$472 per month per household.

## Manitoba Rent Assist

Maximum benefit levels (EIA Participants)

Sample Household Types	July 2014	July 2015	December 2015 (75% of MMR)	Total Monthly Increase 2015
	(Dollars)	(Dollars)	(Dollars)	(Dollars)
Two Adults - General Assistance - Two Children (Ages 4 and 6)	480	525	742	262
Single Parent - Two Children (Ages 10 and 13)	521	566	742	221
Single Adult - General Assistance	435	460	513	78
Single Adult with a Disability	435	460	513	78

Ensuring that all low-income Manitobans can better afford adequate housing through a portable benefit like Rent Assist permits greater choice in where people choose to live. This creates more options when moving for school, work or to be nearer to family and community amenities.

For those who choose to stay in their current residences, Budget 2015 commits support for the Manitoba Government to work with municipalities and community agencies to increase awareness of both minimum housing standards (liveability bylaws) and rent controls. This will help assure that the substantially increased resources for private rental housing provided through Rent Assist also helps improve housing quality for low-income Manitobans.

## ■ OTHER MAJOR ALL ABOARD INITIATIVES IN BUDGET 2015

### Supporting Transitions to Work – Better Supports for EIA Participants

The Manitoba Government is taking additional action to better support EIA participants to transition into sustainable employment. These include:

- Extending the Rewarding Work Health plan, which provides drug, dental, and optical coverage for up to two years, to all EIA participants leaving EIA for employment and training.
- New funding to support financial literacy training for EIA participants who transition to a flat rate benefit, to assist with capacity building around personal finances.
- Eliminating the 135% rule so that EIA recipients can earn their way off assistance. (Currently EIA recipients are ineligible for further EIA assistance once their earnings reach 135% of their benefit income.)

### Social and Affordable Housing

In 2014, Manitoba Housing completed the government's five-year commitment (2009-2014) to develop 1,500 new affordable housing units and support 1,500 new households with Rent-Geared-to-Income assistance. Budget 2013 introduced a three-year housing plan. In 2014, work began on an additional commitment to build an incremental new 500 social housing units and 500 affordable housing units over three years, and progress is being made, with 154 social units and 170 affordable units committed to date, with an associated cost of approximately \$51 million. In 2015/16, Manitoba Housing expects to commit an additional 93 social units and 214 affordable units, with an associated cost of approximately \$25 million. Budget 2015 makes provisions for Manitoba Housing to invest \$100 million in 2015/16 in housing portfolio restoration and redevelopment, in addition to \$34 million in maintenance and repairs to the existing stock. Restoration and redevelopment and maintenance commitments is ongoing.

### Kay's Success Story

Kay is a 35-year old single mother of four, living in Flin Flon. She has been a client of EIA since December 1997.

Working with Kay on her employment plan took some time, but by building a trusting relationship and exploring her values, Kay and her EIA Counsellor were able to find an employment solution that was a good fit for her. Kay was then ready to move forward, having decided that she wanted to become self-sufficient and work with children. With support from her EIA Counsellor, Kay was able to participate in a work experience opportunity with the local school division. The school division was so impressed with Kay that they entered into a wage subsidy agreement with the province in the 2014/15 school year, putting her into a paid position, working 30 hours per week as a Classroom Support Worker. Kay has completed 75% of the Educational Assistant Certificate Program online. She is very happy and continues to plan for her future. In September of 2015, she will leave EIA benefits and transfer to Training and Employment Services living supports, studying full time to complete the Educational Assistant Certificate Program, and working on a casual basis for the school division.

## **Manitoba Youth Jobs Strategy**

Budget 2015 introduces a new Youth Jobs Strategy to help young people gain valuable work experience and connect to employment. The Strategy supports the creation of more paid work and on-the-job training opportunities, helping young people find that first job, as well as helping graduates connect their education to rewarding careers. The strategy will also promote youth entrepreneurship and help students make informed decisions about their education and future careers while still in school.

Co-op Education and Apprenticeship Tax Credits will also be enhanced, with a new stream of support for high school students, providing employers with a refundable tax credit worth 25% of eligible wages, up to a maximum credit of \$5,000 per student. Existing tax credits for post-secondary co-op education students will also be enhanced, and the government will be partnering with universities to create more co-op programs where students will have access to on-the-job work experience as part of their university education.

## **Adult Learning and Literacy**

Manitoba's sustainable employment strategy, which supports Manitobans on social assistance to get the training they need to go back to work or get their first job, is generating a strong demand for literacy and adult learning opportunities. It is expected that over 50 new learners per month will require full-time literacy programming to move into training and employment. Budget 2015 provides funding for a new full-time wrap-around literacy model focussed on the needs of social assistance participants, incorporating essential skills training, child care, high school and post-secondary credits, and work placements. This new program will be delivered at the Manitoba Jobs and Skills Development Centre in downtown Winnipeg, building on the one-stop model that includes job search, apprenticeship, skills training and career development resources.

Budget 2015 also provides increases to strengthen programming throughout our network of adult literacy providers to serve more Manitobans through existing programs.

## **Supporting Skilled Newcomers**

Recognition Counts! is a program administered by SEED Winnipeg in partnership with Assiniboine Credit Union that provides financial literacy education and flexible loans to skilled newcomers so they may get the right accreditation to work in their chosen careers in Manitoba. The program has been extremely effective, with 91% of clients to date finding new employment in their area of specialization after completion of their bridge education.

Budget 2015 doubles Manitoba's contribution to the project, from \$60,000 to \$120,000. Manitoba's increased funding will allow Recognition Counts! to expand into rural Manitoba and serve additional communities including Portage la Prairie, Steinbach, Morden, Winkler and Brandon.

## **Supporting Parents in Community Schools**

Budget 2015 provides \$160,000 through the Community Schools Partnership Initiative to support two new parent-child programs in high-need communities and help parents to become more engaged in their children's education. These new programs, enhancing existing community school sites, will provide a welcoming location for parents to organize and participate in activities that lead to improved educational outcomes for their children.

## Early Learning and Child Care

Budget 2015 continues to build on Manitoba's five-year child care plan by committing to 900 newly funded child care spaces and to support higher wages for the child care workforce. Budget 2015 also supports the Early Learning and Child Care Commission, which will investigate system redesign, including looking at ways to make the early learning and child care system more universally accessible.

## Early Childhood Development

Budget 2015 continues to support The Winnipeg Boldness Project with a renewed investment of \$500,000 in support of innovative early childhood development initiatives for children and families in the Point Douglas community, with matching funding from the McConnell Foundation. Budget 2015 also supports the development of new Early Childhood Development Hubs in the Lord Selkirk Park community, and at the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba, as committed to in the province's Early Childhood Development Plan.

## Mental Health

Budget 2015 commits to a new \$2 million Child and Youth Mental Health Strategy to promote mental health, prevent mental illnesses and improve access to services and treatment for children and youth who need them.

## Income Supports and Income Tax Credits

In 2015, Manitoba doubled the Seniors' School Tax Rebate (Rebate) to \$470 from \$235, which will result in almost 24,000 senior homeowners having their school taxes fully covered by the Education Property Tax Credit (EPTC) and the Rebate. In 2016, Manitoba will increase the Rebate to a maximum of \$2,300. This will result in over 98% of senior homeowners having their school taxes fully covered by the EPTC and Rebate, while ensuring that those owning very expensive homes, for example, seniors owning homes with assessed values of over \$1 million, will continue to pay school taxes.

Budget 2015 also increases the Primary Caregiver Tax Credit from \$1,275 to \$1,400.

## Social Enterprise Strategy

Last year, the Manitoba Government worked with social enterprises to co-create a comprehensive strategy to grow the sector and create more first jobs for individuals facing barriers in accessing the labour market. Building on the effective working relationships developed between social enterprises and government, Budget 2015 will invest \$250,000 per year for the next three years, to begin implementation of the Social Enterprise Strategy. This investment will ensure that partnerships are strengthened, resources are leveraged, business development supports are built, procurement opportunities are identified and community stakeholders are engaged. Manitoba Housing's purchasing from social enterprises has ranged from \$5 million to \$7 million annually. Within three years, Manitoba Housing will double that spending.

## Improving Food Security

Budget 2015 continues to support remote Manitoba communities to gain better access to healthy foods by developing a retail food subsidy to offset the costs of healthy foods in 10 of Manitoba's most remote communities, including several First Nations communities. This will complement Manitoba's promotion of local food social enterprise development in Northern communities.

Budget 2015 also provides a \$200,000 funding increase to school nutrition programs delivered by the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba, increasing support for in-school and after-school healthy food programs for children who need it most. Funds will be used to engage with high-needs schools not currently offering a nourishment program, and increase funding to existing programs that have the capacity and ability to either make the program available to more students and/or provide food on more days.

## Non-Profit Organization Strategy

Manitoba's Non-Profit Organization ("Reducing Red Tape") Strategy will be expanded beyond the current 35 organizations to include more provincially-funded non-profits. This Strategy provides multi-year, multi-departmental agreements, allowing community agencies to focus more time on serving Manitobans in need, and less time applying and re-applying for funding. Multi-year funding also promotes the recruitment and retention of skilled staff.

Responding to recommendations from the Hughes Inquiry, \$500,000 will be committed to help increase the capacity and development of successful Aboriginal-led organizations working with families in need.

## ■ MAKING PROGRESS ON EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME ASSISTANCE

Rent Assist has reinvented the traditional income support system by abolishing the old concept of a single, stand-alone income assistance program where families had to lose almost everything before they could get any help. Over the past decade, Manitoba has taken steps to move towards a more modern approach to income assistance. The Manitoba Government also reversed the claw back on child tax benefits which has returned over \$48 million to families with children. Benefits outside of income assistance have been enhanced and asset exemptions increased. Rent Assist takes this a step further by ensuring that working Manitobans can afford a modest rent without having to enrol in EIA. The Manitoba Government, guided by its Sustainable Employment Strategy is taking a more holistic and inclusive look at programs and services for EIA participants, working towards sustainable employment for those able to work, and more compassionate benefit structures and systems for those for which work can only be a longer-term objective. This includes exploring the possibility of a pension-type income support program for low-income persons living with a severe and prolonged disability.

### Total Monthly Benefit Income (Federal and Provincial) for EIA Participants Receiving Rent Assist 1999 to 2015

Sample Household Types	1999	July 2013	December 2015	Increase 2013-2015	Increase 1999-2015
	(Dollars)	(Dollars)	(Dollars)	(Per Cent)	(Per Cent)
Two Adults - General Assistance - Two Children (Ages 4 and 6)	1,288	1,822	2,230	22	73
Single Parent - Two Children (Ages 10 and 13)	1,253	1,687	2,136	27	71
Single Adult - General Assistance	463	607	756	25	63
Single Adult with a Disability	695	823	972	18	40

## ■ Appendix 1: MANITOBA'S INDICATORS OF POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

INDICATOR	SOURCE OF INFORMATION
Total units of social and affordable housing supported by Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation	Manitoba Housing and Community Development
New households served through Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation programs and services (excluding those entering social housing)	Manitoba Housing and Community Development
Households in Core Housing Need	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
Sense of community belonging	Statistics Canada (Canadian Community Health Survey)
High School graduation rates	Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning
Participation in adult learning programs	Manitoba Multiculturalism and Literacy
Employment rate	Statistics Canada (Labour Force Survey)
Average weekly earnings	Statistics Canada (Labour Force Survey)
Minimum wage rate	Manitoba Labour and Immigration
Low income rate	Statistics Canada (Canadian Income Survey)
Income inequality	Statistics Canada (Canadian Income Survey)
Post-secondary education participation	Statistics Canada (Labour Force Survey - custom tabulation)
Early Development Instrument scores	Manitoba Children and Youth Opportunities
Availability of child care	Manitoba Family Services
Number of children in care	Manitoba Family Services
Teen birth rates	Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors and Statistics Canada - Vital Statistics - custom tabulation
Potential years of life lost by income quintile	Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors
Prevalence of chronic diseases by income quintile	Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors
Average monthly number of persons receiving co-ordinated home care services	Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors
Continuity of physician care	Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors
Number of people using ACCESS centres	Manitoba Family Services and Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors

## ■ Appendix 2: REPORTING ON COMMITMENTS

### Housing

2014	Launch the new Rent Assist Program:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace (integrate) the current Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) Shelter Allowance and RentAid programs.</li> <li>• Raise the annual shelter benefit amount of EIA participants by between \$600 and \$840.</li> <li>• Introduce a multi-year plan to raise the maximum benefit level to 75% of Median Market Rent (MMR).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Rent Assist replaced (July 2014) and enhanced the previous RentAid and EIA shelter benefits, and household eligibility restrictions on shelter benefits were eliminated.</li> <li>✓ EIA participants living in private rent received an annual increase to shelter benefits of \$600 to \$840 and non-EIA program participants received a significant increase.</li> <li>✓ Rent Assist benefits will rise to 75% of MMR this year creating an integrated and portable shelter benefit for all low-income Manitobans renting in the private market.</li> </ul>
2013	Portable Shelter Benefits – \$6.3 million of increased investments in RentAid shelter benefits to assist low-income Manitobans:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing and simplifying income and rent thresholds for RentAid, allowing more people to qualify.</li> <li>• Increasing RentAid benefits for all recipients by \$240 per year.</li> <li>• Introducing the RentAid Transition Bonus – \$110 per month for up to two years for EIA recipients in private rental situations transitioning into training or employment, who are otherwise ineligible for RentAid.</li> <li>• A long-term commitment to improve and streamline portable shelter benefits to better support transition to financial independence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The RentAid Regulation was amended, and more Manitobans were made eligible for the benefit.</li> <li>✓ The maximum benefit was raised by \$240 in 2013/14.</li> <li>✓ The RentAid Transition Bonus (\$110 per month for 24 months, including transitions to training) replaced the Rewarding Work Rent Allowance (\$50 per month for 12 months).</li> <li>✓ Rent Assist program was launched in 2014.</li> </ul>

2014	Continue to implement the Budget 2013 commitment to build 500 new social housing units over three years.	✓ Since Budget 2013, the Manitoba Government has committed to 154 social housing units and 170 affordable housing units, with an associated cost of approximately \$51 million.
2014	Continue to implement the Budget 2013 commitment to build 500 new affordable housing units over three years.	
2013	Increasing the number of social housing and affordable rental units across Manitoba.	✓ Manitoba achieved the unprecedented commitment to establish 1,500 new affordable housing units and support 1,500 households with new rent-geared-to-income assistance between 2009 and 2014, increasing housing options for low-income Manitobans.
2013	New social and affordable housing – a three-year commitment of \$114.3 million for 500 new social housing units, and \$25 million for 500 new affordable housing units over three years, in addition to the previous commitment to establish 1,500 new affordable housing units and 1,500 new social housing units between 2009 and 2014.	✓ The province has embarked on a new commitment of more than \$130 million to build 500 new social housing units and 500 new affordable housing units over three years.
2013	Restoring, repairing and redeveloping housing – a three-year commitment to invest \$100 million annually to restore and redevelop housing units, plus an additional \$34 million annually to repair existing stock and provide quality home environments for tenants.	✓ Manitoba continues to work towards our reinvestment commitments under the Three-Year Housing Plan. Since 2013/14, Manitoba Housing has invested an estimated \$234 million, including \$160 million in housing portfolio restoration and redevelopment, and \$73 million in repairs.
2013	Support the development of new affordable rental housing – a new Residential Housing Construction Tax Credit to support the development of new rental units. This 8% tax credit will be available for construction of new rental units where at least 10% of the units have rent at, or below, affordable rental rates.	✓ The Rental Housing Construction Tax Credit was introduced in 2013; as of April 2015, 13 applications for the credit, representing potential benefit to more than 400 affordable units, have been received.
2013	Change provincial rent regulation to ease large rent increases linked to renovations for tenants in units subject to rent regulation.	✓ Enabling legislation was passed in 2013, amending <i>The Residential Tenancies Act</i> and regulatory changes have been made.
2013	Green Energy Retrofit – actions to help low-income Manitobans equip their homes with green energy-efficient devices.	✓ Since Budget 2012, Manitoba Hydro's Affordable Energy Program (formerly the Lower Income Efficiency Program) completed 2,014 high-efficient natural gas/boiler upgrades, 5,784 basic energy efficiency upgrades and 3,913 insulation retrofits.

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## Building Blocks for Employment

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2014	Launch Manitoba Works! – supportive training and co-op work opportunities for Manitobans with barriers to employment – including a \$3 million investment over three years.	✓ Manitoba Works! is being piloted in Winnipeg and The Pas; more than 200 EIA participants and others at risk of enrolling in the EIA program have benefited from training and work experience.
2013	Launch Manitoba’s Strategy for Sustainable Employment and Stronger Labour Market, including:	✓ Strategy was launched in 2013/14.
	• A new, comprehensive approach to workforce development.	✓ Developed and implementing the Sustainable Employment Pathway, which streamlines and focuses programming for training-ready participants. This “pathway” relies on assessing prior education, work history, social barriers and skill levels to inform future training interventions.
	• Restructuring and modernizing Manitoba’s EIA program.	✓ Amended the EIA Regulation to work with single parents to make employment plans sooner and to allow payment to family members of EIA recipients who provided care to children when their parents are at work or in training. As at December 31, 2014, more than 500 parents who were reliant on EIA were on their path towards independence and 197 families were no longer dependent on social assistance.
	• Providing new wrap-around supports for EIA recipients who are transitioning to training and employment.	✓ Job Connections workers support EIA recipients to resolve training or employment-related problems. ✓ Launched Manitoba Works! an innovative new approach to help those with complex service needs with assessment, training and co-operative work experience.
2012	Strengthening programs to help connect people with jobs.	✓ The EIA program is now administered alongside employment and training programs (Manitoba Jobs and the Economy), to better reflect the continuum: unemployment – EIA benefits – training – employment.

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2012	Investing in quality, accessible post-secondary education:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limiting university tuition fee increases to the rate of inflation. ✓ Passed <i>The Protecting Affordability for University Students Act</i>.</li> <li>• Capping fee increases at colleges at \$150. ✓ Passed <i>The Protecting Affordability for University Students Act</i>.</li> <li>• Committing major multi-year funding to universities with 5% operating increases until 2013/14. In 2013/14, operating funding for universities was increased by 2.5%.</li> </ul>
2014	Pilot the Gateway to Apprenticeship program, which assists under-represented groups gain access and exposure to the skilled trades.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Offered the inaugural Building for Tomorrow summer programs and funded opportunities for individuals to overcome barriers to the construction sector in 2014/15, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• nine service providers offered eleven Building for Tomorrow camps to grade 7 to 11 students from groups under-represented in the skilled trades; and</li> <li>• government partnered with trade unions to deliver pilot pre-apprenticeship co-op placements to those who would otherwise have limited or no opportunity to enter the sector. Thirty participants received level one credits in a trade and gained paid work experience.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2012	Expand access and options for apprenticeship training in local communities across the province.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The Northern Apprenticeship Training Co-op (NATC) finished in 2014; 75% of participants completed the program with advanced standing in level three technical training and were in continuing employment. Through initiatives like NATC and Northern Construction Trades Training Program, there are approximately 1,038 (active and new) Aboriginal apprentices in Manitoba.</li> </ul>
2013	Increase support for apprentices in Manitoba.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Launched the Final Year Bursary Program, providing \$1,000 each to help alleviate the challenges and barriers of final year apprentices; in 2014/15, 100 apprentices shared \$100,000 in bursaries.</li> </ul>

- 2012 Enhance the Co-op Education and Apprenticeship Tax Credit. ✓ Budget 2014 made this tax credit for hiring apprentices and journeypersons permanent, introduced a suite of credit enhancements (effective January 1, 2015) and established a new \$1,000 employer hiring grant for employers engaging in apprenticeship for the first time. In 2014/15, 53 new employer-hiring grants were awarded.

### Early Childhood Development and Parenting Supports

- 2014 Seeding the Early Childhood Development Innovation Fund with a \$500,000 investment from the Manitoba Government and a \$500,000 investment from the McConnell Foundation. The first initiative the fund will support is the Winnipeg Boldness Project. ✓ Launched the Winnipeg Boldness Project in 2014, a community-driven, science-based, culturally-informed partnership to innovate and evaluate initiatives to dramatically improve early childhood outcomes in Point Douglas.

2012 Continue to strengthen accessible, early learning, child care, and early childhood development programming, and provide innovative programs and supports for parents.

- Parenting supports like Triple P the Positive Parenting Program and hotline, and Manitoba Parent Zone. ✓ Launched the Manitoba Parent Zone website (ManitobaParentZone.ca), updated the Triple P phone line and continued Triple P training.
- First-of-its-kind in Canada pilot of PAX Good Behaviour Game. ✓ Piloted the PAX Good Behaviour Game in over 200 classrooms (reaching approximately 5,000 students), including classrooms on First Nations.

- 2014 A new multi-year child care plan that will build and open new centres and fund 5,000 more spaces over the next five years. ✓ Completed the intake process for community and school-based projects under the Family Choices Building Fund (FCBF) and applications are being assessed.

✓ 801 newly funded spaces in 2014/15

- 2013 Invest \$25 million to build new or expand existing child care facilities by 2015. ✓ Completed the intake process for school-based projects under the FCBF. One project has been approved and the assessment and selection process is underway for remaining projects.

- 2012 Continue to strengthen supports for parents, including building new schools, gyms and child care centres. ✓ Since 2012/13, 38 new or expanded child care centres were completed in Manitoba, as follows:

2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Total
18	11	9	38

2013	Additional funding for 2,000 child care spaces by 2015, starting with 386 new spaces in 2013/14.	✓ Allocated funding for 386 new spaces in 2013/14, 801 in 2014/15 and 900 in 2015/16.
2013	Open approximately 1,000 new child care spaces in 2013/14.	✓ Since 2013/14, the number of licensed child care spaces increased by 1,006.
2014	Grant increases to support higher wages for early childhood educators.	✓ Increased funding via operating grants by 2%, effective January 1, 2015, in support of increased wages for early childhood educators.
2012	Continue to strengthen supports for parents, including providing child care subsidies to more Manitoba parents.	✓ In July 2012, income eligibility levels were increased by 5.3%.

## Youth

2012	Introduce a new crime prevention strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Launched a new five-point strategy to keep kids out of crime (October 2012).</li> <li>✓ Launched "Block by Block" a crime reduction and community mobilization initiative in Winnipeg.</li> </ul>
2012	Establish a new intensive after-school program modelled after the successful Chicago After School Matters program.	✓ Began the After School Leaders program in 2012/13; 535 youth with multiple barriers have attended career-oriented after-school programs at seven sites.
2012	Investments in the Bright Futures Fund.	✓ Since Budget 2012, over \$12.6 million has been invested in the Bright Futures Fund.

## Income Supports and Tax Credits

2014	Start eliminating the education property tax paid by senior homeowners, with the tax fully eliminated by 2016.	✓ The Seniors' School Tax Rebate was introduced in 2014 and will increase to \$470 for the 2015 tax year, meaning approximately 23,700 senior home-owners will be exempt from paying school taxes on real property.
2013	Increase the Seniors' Education Property Tax Credit.	✓ Maximum increased from \$1,025 to \$1,100 in 2013, benefitting approximately 31,000 seniors' households.

2014	Increase basic income tax exemption by \$250.	✓	Since 2011, the tax exemption has been increased by \$1,000 and approximately 22,000 fewer low-income Manitobans are required to pay provincial income tax.
2013	Increase basic income tax exemption by \$250.		
2012	Increase basic income tax exemption by \$250.		

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## Food Security

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2014	New \$450,000 allocation for child nutrition programming for students in low-income schools.	✓	Grant support for the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba increased by \$450,000 in 2014/15.
2014	A new pilot project to help make healthy food, including milk, more accessible to northern Manitobans.	✓	Advanced the local food social enterprise approach in the North, like Meechim North Inc., which markets local food while growing the local economy.
2012	Working with partners to make milk more affordable in northern Manitoba.	✓	Continued work on a retail subsidy to lower the cost of healthy foods, including milk.