

# *2013 Progress Report on the Prince Edward Island Social Action Plan*

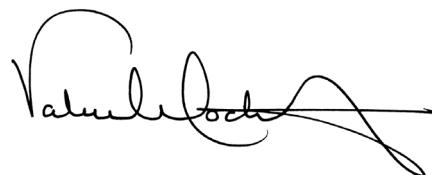
*June 2013*

*I*t is my pleasure to present the 2013 Progress Report on the Prince Edward Island Social Action Plan.

The province's first Social Action Plan was released in May 2012. This report provides an update on progress which has been made through the Social Action Plan during the past year.

As you read the report, you will learn more about the ways government and our community partners are working together to implement this Social Action Plan. Through these collaborative efforts, we strive to create a supportive environment that helps each person develop to his or her full potential. Through the Social Action Plan we want to enable each person to be a self-sufficient, fully participating member of the community.

Please take a few moments to browse through the report. Here you will find information on our partnership successes, reports on achievements and plans for future initiatives.



Hon. Valerie E. Docherty, Minister  
Community Services and Seniors



# Introduction

This report on Prince Edward Island's first ever Social Action Plan has been developed through the efforts of the Social Action Plan Working Group, who met frequently throughout the year to monitor progress, recommend changes and identify action items for next year.

The development of social indicators that provide a long term measure of the social well being of Islanders was an important area of work in 2012-13. To support this objective, the working group added a new goal – the third bullet – to the plan.

As always, the input of Islanders is appreciated and will help to guide the working group as they continue to monitor and report on the action items identified in the plan.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact the Department of Community Services and Seniors at (902) 620-3777 or submit a question or comment online at [socialactionplan@gov.pe.ca](mailto:socialactionplan@gov.pe.ca). Also, please call or email if you would like to be added to a list of people and groups interested in updates related to the Social Action Plan.

## Goals:

- Support people to move out of poverty by strengthening their educational and economic opportunities and their participation in the labour force.
- Protect and enhance the standard of living and quality of life for those unable to participate in the labour force for whatever reason.
- Provide fair and equitable opportunities for Islanders to participate in and contribute to the cultural, economic and social environment of Prince Edward Island.

# Achievements in Year One – 2012/13

## Housing

- Six individuals are enjoying new supportive housing units in Alberton.
- Twenty additional families and individuals have received rent supplements through Housing Services.
- Two hundred and seventy families have benefitted from the establishment of the Salvation Army Emergency Home Heating Program which provided \$121,000 to low income Islanders to assist with their heating costs;
- A contribution of \$50,000 was made to Habitat for Humanity to support the building of two homes

## Early learning and education

- Island children have benefitted from investments in early learning through literacy action plans in Early Years Centres, more highly trained staff, and improved child care subsidies
- Early Childhood Educators wages increased in September, 2012
- A new Early Years Centre has opened

## Employment supports and services

- Over 500 Social Assistance clients have been referred to Employment Support Services since June, 2012, a partnership between Community Services and Seniors, Skills PEI and Rural Development. The Program assists Islanders who receive social assistance to connect to employment services within their community. Ninety clients have secured employment through the Job Creation Program; 44 clients have been employed via Skills PEI; and approximately 250 clients have been supported to secure their own employment.
- The Minimum Wage increased to \$10/ hr

## Health

- Provincial pharmacy programs have increased access to medications needed by Islanders by:
  - proclaiming the *Drug Product Interchangeability and Pricing Act*, which will reduce the amount the Province pays for generic drugs and in turn Islanders should see reduced drug costs; and
  - expanding the list of drugs on the formulary.

- The health benefits of prescription medications are being maximized by the beginning of a medication review service with pharmacists for seniors and persons with diabetes who are registered with the Provincial Pharmacare Program.
- Mental Health and Addiction services consultative process and comprehensive report of this Review has been completed.

#### **Family supports**

- Research is being done on the viability of a therapeutic court in Prince Edward Island.

## **Plans for Year Two –2013/14**

#### **Housing**

- Create 20 additional rent supplements
- Implement the PEI Home Renovation Program with supports for families and seniors
- Contribute \$50,000 to Habitat for Humanity
- Continue annual funding of \$121,000 to Salvation Army Emergency Home Heating Program

- Work with community partners to identify longer term solutions to homelessness

#### **Income support**

- Increase shelter rates by 3% November, 2013
- Increase food rates for singles by 5% January, 2014
- Explore options for regular food rate increases
- Review asset levels applied to the Social Assistance Program
- Continue to work with other provinces and the federal government to implement a modest, fully funded, phased-in enhancement to the Canada Pension Plan to improve coverage and adequacy of retirement benefits.

#### **Early learning and education**

- Continue to work on the Integrated Service Delivery Project for Island schools and develop the framework, guidelines and standards for implementation
- Increase Early Childhood Educators wages in September, 2013
- Open a new Early Years Centre

## **Employment supports and services**

- Implement a Rural Diversification Plan with Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency by:
  - strengthening and growing existing businesses through one-to one supports
  - continuing to educate and support new primary producers through direct programming such as Future Fisher and Future Farmer programs; and
  - assisting Job Creation Program recipients to become employable on a long-term basis.
- Continue to expand the Employment Services and Supports Program, a partnership between Rural Development, Innovation and Advanced Learning, and Community Services and Seniors
- Smartforce PEI - \$240,000 to Holland College to enhance skills of Prince Edward Island businesses and individuals via online training
- Self-Employment Program, providing financial support and workshop training for 52 weeks to those establishing their own businesses

## **Health**

- Release to the public the report on the review of Mental Health and Addictions and begin implementation of a plan to address the findings
- Implement a catastrophic drug program to protect any individual or family whose drug costs are consuming an unreasonable share of their income
- Strengthen the monitoring of prescription drugs
- Begin Provincial consultations leading to the release of a provincial Wellness Strategy.

## **Family supports**

- Increase clothing and room and board for children in care by 5%, October 2013
- Continue to coordinate research regarding the viability of a therapeutic court in PEI
- Strengthen Age-Friendly Communities in Prince Edward Island
- Enhance support for safety programs for seniors

## Next Steps

Over the next year Government will monitor the Social Action Plan in two ways:

1. Continue to monitor achievements of the plan
2. Identify measures and indicators of social well being in Prince Edward Island

Progress on social well-being in Prince Edward Island will be observed using measures such as:

- Labour force participation
- Unemployment rates (all workers and youth unemployment)
- Low income measures (using both Market Basket Measure and Low Income Cut Offs)
- Highest level of education achieved
- Population in core housing need
- Social Assistance caseload
- Income inequality
- Kindergarten readiness
- Self-reported health status
- Self-reported mental health
- Life expectancy

*(Statistics Canada and provincially collected data will be used.)*

## Moving Ahead

The Social Action Plan is flexible and will be adjusted as necessary. Work during the next year will shape the plan into the 2014/15 year and beyond.

For more information, visit [peisocialactionplan.ca](http://peisocialactionplan.ca) or call 620-3777 for a copy of the Social Action Plan.