

Savings for Islanders

The provincial government has implemented a broad range of measures to help Islanders become more financially secure and improve their standard of living and quality of life. Through reductions in taxes, freezes on assessments and improved benefits, Islanders have achieved significant savings. As well, many programs have been strengthened, providing greater security to Islanders.

Personal income taxes were reduced, saving Islanders over \$36 million.

As a result of the reduction in gasoline taxes by 4.4 cents a litre, Islanders have realized savings of \$44 million.

For the past four years, tax assessments were frozen on owner-occupied residential property. This has resulted in a saving of more than \$9.9 million in property taxes.

Under the new PEI Energy Accord, electricity rates in the province have dropped by an average of 14 per cent and they will remain at that level this year and next. This will save Islanders \$25 million this year and an additional \$25 million next year.

Savings through lower electricity rates over the next 2 years	
Seniors	\$4 million
Single parents	\$1.3 million
Couples with children	\$10.2 million
Singles and couples with no children	\$9.2 million
Business and municipalities	\$25.3 million
Total savings	\$50 million

Since it opened in 2008, the Office of Energy Efficiency provided \$4.3 million in funding to 5,000 clients to reduce energy consumption and costs, while helping reduce dependence on fossil fuels and green house gas emissions.

Savings for Islanders (2007-2010)

- Personal income tax - \$36 million
- Gas tax savings - \$44 million
- Property taxes - \$9.9 million
- Low interest loans for fishers - \$10 million
- Home energy efficiency grants - \$4.3 million
- Reduced co-pay on seniors' drugs - \$1 million
- Blood glucose test strips - \$1.5 million
- Elimination of ambulance fees - \$1.5 million
- Seniors Home Repair grants - \$1 million
- Disability supports for families - \$1.8 million
- Child care subsidies - \$300,000
- National Child Benefit - \$750,000 per year, beginning this year

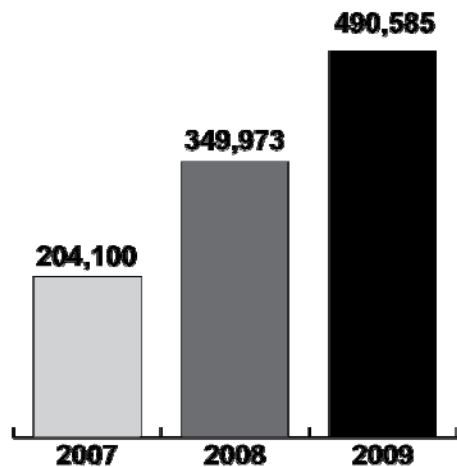
A 25 per cent reduction in the co-pay on seniors' drugs has resulted in direct savings to seniors of \$1 million a year. The provincial government continues to pay most of the cost of seniors' drugs, which saves Island seniors approximately \$14.8 million annually.

The provincial government now pays for blood glucose test strips for those dependent on insulin, resulting in a savings to them of \$1.5 million.

User fees for ambulance services have been eliminated for seniors and out-of-province ambulance fees have been eliminated for all Islanders, a total savings of \$1.5 million.

In November 2007 the Seniors Home Repair program was reinstated to help Island seniors make their homes safer, more energy-efficient and comfortable. In 2009, the income ceiling for the program was raised from \$30,000 to \$35,000, allowing more seniors to qualify. Since its reintroduction, this program has helped over 1,150 Island seniors to remain in their homes.

Seniors Home Repair Program (Funding)



In 2008, the provincial government acted to help students meet the costs of post-secondary education on Prince Edward Island with the introduction of the George Coles Bursary, the Island Skills program and the Island Student awards. Since that time, Island students received 12,000 awards to support their participation in higher learning.

To help fishers with rising costs and lower prices during the economic downturn, the provincial government introduced a low interest loan program. The total savings to fishers over the life of the program is \$10 million.

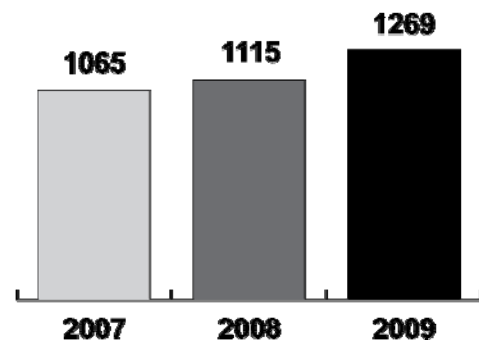
The provincial government is providing savings to low income families. The National Child Benefit will no longer be calculated as an income source for the purposes of determining eligibility for Social Assistance benefits. This will save low income families more than \$750,000 a year.

In 2007-08, parental contributions were removed for families with children receiving disability supports. Income ceilings were also increased by \$100. These changes allowed more Islanders to access the program and represented an additional investment of \$1.8 million.

Families of people with disabilities are able to take advantage of new Registered Disability Savings Plans (RDSPs) while also receiving support from the Department of Community Services, Seniors and Labour. The department fully exempts RDSPs when calculating clients' eligibility for income-tested social programs.

Since 2007, total funding for the Disability Support Program has risen by 35 per cent or \$2.8 million. This year it will increase by an additional \$820,000.

Disability Support Program (Clients)



The child care subsidy is provided to low and middle income families to help with the cost of licensed child care. Approximately 1,400 families representing 2,100 children benefitted from this program last year.

Enhancements to the child care subsidy program are included as part of the Preschool Excellence Initiative. Effective September 1, 2010, a total of \$300,000 was committed to the program and eligibility requirements were extended.