



Manitoba Poverty Progress Profile

OVERVIEW

ALLAboard is Manitoba's poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy which was released in 2009. This Poverty Action Plan (PAP) has focused on building partnerships with federal and municipal governments, community organizations, businesses and citizens. The strategy even includes legislation - *The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act* - which became law in June 2011. The PAP emphasizes that solutions to poverty lies with all Manitobans working together for a strong, successful province.¹ According to Statistics Canada Low Income Cut Off (LICO), in 2011 an estimated 105,000 Manitobans were living in low income, which is down from 107,000 in 2010.² Despite the estimated overall decrease, there are an alarming number of children living in poverty in the province: 54,000, or about 20%, which was reported in the most recent Child and Family Poverty Report Card.³ This number grows to 62% for Aboriginal children.⁴ The government has also received criticism for their 2013 budget, as well as the processes they have used during consultations with the public.

Plan Components and Highlights

The *ALL Aboard* framework and vision focused on four pillars to "reduce poverty and promote prosperity":

1. Safe, affordable housing in supportive communities
2. Education, jobs and income support
3. Strong, healthy families
4. Accessible, co-ordinated services⁵

For more details of the four pillars please see our 2012 Manitoba Poverty Progress Profile or visit Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/allaboard/index.html>.

Community Engagement in Plan Development and Implementation

In early 2013, more than 500 Manitobans participated in an *ALL Aboard* public survey and over 140 participated in the consultation process in-person.⁶ The consultations included 10 public meetings in six regions, an online/print survey and a request for written submissions, with the aim of learning what is working well, what needs improvement and what initiatives are recommended.⁷

In August 2013, the provincial government released the results of the consultations in a report titled *All Aboard: What We Heard*. The news release stated that the government is renewing its commitment to help end poverty for Manitobans and will move forward with the guidance of consultations.⁸ The report summarizes key findings that emerged from the process, which prioritized housing and food security, as

**Manitoba Poverty Progress Profile Update
Canada Without Poverty, 2013**

well as training and employment opportunities. The government also noted that any next steps must be an inclusive process and that much work lies ahead.⁹

Manitoba’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Act – (enacted June 2011)

Purpose

To establish the government’s responsibility to implement a long-term strategy to reduce poverty and increase social inclusion, including to establish indicators to measure progress and provide annual progress reports to the public.

Key provisions

- Outlines the seven areas of need that the PAP must address (education, training, employment, income support, housing, communities, and family), stipulates that the PAP must be targeted at groups particularly vulnerable to poverty, and addresses that the PAP should be coordinated across government ministries.
- Establishes the formation of a Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Committee that consists of Ministers, a member of the Premier’s Advisory Council on Education, Poverty, and Citizenship (who is a regular citizen), and three community members.
- Committee provides advice on the content of the PAP, progress indicators, and proposed programs or policies. The Committee monitors PAP implementation, including coordination across government and community involvement, but is not responsible for distributing funds.
- Requires the government to include the PAP in the annual budget. Requires the Minister and Committee to prepare and table an annual report on PAP implementation and progress. Requires the PAP to be reviewed and updated every five years.

MEASURING PROGRESS

Statistical Indicators of Poverty in Manitoba (unofficial measurement tools)

	LICO¹⁰ <i>Low Income Cut-off After-tax</i>	LIM¹¹ <i>Low-Income Measurement</i>	MBM¹² <i>Market Basket Measure</i>	Food Bank Usage¹³	Welfare Caseloads¹⁴
2000	144,000, 13.4%	155,000, 14.4%	117,000, 10.8%	-	59,026
2005	139,000, 12.7%	161,000, 14.7%	127, 000, 11.6% -	46,161, 3.9%	37,933
2009*	101,000, 8.8%	172,000, 15.0%	132,000, 11.5%	47,925, 3.9%	32,147
2010	107,000, 9.2%	165,000, 14.3%	124,000, 10.7%	57,966, 4.7%	32,829
2011	105,000, 8.9%	164, 000, 14.0%	134,000, 11.5%	55, 575, 4.5%	34,418
2012		-	-	63,482, 5.1%	35,427

* PAP came into place

Manitoba Poverty Progress Profile Update Canada Without Poverty, 2013

**It is important to note that many income-based indicators are not available on reserves, which excludes a significant portion of Manitoba's Aboriginal population from reported data.*

The Manitoba Government's Success Indicators

In the All Aboard strategy, the Manitoba Government stated they will track key indicators from the four pillars to measure progress on poverty reduction. The government released a report in March 2013 which summarized 21 indicators to monitor progress. The indicators covered key areas such as:

- **Safe Affordable Housing in Supportive Communities:**
 - The Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation (MHRC) will monitor the units of social and affordable housing, new households benefiting from programs and services, and households in core housing need, such as by Aboriginal Status.¹⁵ Social housing refers to rental accommodation for low-income households with rates charged on a rent-geared-to-income (RGI) scale. Affordable housing refers to units with rent set at or below median market rent.¹⁶
 - Commitment of 1,500 new affordable housing units in 5 years (2009-2014). As of January , 2013 1,132 new affordable units added. ¹⁷ As of March 31, 2013, MHRC supported 35,826 units of social and affordable housing (including personal care home beds).¹⁸
 - Sense of community belonging to local community.¹⁹ This indicator measures social attachment to the community and is related to social exclusion, as well as physical and mental health.²⁰
- **Education, Jobs and Income Support:**
 - High school graduation rates, post-secondary education and participation rates, and participation in adult learning centres.
 - Employment rates and average weekly earnings, minimum wage and consumer price index, as well as Manitobans in low-income.
 - Another indicator was income inequality as measured by Gini coefficient.²¹
- **Strong, Healthy Families:**
 - Early childhood development index scores, regulated child care spaces, percentage of children in Child and Family Services (CFS) care, and teen birth rates.
 - Potential years of life lost by factors such as rural and urban income quintiles and First Nations status.
 - Percentage of population with selected chronic diseases.²²
- **Accessible, Co-ordinated Services:**
 - Persons receiving coordinated home care services, continuity of care and the number of people using Access centres.²³

For the detailed summary, please visit:

http://www.gov.mb.ca/allaboard/pubs/disaggregated_data_on_allaboard_indicators.pdf?cap=p94.7

Progress to Date & Notes on Critical Thematic Areas

The Manitoba government reports that progress over the past decade has led to 16,000 fewer Manitobans living in poverty from 2000-2010. They highlight that the passing of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Act in 2011 has been a major step forward. The legislation has required the government to set indicators to measure progress and the act recognizes that certain populations are at greater risk. It also ensures that programs and initiatives are accessible to everyone. The strategy is linked to the annual provincial budget and establishes the All Aboard Committee, which consists of cabinet ministers and community representatives.²⁴

1. **Income Support:** On October 1, 2012, the minimum wage was increased 25 cents to \$10.25 an hour.²⁵ In 2012, the government began increasing the Basic Income Tax Exemption for low-income individuals by \$1,000 over four years; once this measure is fully implemented, 22,000 Manitobans will not pay provincial income tax.²⁶ In 2013, basic income tax exemptions will increase by \$250, removing another 5,500 low income Manitobans from income tax rolls.²⁷
2. **Housing:** In 2013, the government introduced a new, three-year commitment that includes \$114.3 million for 500 new social housing units and \$25 million for 500 affordable housing units. These are in addition to the commitment to establish 1,500 new affordable housing units and 1,500 social housing units between 2009 and 2014. The government will also invest \$100 million annually to restore and redevelop housing units, as well as \$34 million annually to repair and provide quality home environments.

A new Residential Housing Construction Tax Credit was introduced; this 8% tax credit will be available for construction of new rental units where at least 10% of the units have rents at, or below, affordable rental rates. The RentAid shelter benefits have been increased for all recipients by \$240 per year, and income and rent thresholds have been increased and simplified, allowing more people to qualify. The RentAid Transition Bonus was introduced, a benefit of \$110 per month for up to two years for Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) recipients in private rental situations transitioning into training or employment, who are otherwise ineligible for RentAid. This has resulted in over \$6.3 million new, annualized benefits for low income Manitobans. Also, the Seniors' Education Property Tax Credit will increase from a maximum of \$1,025 in 2012, to \$1,100 in 2013, for seniors with household incomes up to \$40,000. An estimated 31,000 seniors' households will receive an average \$151 above their basic \$700 Education Property Tax Credit.²⁸

3. **Education:** In 2012, the government limited university tuition fee increases to the rate of inflation and capped fee increases at colleges at \$150, as well as committing multi-year funding to universities with 5% operating increases until 2013/14.²⁹ In 2013, the province will be increasing funding for schools by \$27.2 million or 2.3% in order to provide continued, stable

Manitoba Poverty Progress Profile Update Canada Without Poverty, 2013

funding.³⁰ In their annual strategy report, the government reported that the high school graduation rate has risen from 79% in 2008 to 84.1% in 2012, which is a key indicator when looking at income disparity.³¹

4. **Early Childhood Education and Care:** The government has announced an investment of \$25 million to build new or expand existing child-care facilities and additional funding for 2,000 child-care spaces by 2015. Funding will be provided for 386 new child-care spaces in 2013/14 as well as approximately 1,000 new child-care spaces that are expected to open in the next fiscal year.³²
5. **Health:** In 2013, a new Mental Health Crisis Response Centre, the first of its kind in Canada, was opened as a central access point for adults experiencing mental health issues.³³ Effective in 2013, families gained more access to medication as the result of 153 new drugs to the provincial pharmacare formulary, which will lower prescription drug costs and provide more treatment options.³⁴
6. **Community Building/Investment:** In 2013 the government will invest \$29 million into 241 community projects across Manitoba including funding for community centres, swimming pools, parks and libraries.³⁵ The government also announced the Sports Opportunity Program, which is providing community-based sport and recreation organizations with two levels of grants- \$10,000 and \$2,500. The government sees the program as contributing to crime prevention by providing youth healthy positive options after school.³⁶
7. **Aboriginal Manitobans:** As of March 2013, the government has invested \$45 million into Aboriginal communities, as well as provided job opportunities and skills training to approximately 200 Manitobans. Community Benefit Agreements have been signed with 13 Eastside First Nations, nine community-owned construction companies have received contracts, and job priority for local residents is being encouraged.³⁷

Views From Outside the Manitoba Government

The 2013 budget announced several measures to address affordable housing. Despite these measures, governments have been told that the current number of units available for the lowest-income earners in Manitoba is not enough to meet the need. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) offers suggestions and refers to the campaign by Make Poverty History Manitoba to increase the rental allowance to 75% of the median market rent, which was signed by over 145 organizations across Manitoba. CCPA also states that in order to have success in education and employment, which the government focused on in the budget, there needs to be safe and affordable housing.³⁸ The Social Planning Council of Winnipeg (SPCW) agrees, stating that the budget only allocates limited resources for the poverty reduction strategy. They are concerned the government has not delivered on commitments for consultation on the action plans, as well as evaluation tools, target and timelines.³⁹

**Manitoba Poverty Progress Profile Update
Canada Without Poverty, 2013**

In August 2013, the provincial government released a report of the findings from public consultations in June. The Social Planning Council of Winnipeg acknowledges that it is positive that the government is seeking to communicate with the public and activists, and that the report clearly states community engagement is essential; however, they argue that the consultation only confirmed the importance of reaching out to the community on how to roll-out the strategy. The SPCW highlighted specific failures with the process as being the poor turnouts for consultation events, the inability to rate the different issues by importance, not knowing what criticisms were said about the government at the events, and the inability to discuss and develop views.⁴⁰

THE BOTTOM LINE

Poverty rates in Manitoba remain some of the worst in the country. Manitoba faces the second highest rate of Aboriginal child poverty in the country at 62% (compared to 50% nationally),⁴¹ tied for the highest child poverty rate in the country with BC,⁴² and sits in the bottom three in terms of an overall poverty rate between provinces and territories.⁴³ With factors such as the implementation of Manitoba's *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act*, and the continued communication with the public, anti-poverty advocates are agreeing that the Manitoba government is making positive steps in the right direction. However, they argue that the government could have had a more comprehensive 2013 budget, more effective strategies for engaging public support and input, as well as greater attention to the alarming rate of child poverty. Much work is still left to be done.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Canada Without Poverty
251 Bank Street, 2nd Floor
Ottawa, ON K2P 1X3
613-789-0096 (1-800-810-1076); info@cwp-csp.ca

Manitoba Poverty Progress Profile Update Canada Without Poverty, 2013

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Province of Manitoba, "ALL Aboard: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy." Retrieved from <http://www.gov.mb.ca/allaboard/index.html>
- ² Statistics Canada, CANSIM table 202-0208.
- ³ Campaign 2000 and the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, "Child and Family Poverty 2010 Report Card," (2012). Retrieved from http://www.spcw.mb.ca/files/4013/5414/7237/C2000_Child_Poverty_Report_Card-2012.pdf
- ⁴ David MacDonald & Daniel Wilson, "Poverty or Prosperity: Indigenous Children in Canada," *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives*, (2013), 6. Retrieved from http://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2013/06/Poverty_or_Prosperty_Indigenous_Children.pdf
- ⁵ Province of Manitoba, "All Aboard: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy," (2009), 2.
- ⁶ Province of Manitoba, (September, 2013) "All Aboard: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy," pg11. Retrieved from http://www.gov.mb.ca/allaboard/whats_new.html
- ⁷ Province of Manitoba, (2013) "Budget Paper E: Reducing Poverty and Promoting Social Exclusion," pg, 2. Retrieved from <http://www.gov.mb.ca/finance/budget13/papers/poverty.pdf>
- ⁸ Province of Manitoba, News Release, (August 21, 2013) "Province Thanks Community Groups, Public for Input on Poverty Strategy." Retrieved from <http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/print,index.html?item=18572>
- ⁹ Province of Manitoba, (2013) "All Aboard: What We Heard," 15. Retrieved from <http://www.gov.mb.ca/allaboard/pdf/WhatWeHeard.pdf>
- ¹⁰ Statistics Canada, CANSIM table 202-0208.
- ¹¹ Ibid
- ¹² Ibid
- ¹³ Food Banks Canada, "Hunger Count 2012: A Comprehensive Report on Hunger and Food Bank Use in Canada, and Recommendations for Change," (2013), 23.
- ¹⁴ Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs – Annual Reports 2001/02, 2005/06, 2009/10, 2010/11, http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/about/annual_reports.html; Government of Manitoba, "EIA Rate Review Fall 2013," 8. Retrieved from http://www.gov.mb.ca/ctt/eia/pubs/eia_rate_rev.pdf; Government of Manitoba, "Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade Annual Report 2011-2013," 47. Retrieved from http://www.gov.mb.ca/ctt/pdfs/11_12_ett_ar.pdf
- ¹⁵ Province of Manitoba, (2013) "AllAboard Consultations: Data Summary," Retrieved from <http://digitalcollection.gov.mb.ca/awweb/pdfopener?smd=1&did=21669&md=1>
- ¹⁶ Province of Manitoba, (2013) "AllAboard: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy. Annual Report 2012/13," 18. Retrieved from http://www.gov.mb.ca/allaboard/pubs/all_aborboard_annual_report_2012_13.pdf
- ¹⁷ Province of Manitoba, "AllAboard Consultations: Data Summary," (2013).
- ¹⁸ Province of Manitoba, "AllAboard: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy. Annual Report 2012/13," (2013), 18.
- ¹⁹ Province of Manitoba, "AllAboard Consultations: Data Summary," (2013).
- ²⁰ Province of Manitoba, "AllAboard: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy. Annual Report 2012/13," (2013), 23.
- ²¹ Province of Manitoba, "AllAboard Consultations: Data Summary," (2013).
- ²² Province of Manitoba, "AllAboard Consultations: Data Summary," (2013).
- ²³ Province of Manitoba, "AllAboard Consultations: Data Summary," (2013).
- ²⁴ Province of Manitoba, "Budget 2013," 1.
- ²⁵ Province of Manitoba, News Release (September 28, 2012) "Province Announces Minimum Wage Increase to \$10.25 Per Hour Oct. 1." Retrieved from <http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=15362>
- ²⁶ Province of Manitoba, (2012) "Budget 2012: Reducing Poverty and Promoting Social Exclusion," 4. Retrieved from <http://www.gov.mb.ca/finance/budget12/papers/poverty.pdf>
- ²⁷ Province of Manitoba, "Budget 2013," 3.
- ²⁸ Province of Manitoba, "Budget 2013," 3.
- ²⁹ Province of Manitoba, "Budget 2012," 5.
- ³⁰ Province of Manitoba, News Release (January 28, 2013) "Increased Funding to Help Strengthen Schools, Support Student Success: Allan." Retrieved from <http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2013-01-01&item=16432>

Manitoba Poverty Progress Profile Update

Canada Without Poverty, 2013

³¹ Province of Manitoba, "AllAboard: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy. Annual Report 2012/13," (2013), 24.

³² Province of Manitoba, "Budget 2013," 3.

³³ Province of Manitoba, News Release (May 28, 2013) "Mental Health Crisis Response Centre to Provide Critical Help During Times of Need: Premier." Retrieved from <http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2013-05-01&item=17383>

³⁴ Province of Manitoba, News Release (January 18, 2013) "Province Providing More Prescription Drug Coverage For Manitoba Families." Retrieved from <http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2013-01-01&item=16272>

³⁵ The Lance Community News, (May 29, 2013) "Province increasing spending on pagodas, playgrounds." Retrieved from <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/our-communities/lance/Province-increasing-spending-on-pagodas-playgrounds-209265971.html>

³⁶ Province of Manitoba, News Release (March 25, 2013) "Province Announces Sport Program Grants," Retrieved from <http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2013-03-01&item=17108>

³⁷ Province of Manitoba, (2013) "All Aboard: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy. Annual Report 2012/13," 16.

³⁸ Kirsten Bernas & Shauna MacKinnon, "Policy and Poverty in Manitoba- Budget 2013," Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/commentary/policy-and-poverty-manitoba-%E2%80%93-budget-2013>

³⁹ Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, "Annual Report on Poverty Reduction 2012/13: Province of Manitoba gives itself a passing grade." Retrieved from <http://www.spcw.mb.ca/issues/all-aboard-poverty-reduction-strategy/>

⁴⁰ Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, "ALL Aboard: What We Heard. SPCW Comments and Observations," <http://www.spcw.mb.ca/issues/all-aboard-poverty-reduction-strategy/>

⁴¹ David MacDonald & Daniel Wilson, "Poverty or Prosperity: Indigenous Children in Canada," *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives*, (2013), 16.

⁴² Based on LICO-AT, First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, (2013) "2013 Child Poverty Report Card," 7. Retrieved from <http://worstinacanada.org/>

⁴³ Ibid, 9.