

# Budget2015

## Balancing Choices for a Promising Future

### Investing in Healthy, Age-Friendly, Inclusive Communities

#### Age-Friendly Communities

To support Newfoundland and Labrador's seniors to remain healthy, active, engaged citizens in their communities, Budget 2015 includes a series of investments, which include:

- Approximately \$180 million for the Provincial Home Support Program, representing an increase of over \$6 million from last year's program that provided support to about 9,000 seniors.
- \$42.1 million for the Low-Income Seniors Tax Benefit, which is estimated to result in approximately 44,800 households receiving a tax benefit to a maximum of \$1,059 in October 2015.
- \$8.8 million under the Provincial Home Repair Program to assist households with lower incomes make repairs to their homes. Historically, nearly 86 per cent of applicants are seniors.
- \$5.4 million to create new affordable housing units through the Investment in Affordable Housing Program, of which approximately 60 per cent will serve seniors.
- \$2.6 million to implement new drug therapies in the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program, including drugs for the treatment of Hepatitis C and pulmonary hypertension, as well as new cancer therapies for lung cancer and multiple myeloma. The listing of any new drug therapy is contingent on the final recommendations of the national drug review committees, and the successful negotiation of pricing agreements with the manufacturer where appropriate.
- \$400,000 for age-friendly transportation services.
- \$104,000 to support the continuation of a Rent Supplement Pilot Project, which provides rental subsidies to eligible applicants who wish to remain in private sector rental accommodations.

#### Active, Healthy Living

To promote and improve the overall wellness of Newfoundland and Labrador's population, Budget 2015 includes initiatives that provide support and reduce barriers to healthy, active living. These include:

- \$24.9 million for sport and recreation infrastructure projects, bringing the total invested since 2004 to \$169.6 million.
- \$5.9 million for community-based organizations and agencies that are advocates for health and wellness and deliver key programs and services.
- \$2.2 million for initiatives, programs and projects focused on healthy living, recreation and wellness at the community level.
- \$500,000 to develop and implement a physical activity program for school-aged children.
- \$500,000 to promote healthy living initiatives which support breastfeeding, healthy eating, school health, smoking cessation and more.
- \$86,000 for the continuation of functional design for a new wellness centre in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

## **Inclusive Communities**

In 2015, the Provincial Government will release a three-year action plan to further guide implementation of initiatives under Access. Inclusion. Equality. A Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.

Budget 2015 investments include:

- \$117.8 million to meet the needs of students with disabilities, providing instructional resource teachers, speech language pathologists, guidance counsellors, autism itinerants, inclusion itinerants, educational psychologists, assistive technologies and more.
- \$1 million to continue accessibility improvements to Arts and Culture Centres in the province, bringing the total invested in accessibility at the centres in the past four years to \$4.7 million.
- \$400,000 for the Accessible Vehicle Program, which helps individuals with mobility disabilities to acquire or adapt personal vehicles for accessibility. This funding also includes \$50,000 to assist the taxi industry acquire accessible taxis.
- \$200,000 for inclusion grants, which help communities and organizations install such items as accessible washrooms, automatic doors, visual smoke alarms, accessible playground equipment and to provide sign language services and captioning at events.

## **Poverty Reduction**

Budget 2015 includes over \$185 million for Poverty Reduction Strategy initiatives designed to prevent, reduce and alleviate poverty, bringing the total investment in poverty reduction since 2006 to over \$1.2 billion. This year, the Provincial Government will release a new action plan to build on the strategy's successes and reflect priorities identified in a recent engagement process.

Budget 2015 investments include:

- Over \$25 million for early learning and child care initiatives designed to ensure all children have the opportunity to develop to their full potential.
- \$12.2 million for the Low Income Tax Reduction Program, which represents a \$1.1 million increase over last year.