

Poverty, Social Assistance in Manitoba Post Canada Assistance Plan

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Chronology of key changes 1993-2015

1993 -1994	“Welfare Reform” - Elimination of several supplements, exemptions and services. Emphasis on employment begins. Established Welfare Fraud Line
1996 -97	Elimination of CAP replaced with CHST; Manitoba “Social Assistance Act” renamed “Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) Act. Focus on short term training toward employment. Long term PSE supports scaled back.
2000	Reversed clawback NCB supplement, Eliminated Welfare Fraud Line
2000-2010	Minimal attention to social assistance – focus on employment and ‘employability’
2009	<i>All Aboard Strategy</i> , minor increases to shelter benefits
2010	Ombudsman report - 68 recommendations for ‘administrative improvement’ and a ‘rate review’
2010	Implementation of timelines and targets to increase social housing
2011	Poverty Reduction Strategy Act
2013	Rent Assist – move toward increasing rental allowance to 75% of median market rents
2015	Employment and Income Assistance Act

- There have been several policy and program changes aligned with Manitoba's All Aboard Strategy
 - The majority focuses on program and service expansion
 - Social assistance has been a minor focus and any progress made
 - Incremental increases to minimum wage since 1999 (currently \$10.70)
- We have seen decrease in poverty generally since 1999
 - with increase during recession followed by decline

Persons in Low Income Families in Manitoba



- The focus of income assistance under the NDP government remains consistent with the principle of “work-first” with an emphasis on ‘labour market participation’
- Opportunities for education and training for income assistance recipients is short term, labour market focused and at the discretion of EIA workers.
- Manitoba government has been resistant to changes and have acted only as a result of a very vocal and strategic anti-poverty movement.
 - Eg. The View From Here: Manitobans Call for A Poverty Reduction Plan; Right to Housing Manitoba campaign for increase in social housing; EIA Network lobby for ‘rate review’

- Moving Forward
 - Manitoba government announced in its 2015 budget a movement toward a guaranteed annual income for persons with disabilities
 - Two 'tracks' of advocacy at the community level
 - Incremental changes (as outlined in the View From Here)
 - Basic Income Network (pushing for a Manitoba GAI scheme)