**Newfoundland and Labrador**

**Budget highlights**

**Tax rebates:**
- $38 million tax rebate equal to the 8 percent provincial portion of HST on residential electricity and heating. All residential electricity will be eligible for the rebate, not just the heating portion
- $3 million for a new, non-refundable, Child Care Credit amount equal to child care expenses currently deductible from income commencing with the 2011 taxation year. The maximum benefit will be $539 per child and will depend on a child’s age and the value of deductible child care expenses


**Child care:**
- Introduction of a two-year pilot project focused on the development of spaces in family child care homes (400 new spaces targeted). The new Family Child Care Initiative targets the shortage of regulated spaces in rural communities and for children under the age of 2. Start-up grants from $2,500 to $5,000 are available for those wishing become a regulated family child care provider. Infant start-up grants of $7,500 are available for homes that care exclusively for children up to the age of 2. In addition, an annual infant stimulus grant of $2,400 per infant space ($200/month per infant) will be available to family child care providers who care exclusively for children age 2 to help offset the loss of revenue associated with the smaller group size required in these homes.
- $1.3 million, part of a total commitment of $4.8 million over three years, to begin implementation of the Early Childhood Learning Strategy, *Learning from the Start*. Implementation will focus on social and early language development opportunities from birth to age 3, providing parents with brochures, resource kits, a website and other tools.
- $9.2 million to the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services, bringing new total investment to $33 million in two years. Progress has been made since the creation of the new department through important developments, such as new child protection legislation and an organizational model to drive improvements in service delivery.
- $2.7 million to enhance services to support children and youth with autism.


**Poverty reduction measures** include:
- $2.9 billion for improved health care, including $1.5 million to enhance the provincial Dental Health Plan to provide coverage for adults 18 and older who have low incomes or are in receipt of income support; $700,000 to reduce the private vehicle expense threshold; and $734,000 to eliminate patient fees for inter-facility transfers for road and air ambulance services.
- $5 million to enhance housing and community supports
- $2.4 million in additional funding ($4.8 million total) for the Supportive Living Community Partnership Program (supports for homeless people)
$1 million in additional funding per year, over the next two years, to expand the Rent Supplement Program, bringing the total investment to $7 million in 2011-12 and $8 million in 2012-13. This initiative will provide financial help to approximately 375 low-income households that are waitlisted for housing units.

$1 million is being provided through the Department of Education for the Positive Actions for Students (PASS) program over the next two years. The program is designed to reach out to 250 disengaged and at-risk youth to help them remain in school and continue their education.

Enhance the benefits and services within the Income Support Program, including:
- $350,000 to eliminate the clawbacks on the income that clients receive from tax returns by changing the classification of income tax refunds from partially exempt to exempt. This initiative will simultaneously eliminate a disincentive for clients to work and improve earned incomes.
- $37,500 to increase the liquid asset level for all single individuals to $3,000 and to $5,500 for two or more people.

$180,000 to harmonize the thresholds of the NF/LA Child Benefit and the National Child Benefit Supplement. This initiative will benefit approximately 625 families living with low income.

Disabilities:
- $400,000 to support the first stages of implementation of a Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities. This strategy will contain a number of initiatives developed in response to feedback through consultations held in the fall of 2010.
- $86,700 in increased funding for supported employment. This funding will be used to help supported employment organizations recruit and retain appropriately skilled workers with disabilities.

Education:
- $225,000 for the Education Incentive Program delivered by the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, bringing the total investment to $625,000. The program was introduced to tackle low school attendance rates by providing a $50 monthly incentive for up to 4,400 families with children in Grades 7-12.

Long-Term Care and Community Support Services:
- $2.6 million to increase the current home support hourly subsidy rate by 25 cents. This will raise the current rate from a differential of $1.75 to $2.00 above minimum wage. The same incentive is being provided under home support programs within the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services, specifically for respite and behavioural aide service workers.
- $2.4 million to increase the personal care home subsidy rate from $1,717 to $1,808 as well as the creation of 100 new portable subsidies.
- $1.1 million to increase the monthly maximums for home support subsidies to ensure the current number of hours available for home support are maintained.
• $792,000 for the creation of a Small Personal Care Home Subsidy Program which will assist small personal care facilities experiencing cost pressures
• $250,000 to review the current home support program
• $250,000 to implement the Act Respecting the Protection of Adults
• $189,300 to adjust the skill mix at the Protective Care Residence in Corner Brook to accommodate a higher level of care for individuals with dementia.


**Mental health, addictions:**

• $8.7 million for improvements in the areas of mental health and addictions. Investments include $4.5 million to build a specialized mental health facility in St. John’s, $1 million for a website, tele-health tool and awareness campaign aimed at de-stigmatizing mental illness, $2.2 million to place five, full-time mental health and addictions counsellors in four rural communities.

http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2011/health/0419n08.html

**Other highlights:**

• $1.4 billion for new and ongoing educational initiatives in the K-12 and post-secondary systems
• $175 million in business development programs and services, including $8 million to expand broadband to more communities
• $140 million to enable new opportunities for those living with low incomes and individuals facing poverty
• continued investments in Labrador through the Northern Strategic Plan which, since 2004, will exceed $3 billion at the end of this fiscal year.