



Provincial Budget Analysis 2012

This document compares recommendations First Call made to the province's Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, the Committee's recommendations relating to child and youth issues as published in their *Report on the Budget 2012 Consultations*, and the actual budget commitments made this year.

First Call's main recommendation in this year's submission is:

We call on the members of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services to recommend that BC adopt a comprehensive poverty reduction plan, with legislated timelines and targets for the reduction of poverty and homelessness.

While the Committee did not adopt this recommendation, they did incorporate a couple of items that could be part of a poverty reduction strategy into their recommendations, including lowering student loan interest rates and ensuring that Community Living BC is sufficiently funded to ensure that vulnerable people are well-served.

First Call made a number of specific recommendations in our submission focused on the areas of work, education, income supports and social supports. Similarly to First Call, the Committee recommended addressing the current funding formula for education and providing stable and predictable funding to school districts.

Unfortunately, neither the Committee nor the budget itself addressed a number of other major issues impacting children and youth in this province, including the child care crisis and inadequate income assistance rates. In fact, the MSP premium increase announced in the budget will have the biggest effect on modest income families.

See below for a list of recommendations made by the Committee on issues impacting children and youth, with any responses in the budget noted.

First Call's complete recommendations can be read in our budget submission:

<http://www.firstcallbc.org/pdfs/CurrentIssues/2012%20prov%20budget.pdf>

The Committee's recommendations are available in the *Report on the Budget 2012 Consultations*:

<http://www.leg.bc.ca/cmt/39thparl/session-4/fgs/reports/PDF/Rpt-FGS-39-4-1stRpt-Budget2012Consultations-2011-NOV-15.pdf>

Provincial budget information:

<http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2012/default.htm>

Standing Committee recommendations relevant to children and youth:

- Emphasize the development of innovative programs with high schools, colleges, industry, and labour that can successfully recruit and train students
 - **Extension of Training tax credit program**
- increase efforts in trades training for women, Aboriginal people, older and disabled workers
 - **Extension of Training tax credit program**
- On K-12 education, the Committee recommends that steps be taken to address issues relating to the current funding formula and the annual facilities grant. While acknowledging the recent announcement of \$300 million to cover projects in seven school districts, the Committee encourages that funds be targeted to address high-need areas.
 - **No specific promises made**
- The Committee recommends steps that government can take to strengthen the post-secondary sector, including reviewing post-secondary accounting standards, developing a plan to address capital funding issues.
 - **No specific promises made regarding accounting standards**
 - **Capital funding set at \$896,000**
- It is recommended that the current review of CLBC be expedited, and that sufficient investments be provided to ensure that vulnerable people are well-served.
- ... and continue to improve planning and services for youth and adults with special needs who are in transition or whose families are in transition.
 - **Funding increased to \$718,777,000 – 5.5% increase in funding over previous year**
 - **Four review reports released; government is implementing a 12-point plan announced in January**
- Support the Ministry of Education and work with stakeholders to revamp the current funding formula.
 - **No specific promises made**
- Provide stable and predictable funding for school districts and continue to restore the K-12 annual facilities grant.

Provincial Budget Analysis 2012

- **No specific promises made**
- Review the capital funding process, particularly for high-growth school districts.
 - **No specific promises made**
- Review the Community Link program and consider moving to a needs-based funding formula for school districts.
 - **No specific promises regarding Community Link**
 - **No specific promises regarding needs-based funding formula**
- Support the establishment of regional stakeholder tables to work with the Ministry of Education to identify priorities within school districts to deal with special needs students.
 - **No specific promises made**
- Improve resourcing to address any delays for early intervention therapy and autism services in order to facilitate the transition of children with special needs into the K-12 system.
 - **No specific promises made**
- Consider the Windsor House proposal as a pilot project for selected schools to capitalize on personalized learning for all students in the school system.
 - **No specific promises made**
- Lower student loan interest rates to the same national ranking as BC tuition fees – i.e. middle of the pack.
 - **No specific promises made**
- Establish a provincial system of upfront needs-based grants to ensure success for students at all socioeconomic levels.
 - **No specific promises made**
- Compile a province-wide inventory of current and future maintenance needs for post-secondary infrastructure and develop a realistic plan to fund the Annual Capital Allowance.
 - **No specific promises made**
- Support the development of a full-cost and sustainable funding model for community-based employment service programs that deliver services on behalf of government.



Provincial Budget Analysis 2012

- **Employment programs funding set at \$55,487,000 in Ministry of Social Development, no change from previous year**
- **No specific promises regarding development of community-based programs**
- Give consideration to improving how community gaming grants are distributed, in recognition of the valuable services of non-profit and volunteer organizations.
 - **Changes announced in January 2012 increased eligibility for gaming grants. Government increased the budget for this year by \$15 million.**