

Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy

Annual Report
2020 – 2021



Pursuant to The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act, this document reports on the status of indicators of poverty reduction and social inclusion in the 2020/21 fiscal year.

This publication is available in alternate formats upon request.

For alternate format requests, please contact povertyreduction@gov.mb.ca.

This publication can also be found online at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/povertyreduction>

Message from the Poverty Reduction Committee

Co-Chairs

As co-chairs of Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Committee, we are pleased to share the 2020/21 annual report on Manitoba's poverty reduction strategy.

Reflecting on all the accomplishments and challenges facing Manitobans over this past year, the word *resilience* encapsulates the strength shown by individuals and families, our public service and our community partners, to pivot and continue delivering critical services and supports safely during a period of unprecedented upheaval.

[Pathways to a Better Future: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy](#) (2019) helps to harness this resilience demonstrated by Manitobans and highlights opportunities and pathways to close gaps in employment and education, advance reconciliation, improve health outcomes and standard of living, and use innovative tools and approaches to address the root causes of poverty in Manitoba.

This annual report measures progress on key targets and 13 indicators in reducing poverty and social exclusion. Government investments over this past year continue to demonstrate that we are moving in the right direction and decreasing the rates of Manitobans living in poverty. Our report will show that in 2019, the child poverty rate was 14.4 per cent, or 25 per cent lower than 2015. This helps us meet our target to reduce the child poverty rate by 25 per cent by the year 2025, compared to the baseline year of 2015.

This report will highlight some of the efforts taken to help vulnerable populations during our provincial COVID-19 response, as well as broader actions and initiatives underway that address the strategy's guiding vision that all Manitobans have the resources, opportunities and access to achieve a better quality of life.

Our government affirms our continued commitment to work with community partners to help reduce poverty for all Manitobans.

Sincerely,



Honourable Rochelle Squires
Minister of Families
Committee Co-Chair



Honourable Cliff Cullen
Minister of Education
Committee Co-Chair

Message des coprésidents du Comité de réduction de la pauvreté

À titre de coprésidents du Comité de réduction de la pauvreté du Manitoba, nous sommes heureux de transmettre le rapport annuel 2020-2021 de la stratégie manitobaine de réduction de la pauvreté.

En réfléchissant à toutes les réalisations des Manitobains et à tous les défis auxquels ils ont été confrontés au cours de la dernière année, c'est le mot *résilience* qui résume le mieux toute la force démontrée par les particuliers et les familles, notre fonction publique et nos partenaires communautaires, qui ont su se retourner et continuer de fournir le soutien et les services essentiels pendant une période de tourmente sans précédent.

[S'engager vers un avenir meilleur : Stratégie manitobaine de réduction de la pauvreté \(2019\)](#) contribue à faire ressortir cette résilience des Manitobains et met en relief les possibilités et les moyens de diminuer les écarts en matière d'emploi et d'éducation, de progresser sur la voie de la réconciliation, d'améliorer la santé et le niveau de vie, et d'utiliser des approches et des outils innovants pour régler les causes profondes de la pauvreté au Manitoba.

Ce rapport annuel rend compte des progrès réalisés à l'égard des principaux objectifs et des 13 indicateurs établis pour réduire la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale. Les investissements publics au cours de la dernière année continuent de démontrer que nous avançons dans la bonne direction et que les taux de pauvreté diminuent au Manitoba. Notre rapport indique que le taux de pauvreté des enfants s'établissait à 14,4 % en 2019, soit 25 % de moins qu'en 2015. Cela nous permet d'atteindre notre objectif qui était de réduire le taux de pauvreté des enfants de 25 % d'ici 2025, par rapport au niveau de référence de 2015.

Le rapport souligne quelques-uns des efforts déployés pour aider les populations vulnérables dans le cadre des mesures provinciales prises en réponse à la COVID-19, ainsi que les mesures et les initiatives plus générales en cours qui vont dans le sens de l'énoncé de vision de la stratégie, qui est que tous les Manitobains ont des ressources, des possibilités et des accès qui leur permettent d'améliorer leur qualité de vie.

Notre gouvernement affirme sa volonté de continuer à travailler avec les partenaires communautaires en vue de réduire la pauvreté pour l'ensemble de la population de la province.

Veuillez agréer nos meilleures salutations.



Madame Rochelle Squires
Ministre des Familles
Coprésidente du Comité



Monsieur Cliff Cullen
Ministre de l'Éducation
Coprésident du Comité

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Progress in 2020/21

During this year of unprecedented challenges brought on by COVID-19, the Manitoba government has remained committed to reducing poverty and supporting the prosperity and wellbeing of all Manitobans, particularly structurally-marginalized populations. The [Poverty Reduction Strategy Act](#), entrenched in law in 2011, provides the framework for government's actions and investments to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion, including the requirement of annual reporting and establishment of indicators to measure progress.

In 2020/21, government's primary focus was implementing an effective COVID-19 response. This meant adapting the ways government reached Manitobans to deliver programs and services. The ever-present goal has been to minimize disruption in the lives of Manitobans through timely and humane delivery of those programs and services that they rely upon to meet their essential needs.

This annual report shares highlights of how government continued to make inroads in 2020/21 toward creating better outcomes for Manitobans living in poverty and presents data on thirteen indicators used to measure our collective progress.

Poverty Reduction Committee

Under The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act, the Poverty Reduction Committee, comprised of community members and provincial ministers responsible for poverty-related policies, programs and services, oversees the implementation of the strategy, provides advice and facilitates community involvement in strategy development.

As of March 31, 2021, members of the Poverty Reduction Committee were¹:

- Honourable Rochelle Squires, Families (co-chair)
- Honourable Cliff Cullen, Education (co-chair)
- Honourable Eileen Clarke, Indigenous and Northern Relations
- Honourable Wayne Ewasko, Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration
- Honourable Cathy Cox, Sport, Culture and Heritage and Status of Women
- Mr. Bob Lagassé, MLA for Dawson Trail
- Ms. Zully Trujillo
- Dr. Jennie Wastesicoot

¹ There was a Cabinet shuffle on January 5, 2021, wherein the previous co-chairs Honorable Heather Stefanson, Minister of Families, and Honourable Kelvin Goertzen, Minister of Education moved to other portfolios.

Pathways to a Better Future: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy

[Pathways to a Better Future: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy](#), is Manitoba's multi-year, whole-of-government strategy launched in 2019. It focuses on pathways to success and positive outcomes to achieve a vision where "all Manitobans have resources, opportunities, and access to achieve a better quality of life." The strategy is also grounded in the principle of reconciliation as a way of understanding and acting that is embedded in each pathway. The strategy is focused around the following six priority areas:

- Investing in Manitoba's future prosperity through supports to children and youth,
- Working together to improve health outcomes and standard of living,
- Promoting economic inclusion through employment, education and training,
- Facilitating partnerships and supporting community-based organizations,
- Strengthening client-centred service delivery, and
- Making positive change through social innovation.

Exploring the roots of poverty in Manitoba means having difficult dialogues, opening one's eyes to historical truths, and advancing opportunities to close gaps in education, health, and employment for all Manitobans that continue to face structural, physical, and attitudinal barriers.

The Manitoba government affirms its commitment to building strong partnerships with community organizations, the business sector and respectful, sustainable connections with Indigenous and other government partners. We must work together to create conditions for the health, inclusion and prosperity for all.

Highlights of Actions Taken in 2020/21

This section shares examples of how the Manitoba government is taking action in six priority areas to meet outcomes and reduce poverty.

1. Investing in Manitoba's future prosperity through supports to children and youth

Enhancing Opportunities for Early Learning and Child Care

A system of accessible early learning and child care (ELCC) services is an essential component of a successful poverty reduction strategy.

Key achievements from the provincial early learning and child care program during 2020/21 include:

- Funded 108 new home-based family child care spaces.
- Funding 883 new spaces in centres through the development of new community and school-based capital projects.

- Issued four Letters of Eligibility to corporations to support the development of new child care spaces under the Child Care Centre Development Tax Credit program.
- Through the Inclusion Support Program dual stream service approach, supported 1,159 unique children with additional support needs to attend child care by assisting eligible child care facilities in addressing barriers to allow all children to participate in programming.
- Provided presentations, workshops, coaching and mentorship supports to child care staff to receive training in autism spectrum disorder and overview of Applied Behavioural Analysis principles and applications.
- Supported trained Circle of Security facilitators from the early learning and child care sector to provide training to child care facilities to understand how to better meet children's emotional needs and reduce challenging behaviours.

On August 19, 2020, a one year extension of the Canada-Manitoba ELCC Agreement was signed for 2020/21. The extension agreement builds on many of the successful initiatives under the pillars of the original Canada-Manitoba ELCC Agreement, with some changes made to reflect the emerging needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is in addition to the annual investments in ELCC by the Manitoba government to directly support licensed early learning and child care facilities as well as workforce education and training.

The department is working to modernize Manitoba's early learning and child care system to enable a continuum of flexible, equitable and quality child care options that reflects the diverse needs of families in Manitoba, while also supporting economic growth and diversification.

Transforming Child Welfare in Manitoba

The Manitoba government remains committed to the transformation of child welfare to keep families together, reduce the number of children in care, and support reunification with families and communities.

Guided by the four pillars of the Child Family Services (CFS) Transformation Plan, in 2020/21 key activities included:

- Ended the Practice of Birth Alerts effective July 1, 2020. Implemented policy to inform the development of a new practice model focused on voluntary prevention work with high-risk expectant parents.
- Invested \$525,000 to recruit, train and employ Community Helpers, which provide mental health and addictions services to families and caregivers, reducing the risk of CFS apprehension or placement breakdown.
- Continued investment of \$1.5 million in 2020/21 the 'For Every Family Initiative' in collaboration with United Way of Winnipeg and its funded family resource centres.
- Collaborated with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection to create a public awareness prevention campaign to educate parents and tweens (ages 8-12 years) on online safety.

- Established policy to allow CFS Authorities to create customary care and supported guardianship programs.
- Implemented Single Envelope Funding to support better outcomes for children, youth, and families. This funding models enable agencies to divert funding to prevention, early intervention and reunification programming; it reduces administrative burden for the CFS sector and enables more accurate projections for future budgets.
- Continued to review and identify areas that require amendments and modernization within CFS legislation, including implications of federal child welfare legislation.

New Family Resolution Service

The [Family Law Modernization Action Plan](#) (June 2020) has contributed to improved health outcomes and greater affordability for families while addressing unique needs arising from the pandemic. A new, digital single-window [Family Resolution Service](#) was launched to consolidate and expand out-of-court resolution services and supports to a greater number of families.

Restorative and Trauma-Informed Approaches

Public, private and community service providers collaborate to deliver restorative and trauma-informed approaches that foster healthy transitions for former partners, children and their families. For example, the expanded [Child Support Service](#) enables many families to have child support determined without making a court application. Similarly, the updated [For The Sake of the Children](#) program transitioned to a fully online program, eliminating associated childcare and transportation costs previously born by families who were required to attend the program in person. Overall, these efforts offer accessible, timely and affordable family law supports to help minimize conflict and foster more stable home environments for children contributing to healthier, long-term family relationships, and reduced mental and physical illness.

Metis Community Addictions Response Team

The Manitoba government invested \$750,000 in 2020/21 to the Métis Child and Family Services Community Addiction Response Team (CART) pilot project, which provides mental health and addictions services to families in Winnipeg and Parkland Region who are at risk of child apprehension due to co-occurring parental substance use concerns. CART arranges for families to partner with a CFS worker to provide direct support to parents, engage in ongoing family planning, and work to support parents as they engage in or sustain recovery. CART aims to provide early intervention/prevention supports to parents by enabling quick access to addictions and mental health services. The goal is to keep families together while supporting the parents/caregivers' recovery journey.

Thrival Kits™

In 2020/21, the Manitoba government invested \$580,000 to expand the distribution of Thrival Kits™ under a pilot project to address mental wellness and promotion in some Manitoba schools. These kits were distributed by the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth and the Canadian Mental Health Association. At least 30,000 grade 4 to 6 students across the province are expected to benefit from distribution of these kits. This investment aligns with recommendations put forward in the VIRGO report on mental health and addictions and by the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth.

StreetReach Programming

The StreetReach program is part of Tracia's Trust, the Manitoba government's strategy to prevent sexual exploitation of children and youth. StreetReach works in collaboration with law enforcement services in cities/towns across Manitoba. In 2020/21, the following services were expanded:

- Invested \$790,880 to expand StreetReach programming in Thompson, by adding a spiritual advisor and mental health clinicians. The focus is on youth engagement and relationship building to enhance this community mobilization hub. It has received positive feedback from both clients and partner organizations.
- Invested \$369,000 in 2020/21, for the Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre to work in collaboration with StreetReach Winnipeg and to fund a spiritual care position. The combined strengths of these organizations to deliver mental health and substance abuse services, and intervene in crises, will help protect children and youth.

Neecheewam

The Manitoba government invested \$1.3 million in Ata Chiminis Mikisiw (Eagle Embracing You), an Indigenous-led 30 to 60 day treatment program providing individualized care for youth using culturally safe, relationship-based, and trauma-informed methods. This initiative supports Indigenous and non-Indigenous female, transgender or two-spirit youth aged 12-17 who have experienced, or are at high risk of experiencing, sexual exploitation and live with co-occurring mental health and/or substance use concerns. Operated by Neecheewam Inc., the initiative accepts referrals from StreetReach Winnipeg and builds on short-term stays and relationships built with staff at the Strong Hearted Buffalo Women Crisis Stabilization Unit.

Indigenous-Led Healing Services (Land-Based Healing)

The Manitoba government invested \$68,000 in 2020/21 in the Land-Based Healing initiative, offered to Indigenous youth who have experienced sexual exploitation. Elders lead, facilitate, and coordinate bi-monthly cultural programming, including ceremonies, as part of treatment and healing. Land-Based Healing is a new initiative being offered in partnership with StreetReach Winnipeg and Neecheewam's Eagle Embracing You who provide referrals. Land-Based Healing offers lived experiences in the community through the knowledge, wisdom and experiences of the advisory council of Clan Mothers Home Village.

Expanding Food Security

In 2020/21, the Manitoba government provided \$978,000 to the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba (CNCM) to provide nutrition supports for children and youth in Manitoba schools. CNCN supported over 280 school and community-based breakfast, snack, and lunch programs, serving over 34,000 children and teens.

Families First Home Visiting Program enhanced by the Towards Flourishing Mental Health Promotion Strategy for Families (TF)

Families First is a public health home visiting program that provides services to families with children (from prenatal to five years old) who are living in what are considered at-risk conditions. At-risk conditions considered as affecting the well-being of children can include children with congenital health problems, teenage parents, parents in financial difficulties (defined as having insufficient monies available to meet basic needs after meeting financial commitments; inclusive of families living in poverty and those on social assistance/income support), or parenting with mental health problems. This program helps families develop stronger parenting skills and connects them with supports within their communities. Public health staff –through these programs and generally -- enable families to access health and social services, community-based programs and financial and material resources through the Prenatal Benefit program.

In 2019/2020 Families First continued to engage with these families across the province. While the COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges and increased stressors to families and across society, Families First has been able to adapt in order to initiate and maintain connections with families enrolled in the program. In some regions this meant shifting to a more virtual visiting model

Youth Criminal Justice Review

A working group formed between the departments of Families and Justice collaborate on reviewing the youth justice system and its connection to the child welfare system. The goal is to reduce offending and incarceration as well as enhance access to treatment and provide support for youth to end the cycle of crime. The group is working towards solving challenges associated with the pandemic related to such things as youth placement planning. Based on the group's efforts, in part, youth custody counts have continued to decline and a number of placements have been successful.

Removing Barriers to Education, Employment and Training Opportunities for Youth

Through targeted youth programming, Manitoba provides job readiness, work experience, employment and training supports to youth to help them navigate the Manitoba labour market and successfully access employment.

Approximately 4,000 positions were supported through the Manitoba Summer Student Recovery Jobs Program to offset the effects of the pandemic on Manitoba students aged 16 - 29 by providing sustainable long-term, seasonal and short-term employment opportunities.

Apprenticeship Manitoba worked with Skills Manitoba to promote the skilled trades to youth. In December 2020, regulatory amendments expanded the apprentice to journeyperson ratio and supervision definition in all trades. This will provide more opportunities for youth to participate in the High School Apprenticeship Program and lead to better jobs for youth out of high school.

The Manitoba government is committed to providing youth aging out of the child welfare system the resources and support they need to pursue and realize their academic and career goals.

- Futures Forward is a collaborative partnership across multiple community-based service providers to provide mental health, addictions, housing, and career development supports for current and former youth in care aged 15 to 29. In 2020/21 Futures Forward provided 490 youth with supports to help navigate their career path and transition to independence.
- The Tuition Waiver Program and the Advancing Futures Bursary helps to remove financial barriers and improve access to post-secondary education for youth currently or formerly in care. In 2020/21, 156 Advancing Futures Bursaries were awarded.

With funding from Education, SEED Winnipeg has initiated a program that provides individualized financial management support to parents/guardians of children who earned a \$400 bursary from participating in Community School Investigators (CSI) Learning Enrichment Program that is operated by Boys and Girls Clubs of Winnipeg. Under this program, SEED works with parents to deposit the CSI bursary into a Registered Education Savings Plan.

2. Working together to improve health outcomes and standard of living

Creating Better Health Outcomes for Manitobans

Improving the health and wellbeing of Manitobans living in poverty is another key pathway of the provincial poverty reduction strategy. Manitoba Health and Seniors Care (MHSC), the regional health authorities and Shared Health, and community-based service delivery organizations are working together to deliver integrated services across the province. As part of the health system transformation underway, key considerations have been included in the Clinical and Preventive Services Plan, including working in partnership with communities and other stakeholders to enhance social inclusion and improve access, gaps in care and minimize poorer health outcomes faced by many Manitobans.

Basic Personal Amount and Indexation

Boosting the incomes of Manitoba families living in poverty is vital to making basic living affordable. The Basic Personal Amount (BPA) is a non-refundable tax credit, indexed to the rate of inflation that every Manitoba resident is entitled to claim on their income tax return.

The basic personal amount increased from \$9,838 in the 2020 tax year to \$9,936 in 2021. Since 2016, the BPA has increased by \$802. In 2020, indexing removed an estimated 3,300 Manitobans from the tax rolls and saved residents more than \$34.0 million annually.

In 2021, indexing will remove an additional 1,530 Manitobans from the tax rolls for an additional annual savings of \$16.0 million. These savings will continue growing at the rate of the growth in the consumer price index, meaning that Manitobans are able to keep more of their income.

A New Disability Income Support Program for Persons with Severe and Prolonged Disabilities

The Manitoba Families continued its work in developing a new income support program for persons with severe and prolonged disabilities to be launched in 2022. The new program will be separate and distinct from the Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) program and is being developed to meet the unique needs and address the distinct barriers faced by Manitobans with severe and prolonged disabilities. In early 2020, the department held public engagement sessions seeking feedback from Manitobans living with disabilities, as well as from community agencies and other advocates, to help guide program design.

Affordable and Social Housing

In 2019, Manitoba signed the National Housing Strategy (NHS) bilateral agreement with the Government of Canada for the years 2019/20-2027/28. Manitoba's 2020/21 allocation under the NHS bilateral agreement was \$16.8 million. Funding under this bilateral agreement provides affordability support, and allows for the preservation of housing and new capital investment.

In 2020/21, the Manitoba government continued to invest in housing options and supports for Manitobans in housing need. Some key initiatives included:

- Continued the delivery of 137 affordable housing units in Winnipeg and Brandon through a \$5.0 million investment as well as the construction of 82 Supportive Recovery Housing beds and units on behalf of the Department of Health and Seniors Care.
- Provided one-time funding of \$1.1 million to Home First Winnipeg Inc. towards capital costs to build 47 micro-suites, along with common living and counselling support spaces, targeting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and those who are dealing with mental health or addiction issues.
- Contributed \$624,000 to Winnipeg Housing and Rehabilitation Corporation to support the construction of 18 modular units at 260 Toronto Street. This affordable housing project will provide homes for women and their children experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.
- Allocated \$5.6 million to the Manitoba Non-Profit Housing Association towards a Manitoba Relief Fund. The fund provides a quick access loan to bridge a temporary interruption of income, ultimately preventing evictions and potential homelessness while improving housing stability for low-income families.

In 2020/21, \$2.0 million was committed to develop 15 new homes and provide financial assistance for low- to moderate-income families to enter into homeownership. Since 2016, support from the Manitoba government has facilitated homeownership for over 180 households through partnerships with municipalities and non-profit organizations.

Homelessness

Government also invested \$4.5 million towards homelessness initiatives in 2020/21, including operating emergency shelter space, providing rent supplement benefits for vulnerable Manitobans living in the private market, and providing housing support services and programming to individuals with complex health and social issues.

Health IM

The Criminal Property Forfeiture Program of Manitoba Justice provided additional funding of \$454,000 in 2020/21 for the HealthIM Risk Assessment Tool. This software system is installed in police vehicles and mobile devices with receivers in local emergency rooms, nursing stations and community mental health agencies. This tool supports police in providing a more empathetic and evidence-based response to individuals suffering from a mental health crisis by triaging individuals to appropriate mental health and other supports in the community while protecting both the safety of police and medical staff. Between July 2019 and June 2020, in 28.5% of cases using the tool, the person remained in the community without requiring hospitalization or other urgent interventions. In the same period, Manitoba has seen a 57.5% decrease in apprehension rates. Manitoba is the first province in Canada to standardize the system for all law enforcement agencies.

Expanding Support for Mental Health and Addictions

In January 2021, the new Department of Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery was established. The department continues to implement the 125 evidence-based recommendations of the 2018 Virgo report. Examples of achievements during 2020/21 included:

- Opened a sixth Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine (RAAM) clinic in Portage la Prairie.
- Further enhanced access to mental health assessments and treatment for youth through Health Sciences Centre Children's Hospital.
- Created a new unit at Health Sciences Centre Winnipeg's Emergency Department to improve outcomes for patients in various stages of intoxication, withdrawal or mental health crisis.
- Expanded access to Integrated Youth Services in Manitoba by funding five additional sites in Winnipeg, Brandon and Selkirk to provide youth-centered services across a continuum of care so that young people can access all of the core health services they need in one place.
- Created a community drop-in space for adults with addictions and mental health issues which is being operated by the Spence Neighbourhood Association in Winnipeg.
- A pilot project has enhanced existing school-based clinical teams with psychiatric nurses and addictions support workers in Brandon, Portage la Prairie and Steinbach (\$4.4 million).
- Invested \$3.5 million toward the capital construction costs at the Bruce Oake Recovery Centre to enhance access to mental health and addiction treatment in Manitoba.

- Provided \$2.1 million to Siloam Mission, Riverwood Church Community Inc. and Tamarack Recovery Inc. to develop 70 supportive housing units including on-site support services for people completing their addictions treatment.
- Allocated \$75,000 for the Sources of Strength program reaching up to 10,000 students in grades 7 to 12, and providing staff wellness training open to all school divisions.
- Issued \$50,000 to Kids Help Phone to add up to 20 more classrooms to the Counsellor in the Classroom program, and additional staff to respond to increased number of contacts from children and youth received via text and Facebook.

Thompson Sobering Centre

In 2020/21, Manitoba provided funding for development and operation of the Thompson Sobering Centre. Once launched, the Centre will provide an effective alternative to police and hospital-based responses to public intoxication, by providing short-term recovery from intoxication in a safe setting.

Reducing the Harm of Drug Use in Manitoba

In 2019, the Illicit Drug Task Force released a framework for action to combat the proliferation of illicit drugs and reduce the harm of drug use in Manitoba. In 2020/21, the Manitoba government has implemented more than half of the report's recommendations, including initiatives that target the proliferation of illicit drugs, and provide support to substance users, their families and communities to reduce harm and improve community health and safety.

3. Promoting economic inclusion through employment, education and training

Helping Children and Youth Succeed in School

Education is a foundation for building life-skills, creating inclusion and helping children and youth explore pathways to success. Examples of how Manitoba Education improved educational outcomes in 2020/21 included:

- Releasing the *Better Education Starts Today* strategy in March 2021, in response to the recommendations of the Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education and lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a clear plan of action to build an education system that is classroom-focused, student-centred, parent-friendly and accountable for results.
- One of the priority actions in the strategy is to establish a taskforce, connected to the Poverty Reduction Strategy, to examine the linkages between poverty and education and support the implementation of strategies to improve engagement and outcomes for all students. Key areas of action will be identified and shared with the Poverty Reduction Committee.
- Providing \$80,000 to the Newcomer Youth Educational Support Services Coalition to operate a summer learning program that targets students at greater risk of learning loss.

- Allocating \$71,200 to Rossbrook House to operate an after-school homework club and to support three alternative school programs operated in conjunction with The Winnipeg School Division.
- Expanding the community schools program (CSP) through increases in funding totalling \$1.6 million (\$417,000 in 2019/20 and \$595,000 in each of 2020/21 and 2021/22). This is supporting the establishment of five new schools, and expansion of the scope of community programs of 13 Kindergarten to Grade 6 schools. CSP supports the capacity of schools as hubs within communities to strategically gather and deploy school-community services and resources in ways that attain better outcomes for students, families and neighbourhoods that have concentrated disadvantages. This helps extend the benefits of resources and services to more than 10,000 children.

Improving Financial Literacy of Manitobans

Effective March 31, 2021, the Financial Literacy Fund (“the Fund”) was revised and Part XXVI of The Consumer Protection Act was repealed. High-cost credit grantors and payday lenders are no longer required to remit the \$500 financial literacy levy as a part of their licensing process. The monies in the Fund were disbursed as grants to two non-profit organizations: SEED Winnipeg Inc. and Community Financial Counselling Services Inc. Each organization received \$140,000 to support programs and activities that improve the financial literacy of Manitobans.

Employment opportunities for persons with disabilities

Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) works with participants to assess and identify potential employment and education supports required to help the participant achieve financial independence. Though not a requirement for clients enrolled as persons with disabilities, EIA staff actively work with participants who are interested in participating in training and/or employment opportunities. Once a client's unique needs have been assessed, EIA refers participants to appropriate employment and training programs and supports.

Beginning October 2020, Manitoba Families, in partnership with Economic Development and Jobs, collaborated with Equal Opportunities West, a non-profit organization, to launch the Service Needs Assessment Project (SNAP). SNAP offers clients with disabilities a voluntary assessment that will help identify their needs and inform referrals to appropriate supports.

Jobs On

Jobs On is a rapid employment service model with centres in Brandon and Winnipeg that works with EIA participants assessed as closest to the labour market. The objective of the Jobs On model is to quickly engage and support clients to overcome barriers and move to employment, preventing risk of longer term dependency.

In 2020/21, Jobs On in Brandon served almost 400 participants, while Jobs On in Winnipeg served almost 1,800 participants.

Supporting Recruitment and Retention of Women in Underrepresented Areas

Women in Underrepresented Areas Grants are targeted to projects that support the recruitment and retention of women in underrepresented occupations in Manitoba, such as building trades and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) occupations. These grants advance women's economic security by promoting participation in secure and well-paying careers.

Grants provided in 2020/21 included \$25,000 to the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology for their Empower Program, and \$25,000 to the Manitoba Construction Sector Council for women interested in exploring a career in the heavy construction industry in the River East Transcona School Division. The grade 12 students received career awareness, certificates and networking opportunities with leaders in the heavy construction industry with an opportunity for employment in the spring of 2021.

Manitoba Skills, Talent and Knowledge Strategy

Manitoba launched the multi-year Skills, Talent and Knowledge Strategy in February 2021 to ensure people in Manitoba have the right skills, talent and knowledge to rebound from the effects of the pandemic and support economic resilience and growth. The strategy focuses on bringing post-secondary education and industry together to improve student success.

One of the major goals of the strategy is to offer work-integrated learning opportunities to all students. By aligning programs and resources to industry needs and matching students to employers, students will make connections to work and apply their classroom learning to real world experience. The Manitoba Scholarship and Bursary Initiative, the Manitoba Bursary and other student aid supports are available to help students overcome financial barriers to access post-secondary education.

Access to Post-Secondary Education

Programs and financial supports are available to help students and adult learners pursue educational pathways to develop the skills needed to participate fully in the community and contribute to a growing economy.

In 2020/21, Manitoba Student Aid continued to help low income students across Manitoba through the Manitoba Bursary. The Manitoba Bursary provides up-front grants of up to \$2,000 to lower-income students and uses flexible assessment approaches to help increase financial supports. Indigenous post-secondary students are eligible for up to an additional \$1,500 to help further offset the cost of post-secondary education. In addition, the Manitoba Student Loans program is interest free making the cost of education more manageable for many Manitobans.

Partnerships with Manitoba Universities and Colleges

The ACCESS Program is a unique Manitoba initiative with the mandate of increasing access to, and success in, post-secondary education for students facing academic, financial, cultural, language and geographic barriers. The Manitoba government provides funding and guidelines to universities and colleges for their individual ACCESS programs. Students apply to the university or college for programs in Health, Nursing, Engineering, Business Administration, Prep for Post-Secondary Education, Social Work, and Teacher Education. The programs feature tutoring, systems navigation, cultural and language supports, counselling, life skills training and career development to help students succeed and meet their career goal.

Participating post-secondary institutions and the Business Council of Manitoba administer the Manitoba Scholarship and Bursary Initiative. Government matches funds raised by these institutions on a 2:1 private to public ratio. The institutions assess, determine and award scholarships and bursaries to the student. Manitoba's investment of \$6.8 million provided \$24 million to 17,500 students in the 2019/20 program year. For the 2020/21 program year, the investment increased to \$10 million so that \$30 million would be available to students, many of whom face financial barriers to accessing post-secondary education.

Promoting Employment and Training Opportunities

The Workforce Training and Employment division of the Department of Economic Development and Jobs helps individuals develop the skills they need to participate in the labour market. The division delivers employment and training services through 13 Manitoba Jobs and Skill Development Centres across the province and through third party contracts with service providers. Approximately 27,800 Manitobans received services in 2020/21, including youth, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Manitobans and newcomers.

Manitoba recognizes that skills development can assist in breaking down barriers to employment and link individuals to valuable employment opportunities. In 2020/21, over 3,400 individuals accessed skills development training opportunities across Manitoba. These individuals included Indigenous Manitobans, newcomers, immigrants, refugees and people with disabilities.

Supporting Training Opportunities in Northern Manitoba

Manitoba's Communities Economic Development Fund partnered with University College of the North to deliver basic welding skills and small motor training to students who were commercial fishers, unemployed, or currently receiving employment assistance. This opportunity provided individuals with skills that could be used within the commercial fishing trade, or to gain separate employment. In 2020, eight students completed the welding skills course and nine completed small motor training.

Communities Economic Development Fund also partnered with University College of the North, VALE, Workplace Education Manitoba and the Department of Economic Development and Jobs to offer a twelve-week wilderness safety training course for students who were unemployed or receiving employment assistance. The program also included resume building and interview techniques. The training enables individuals to obtain self-employment opportunities in the forestry, tourism, mining, and the commercial fishing industries. In 2020, the Thompson class had six graduates while the Wabowden class saw nine graduates.

Disability Programs - Improved Access to Services and Service Navigation

Community Living disABILITY Services (CLDS) supports eligible adults with intellectual disabilities in Manitoba to live good and satisfying lives in their communities. In 2020/21, CLDS improved access to services and service navigation by centralizing the program's intake process allowing for a more timely and streamlined referral and placement process. This client-centred model aims to reduce barriers by ensuring that clear and transparent guidelines are communicated to all program applicants and that program accessibility and eligibility is standardized across Manitoba.

CLDS Service Integration Pilot Project

Manitoba Families initiated the CLDS Service Integration Pilot Project with an aim to streamline case management functions provided to CLDS participants receiving residential services. The department worked collaboratively with three agencies to develop a new service delivery model where CLDS funded service providers would assume responsibility for the day-to-day case management of the participants they support. This new approach aims to increase efficiency and improve wait-times.

The pilot was launched in Spring 2021.

Indigenous and Northern Economic Development

Manitoba remains committed to investing in Indigenous and northern economic development. In the 2020/21 fiscal year, Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations (formerly Indigenous and Northern Relations), in partnership with Agriculture and Resource Development, provided \$200,000 to FPIInnovations which supported the growth of Manitoba's forestry sector in Northern and Eastern Manitoba. The funding supports the identification and pursuit of forest-sector opportunities for northern and Indigenous peoples. These opportunities will provide increased economic benefits while complementing and enhancing the viability of existing industry. Initiatives include analyses and recommendations concerning the viability of forestry business opportunities, various training opportunities, capacity building within partnership communities, and the Indigenous Owner/Operator Trucking Business Mentorship Program.

Building Independence Program

The departments of Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations, Families, and Economic Development and Jobs support the development of employment opportunities in Northern Affairs communities through the Building Independence Program. This program provides financial support for Community Councils to employ local residents who are in receipt of provincial employment and income assistance benefits for the purpose of community improvement projects or to fill a vacant community position. The projects help participants to develop their work skills and gain experience.

4. Facilitating partnerships and supporting community-based organizations

Community Mobilization and Community Safety and Wellbeing

Community mobilization is a priority in Manitoba's Policing and Public Safety Strategy, Manitoba's Criminal Justice Modernization Strategy and the Guns and Gangs Suppression Strategy. As a multi-sectoral collaborative approach to community safety, community mobilization brings together social services to provide a coordinated response to at-risk individuals and families. These coordinated efforts improve outcomes in education and employment, housing, family wellbeing and reduces contact with the justice system by addressing the root causes that led to the involvement.

Manitoba Justice provides funding and/or capacity building opportunities to twelve community mobilization initiatives throughout the province. To date, Manitoba Justice has committed \$1.0 million to community mobilization efforts. This investment will continue to provide opportunities for expansion of community mobilization, while enhancing the ability to track outcomes and data. Many of the community mobilization initiatives have recognized a reduction in calls to police and the number of charges in addition, some participants started education programs and others found employment and stable housing. In an effort to enhance safety and wellbeing, Manitoba Justice also provided \$85,000 (2019/20 – 2020/21) to the City of Thompson for the development and implementation of a Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan, which has allowed Thompson to identify several priority areas to focus collective efforts and improve safety and wellbeing.

Downtown Community Safety Partnership

The Downtown Community Safety Partnership (DCSP) was established in 2020 to create a safer and more welcoming downtown in Winnipeg, but also to include a continuum of cohesive 24/7 support and non-emergency responses to those in the community who need support, assistance, and outreach focused on long-term solutions. The partnership involves three community presence and outreach teams. These teams permit a frontline presence to provide assistance and referral, conduct assessments and engage with other agencies. Resources offered by the teams include supporting downtown community members in receiving help, first aid, outreach services and follow up intervention and assistance with partner agencies. The Manitoba government is investing \$5 million in this partnership to allow the DCSP to transition into a permanent, not-for-profit organization fully dedicated to enhancing the health, safety and well-being of members of the downtown community.

Promoting Economic Prosperity in Northern Manitoba

Manitoba is committed to developing strategies to enhance the economic prosperity of the North. Look North is a movement by northerners, for northerners, to grow the economy in northern Manitoba. Communities Economic Development Fund (CEDF) is mandated to coordinate economic development programming in northern Manitoba and the lead entity for Look North Strategy.

In 2020/21, CEDF achieved over a dozen deliverables and milestones through short-term actions and long-term initiatives designed to increase economic prosperity and reduce poverty. It implemented resource-based strategic plans and industry-focused training, supporting 21 new commercial fishing businesses. It also helped 31 individuals complete various CEDF training programs during this period.

Supports for those Experiencing Crime and Victimization

Manitoba Justice Victim Services has expanded its Domestic Violence Support Service to enhance support for victims whose current or former partners are involved in restorative justice proceedings. Victim Services has further expanded to include family guides/domestic violence specialists who provide enhanced services to families proceeding through separation and divorce who are experiencing intimate partner violence.

The Criminal Property Forfeiture Program provides approximately \$500,000 annually to Victim Services, which is allocated to support victims in a variety of ways, including grants to community organizations who assist victims of crime.

Twenty-four projects were selected from a Call for Proposals to allocate \$6.4 million to Indigenous-led agencies developing projects to address violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA persons, in addition to community-based organizations developing projects to support victims of crime including new and expanded work with victims of crime, gender-based violence, or in response to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls inquiry Calls to Action. Projects supported include Candace House, Toba Centre for Children and Youth, Resource Assistance for Youth and Clan Mothers Healing Village.

Quality of Life in Manitoba Communities

In 2020/21 the Department of Municipal Relations, through its Community Development Branch, administered over \$42.7 million in Community Development Program initiatives, including the Building Sustainable Communities Program, the Urban/Hometown Green Team Program, and Community Development Partnerships and Strategic Initiatives.

The Building Sustainable Communities program budget was increased by \$2.3 million for a total of \$10.6 million to aid in Manitoba's COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. This enabled provincial support for 353 community projects by non-profit and charitable organizations, municipalities, and Northern Affairs community councils.

The Community Development Branch also provided funding assistance for over 70 community partners through Community Development Partnerships and Strategic Initiatives totaling over \$25.6 million including the following highlights:

- over \$4.72 million to support six United Way Organizations/United Appeals of Manitoba including the United Way Winnipeg with core operating to enhance annual giving campaigns.
- up to \$2.5 million to The Winnipeg Foundation to establish and administer an endowment fund for the Manitoba Trails Strategic Fund Rural Project.
- up to \$1.7 million to support 12 Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations in 13 designated areas with core operating funding.
- up to \$776,500 to 10 community recreation organizations to support initiatives that encourage increased participation in recreation for all Manitobans, including summer camps, recreational sport events, community clubs, and recreation programs for children and youth.
- up to \$165,000 to the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region, along with additional funding provided by the Department of Economic Development and Jobs, to support the core operations of the organization and to help advance its mandate. The organization aims to foster regional coordination and collaboration and to increase and facilitate strategic economic, social, and physical development opportunities

- up to \$120,000 to support the growth of community foundations across Manitoba in collaboration with The Winnipeg Foundation. This included provincial participation in the 2020 Endow Manitoba 24 Hour Giving Challenge, which resulted in more than \$1.25 million being raised in Community Foundations unrestricted funds by 2,450 contributions. All of Manitoba's 55 community foundations received a gift during the campaign.
- up to \$39,500 was provided through the Emergency Capital Fund to support community organizations and an emergency repair project.

Northern Airports and Marine Operations

The Manitoba government continues to support First Nations-led partnerships and ventures as demonstrated in the 2020 signing of a memorandum of understanding to formalize discussions toward an agreement on the transfer of the province's northern airports and marine operations to First Nations ownership and operation. Local ownership and operation of community airports also provides significant economic opportunities and benefits that will help strengthen northern Manitoba.

Investment in One North

One North is an organization of First Nations and other communities in Northern Manitoba and the Kivalliq region of Nunavut that officially assumed ownership of The Hudson Bay Railway in the northern region and the Port of Churchill, as well as the Churchill marine tank farm in March 2021. Manitoba's Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations, in partnership with Economic Development and Jobs invested \$150,000 to One North, enabling them to develop capacity within the organization and the opportunity to leverage assets and actively pursue economic development opportunities related to The Hudson Bay rail line in the north.

5. Strengthening client-centred service delivery

Restorative Justice

One of Manitoba Justice's primary goals is to increase its use of restorative justice to improve the overall criminal justice system, including increasing public safety, reducing delay in the court system and decreasing reliance on incarceration, especially for Indigenous offenders. Law enforcement and Crown attorneys can use restorative justice at any stage of a criminal case to address offending behaviour of individuals outside the formal system. In appropriate cases: restorative justice leads to timelier and more meaningful consequences for offenders and victims than the often costly and complicated formal criminal process. Approximately 5,000 cases per year are currently diverted from the formal justice system.

Building on the success of the development of the Restorative Justice Centre in Winnipeg in 2017, the department announced the Restorative Justice North initiative in partnership with the Manitoba Metis Federation and Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak in 2020. In 2020/21, Manitoba Justice also implemented Restorative Justice Hubs in other regions of the province and going forward will continue to provide support for communities wishing to create a new Community Justice Committee and/or restorative justice program in their region.

Advancing the Path to Reconciliation

The Manitoba government is committed to advancing reconciliation and developing a Reconciliation Strategy that is built upon meaningful engagement with Indigenous Nations and Indigenous Peoples. This strategy respects that survivors of residential schools have a role to play, and fosters the involvement of all sectors of society in the reconciliation process.

Guided by legislation, this work is led by the Minister of Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations and includes reporting annually on the progress of strategy development and reconciliation efforts. *The Path to Reconciliation Annual Report* is available to the public in English, French, Cree, Dene, Inuktitut, Ojibwe, Dakota, Ojibwe-Cree and Michif.

Full Inclusion and Participation of Manitobans with Disabilities

Initiatives to increase accessibility in 2020/21 included three online webinars featuring accessibility experts (with recordings available on AccessibilityMB.ca) and the launch of the Manitoba Accessibility Awards, celebrating leadership among municipalities, business and non-profit organizations. For more information about on-going initiatives, such as the Manitoba Accessibility Fund with grants for community initiatives beginning 2021/22, please see the [Minister's Annual Plan 2021/22 and 2022/23](#), or subscribe to [Accessibility News](#).

Keeping Indigenous Women and Girls Safe

Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations (IRNR), with support from Manitoba Status of Women and other departments, has led the work that will form the basis of Manitoba's response to the National Inquiry and Calls for Justice, under the umbrella of Manitoba's Gender-Based Violence Committee of Cabinet.

In fall 2020, IRNR started an engagement process with various stakeholders to ensure an aligned and effective path forward, capitalizing on Manitoba's strong, dedicated and vibrant networks who continue to work to put an end to violence against Indigenous women and girls. Over 40 community-based organizations have participated in this process. Indigenous organizations have led the engagements with families and survivors with funding support from the Manitoba government.

Addressing Gender Based Violence

Manitoba's Framework: Addressing Gender Based Violence was launched in December 2020. This framework builds on the commitment our government has made to address gender-based violence, and outlines how our government is organizing itself to address this critical issue. Addressing gender-based violence is not the responsibility of one department or organization; it requires a whole-of-government approach in partnership with other levels of government and community. The release of the framework demonstrates Manitoba's commitment to working collaboratively to improve outcomes and address gender-based violence. This work is critically important because gender-based violence has detrimental physical and emotional health effects, and women and gender-diverse people who are experiencing violence are also often held back financially.

6. Making Positive Change through Social Innovation

The Social Innovation Office (SIO), housed in the Department of Families, uses innovation processes to create unique and impactful solutions to complex social problems often experienced by vulnerable populations through the development of social finance tools, such as SIBs and outcomes funds, and targeted investor engagement. In 2020/21, the SIO began coordinating three new Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) in the departments of Conservation and Climate, Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery, and Justice, bringing the total number of SIBs underway in Manitoba to six. Strong partnerships with MaRS Impact Investing and SVX (the only exempt market dealer in Canada) have, and will continue to, garner significant attention and interest in Manitoba's social finance projects.

COVID-19 Response to Support Manitobans in Need

The Manitoba government response to COVID-19 has demonstrated how important flexibility is to the delivery of essential programs and services. Government has also recognized that successful program delivery depends on having strong ties with community organizations, forging open lines of communication, and providing targeted supports to structurally-marginalized populations, including Manitobans living with limited or reduced income, people with disabilities, people who are homeless or precariously housed, youth connected to the CFS system, and seniors over age 65 years.

Targeted Income Supports for Manitobans in Need

Government efforts helped Manitobans to meet the costs of additional expenses during the pandemic:

- More than 23,000 Manitobans received a one-time, non-taxable direct payment of \$200 per person through the Disability Economic Support Program under the disability category of Employment and Income Assistance.
- The Seniors Economic Recovery Credit provided a \$200 one-time, refundable tax credit to Manitoba seniors facing additional costs due to COVID-19.
- One-time payments to over 78,000 Manitobans as part of the federal-provincial cost-shared \$120 million Risk Recognition Program, for essential front-line² workers who took extraordinary risks to keep Manitobans safe during the period of March 20 to May 29, 2020.
- Temporarily froze rent increases from April 1 to September 30, 2020. Late fees were prohibited for failure to pay rent for this period. Landlords were prohibited from issuing a notice of termination other than for impairment of safety or unlawful activities that posed an immediate health and safety risk until September 30, 2020.
- Paused student loan repayments temporarily, from April to September 2020, to help individuals through the pandemic.

² Eligible front-line workers receiving Risk Recognition payments included full-time and part-time positions in health care, social services, justice, security, transportation, food and beverage, hotels and essential retail.

- Manitoba Families provided \$700K through the pandemic staffing and support benefit to agencies in the child care, child welfare and disability sectors to support increased staffing costs due to the pandemic.
- Manitoba of Families operated a call centre to schedule vaccine appointments for employees and clients of in the child welfare and disability sectors.

Supports for Youth Connected with Child and Family Services

In April 2020, eligibility and availability of continued supports for youth transitioning out of the child welfare system were extended. All young adults were able to access continued financial and program supports throughout the pandemic period. Limits on age and guardianship status for Agreements with Young Adults were removed to ensure that all youth had access to the supports and services they required.

Manitoba Families partnered with the Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development (CAHRD), an Indigenous non-profit organization, to hire a recruiter focused solely on hiring for the CFS community care provider sector due to staffing restraints caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Homelessness Initiatives

Manitoba Housing invested an additional \$23.0 million to support people experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included:

- funding for additional shelter beds (more than 140 new beds) to allow physical distancing for those experiencing homelessness and for the operation of an isolation site for those without a home
- introducing the Municipal Grant Funding to 10 municipalities throughout the province to help address the housing needs of vulnerable Manitobans
- providing \$2.6 million for wrap-around supports to help transition individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness into stable housing.

Manitoba Housing also worked with community partners to rapidly house over 100 people who were homeless and provide support services to ensure successful tenancies.

Alternative Isolation Accommodation (AIA) program

In November 2020, Manitoba Families announced the expansion of Manitoba's Alternative Isolation Accommodation (AIA) program to address a surge in COVID cases within homeless shelters, which put a strain on the number of beds in the shelter system. Beds were added, including a 138-room site to primarily serve the portion of Winnipeg's homeless population who use shelters, and who have or are suspected of having COVID-19 to better protect them by providing space needed to safely isolate in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

In addition to a safe space to isolate, participants in the AIA program received services including meals, daily supervised walks, health-care support /monitoring services, and including daily health and wellness checks. Online consultations with primary-care providers and specialists, as well as occasional on-site visits from paramedics, were available and arranged as needed. While this is a multi-sectoral and departmental collaboration, involvement of the health care system includes WRHA's Housing, Supports and Service Integration program and referrals made by Public Health and Occupational and Environmental Safety & Health (OESH). It is a confidential service, to which visitors are not allowed, accessible for individuals who rely upon wheelchairs (non-powered) or mobility devices.

There have been at least 15 sites operating across the province including nine locations throughout northern Manitoba (including Thompson and The Pas), and in Brandon. The AIA sites are managed and operated by varying organizations including Main Street Project, the First Nations Inuit Health Branch of Health Canada and the Canadian Red Cross.

Home Nutrition and Learning Program

The Home Nutrition and Learning Program (HNLP) supports families with school-aged children who are experiencing food disruption during the COVID-19 pandemic by providing them with nutritious breakfast foods, and simple, child-friendly recipes and learning activities. The required contents of each food box, as well as the recipe and activity booklets, have been designed by the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba.

Beginning in June 2020, as a response to the pandemic, Manitoba Families partnered with agencies at five pilot sites across the province to deliver the HNLP. The HNLP is currently delivered by community partners: Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc. and Andrews Street Family Centre Inc. in Winnipeg; Samaritan House Ministries Inc. in Brandon; Bayline Regional Roundtable in the Bayline region which includes the communities of Wabowden, Thicket Portage, Ilford/War Lake, and Pikwitonei; and Cross Lake Community Council in Cross Lake.

Initially the pilot was set to end on September 30, 2020, however it is now set to run until August 31, 2021. The HNLP has been an important source of food and nutritional information for approximately 2,500 families and 6,500 children who receive weekly food boxes in the target regions.

Food Security

As part of the COVID-19 pandemic response, food insecurity was addressed by permitting all food banks and soup kitchens to stay open while other places like restaurants had to close to sit-in dining to limit the spread of the virus. Food was determined to be an essential service, and the public health orders did not apply to social services such as food banks, shelters and the like. Food banks continued to operate to ensure access to food for those in need. Public health inspectors did outreach to soup kitchens advising on how to safely provide food while still abiding by the pandemic guidelines (handwashing, 2 metre rule, masks, etc.).

Emergency Housing Meal Program

The Emergency Housing Meal Program began as a way to support people living in single room occupancy buildings who have tested positive for COVID-19 or are otherwise required to isolate. Manitoba Housing's Food Services collaborated with Made with Love and SCOPE to prepare, package and deliver three meals a day to residents in these buildings. As recipients do not have the facilities to prepare food or the financial means to purchase meals, the Emergency Housing Meal Program provides a meal service so they can isolate properly while still ensuring their nutritional needs are met.

Taking Care of the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Manitobans

Throughout the pandemic, the Manitoba government has focused on increased access and availability of mental health programming and supports. Examples of efforts included:

- Conducting regular wellness checks with participants in programs such as Community Living disABILITY Services and Manitoba Housing, to review proper PPE use and ensure prevention measures are in place.
- Providing one-time funding to the NorWest Youth Hub to temporarily expand counselling capacity to alleviate pressures as a result of the mental health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Providing one-time funding to Klinik Community Health Centre to temporarily expand their mobile withdrawal management and stabilization services, and to increase their 24/7 crisis phone line by providing additional volunteer training sessions, providing supports to volunteers, and purchasing equipment to enable volunteers to work from home.
- Enabling Tamarack to use one-time funding to temporarily increase capacity of their Addictions Counselling Phone Service and provide aftercare services to program graduates.

Naloxone Program

In November 2020, regulation changes were made on how the drug naloxone is classified in order to remove barriers to access and reduce opioid overdose deaths. As an unscheduled drug, naloxone can be accessed or sold without professional supervision from a health-care provider and can be sold in any retail location – on the shelf, not behind the counter.

Beginning in May 2020, in response to COVID-19 public health restrictions, and to minimize risk of exposure to the virus by reducing the number of times a person had to travel to a distribution site to access a kit, two naloxone kits were given out at a time to individuals at risk of opioid overdose.

More access to health services

In March 2020, Manitoba government introduced two tariffs to enable physicians to provide services virtually, by video or telephone, as preferred, and offered in multiple languages.

Manitoba's Home Care program is provided at no cost to the client, and Personal Care Homes (PCHs) are subsidized by the government-daily rate for PCH and is based on income.

Manitoba Health and Seniors Care provided \$5 million for Ronald McDonald House in 2020 for the construction of a new facility. This was to assist with improving access to health services in Winnipeg for northern and rural children.

Pharmacare deductible rates remained frozen at 2019/20 levels for 2020/21.

Vaccine Implementation Task Force – Urban Indigenous Workstream

In 2020/21, the Vaccine Implementation Task Force established a work stream focused on the Urban Indigenous population who live full-time or temporarily in urban communities. Consultations with members of Indigenous leadership organizations and community organizations identified the need to deliver culturally appropriate services to a population that experience multi-system barriers and/or limited vaccine confidence. Five Urban Indigenous Vaccination clinics were established in Winnipeg (two sites), Brandon, Portage and Thompson to serve urban indigenous populations as well as individuals experiencing homelessness.

In addition to providing vaccinations at Urban Indigenous and selected pop up sites, community partners provide food, traditional medicine, comfort kits, children's activity kits and community resource kits. Elders and/or knowledge keepers participate at the sites and where feasible, sites offered smudging and/or other traditional ceremonies. Outreach workers and Indigenous Liaisons were assigned to these sites and at selected supersites to encourage vaccine uptake within the community and provide welcoming services.

Also, in consideration of Waves one and two COVID cases there was an emphasis on getting vaccinations to populations and neighbourhoods disproportionately affected by overcrowding, low-income/poverty, occupational exposures and risks and other barriers related to race, ethnicity and indigeneity.

A variety of models were used to administer vaccines including; Focused Immunization Teams immunizing in personal care homes and other congregate living facilities; vaccine super sites, immunization hubs and pop up sites; medical offices and pharmacies.

Personal Protective Equipment

The use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is an important measure that mitigates the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

From March 2020 to July 2021, the government invested approximately \$7 million for the supply and distribution of PPE Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) across its various service sectors. In Early Learning and Child Care service sector, the government spent almost \$900 thousand in PPE to ensure that service providers are protected while delivering important child care services to families.

As part of the Manitoba Protection Plan, the Province accelerated the pace at which Manitoba procured essential medical supplies and equipment, hotel capacity and other critical needs to help prepare for COVID-19. Businesses were invited to donate unused personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies in original packaging, clean and in useable condition. Donations of PPE and the provision of alternate accommodation for isolating helps to ease the financial burden for Manitobans living in poverty.

Disproportionate Impact of COVID-19 on Women

The Manitoba Status of Women Secretariat (MSW) recognizes the disproportionate economic impacts of COVID-19 on women. MSW worked with other departments and at the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Status of Women table to explore ways to support women in upskilling/reskilling, with specific work to be rolled out in 2021/22 as part of Manitoba's pandemic recovery efforts.

Supports provided by government to funded agencies of the Family Violence Prevention Program since spring 2020 included:

- access to a continuous supply of PPE for shelters;
- facilitating access to funding through WAGE Canada;
- creating opportunities for sharing information among the shelter sector and the FVPP-funded agencies as a whole;
- partnering with Communications Services on a public awareness campaign to ensure that Manitobans are aware of continued service availability;
- supporting agencies to access alternative accommodation for individuals who have been tested, or tested positive for, COVID-19;
- providing individual support to funded agencies and working with other government partners to address their needs or gather information (e.g. Public Health, Manitoba Housing, EIA); and
- joining a First Nations Domestic Violence Task Force to ensure consistent service response to all Manitobans, Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

Targeted Actions for People with Disabilities

Since March 2020, the Manitoba government has been leading by example, showing organizations how they can maintain accessibility and provide safe access to goods, services and employment. For example, government has integrated accessibility into COVID-19 updates and the vaccine rollout, for instance, by providing American Sign Language and offering disability accommodations. The Manitoba Accessibility Office (formerly the Disabilities Issues Office) also created a social media campaign, tools and resources to emphasize accessibility during the pandemic. For more information, see content under the COVID banner on the AccessibilityMb.ca homepage.

Supporting Safe Schools

Manitoba Education made available \$76 million in funding to support safe schools, allocated on a per pupil basis. The categories of expenditure for this funding were Health and Safety, Learning and Technology, and Staffing.

The funding for Learning and Technology in particular, included supports to alleviate the impact of poverty on learning during the pandemic. Examples include:

- schools providing students with tablets or laptops for use at home during periods of remote learning;
- opening school-based internet service such that families who do not have access at home, could access the school's internet service when in the vicinity of the school building; and
- printing learning resources at the school and making them available for pick-up or delivering packages to homes of students in areas of the province where internet access was not available to ensure continued learning from home.

In addition to the above, The Manitoba Remote Learning Support Centre was established in January 2021 to ensure that all students have access to and engage in high-quality learning regardless of the circumstances posed by COVID-19. The Centre offers a variety of resources including, a student support team for those who may need mental health supports.

Maintaining Safe, Reliable Access to Services Helping Manitobans Find Jobs

Manitoba Jobs and Skills Development Centres and service providers pivoted their content and service delivery model to ensure that clients could book and access career professionals and online job search and training resources, to ensure Manitobans continued to have access to high quality employment services.

Youth Employment: Urban/Hometown Green Team

The Urban/Hometown Green Team program was increased by \$4.7 million to maximize youth employment opportunities during the pandemic by providing up to \$8.7 million to community organizations, rural and northern municipal governments to hire youth to work on a variety of community projects, such as: COVID-19 activities like sanitizing public areas, recreation, grounds maintenance, public works, conservation, trail enhancement, community beautification, community gardens, and public education. The Green Team program approved funding for 805 projects, with 708 projects proceeding for a total of \$6.5 million. This resulted in the hiring of 2,090 youth, an increase of 807. Due to COVID-19, 97 projects withdrew from the program.

COVID-19 Court Delays and Backlog

Prior to, and during COVID-19, Manitoba Justice has taken steps to mitigate the risk of pandemic-related delays and continues to optimize the use of justice resources to target serious and violent offences, reduce overreliance on incarceration, and make more effective use of diversion options. Examples include:

- The Courts now accept e-transfer payments for bail and provincial offences tickets allowing clients to make payments without having to travel to a court centre.
- In Winnipeg, the Provincial Court moved to a Counter Court model for out-of-custody administrative courts for individuals to make a first appearance.
- Virtual proceedings have and will continue to increase to ensure proceedings can occur safely.
- Branches of the Courts Division that provide direct service to the public have also shifted service delivery to occur remotely where possible and appropriate.
- Several IT-related projects are underway to improve access to justice and streamline business processes.

Air Services to Remote Communities throughout COVID-19

An agreement signed by both Manitoba and Canada ensured air services to remote northern communities continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The agreement financially supported carriers that provided scheduled transportation service to 21 remote communities that rely on air service as the only year-round mode of transportation to ensure the continued supply of food, medical supplies, and other essential goods and services.

Poverty Reduction Indicators

Having a measurement framework is critical to the success of Manitoba's poverty reduction strategy.

Based on extensive consultations with Manitobans and insights from the federal poverty measurement approach, Manitoba's poverty measurement framework includes a primary target for [Pathways to a Better Future](#) and a set of 13 indicators that measure the important facets of poverty in areas that are strongly related to poverty such as income, employment, education, skills, training, child care, child welfare, health, housing, and income inequality.

The primary target of Manitoba's poverty reduction strategy is to reduce the child poverty rate by 25 per cent by the year 2025, compared to the baseline year of 2015.

The 13 poverty indicators provide a comprehensive view of the strategy's progress in creating a better life for all Manitobans.

Data on Manitoba's 13 indicators of poverty reduction are presented in this section. Where available, baseline data is from 2015. On an annual basis, the Manitoba government will publish the most recent data to measure progress of the poverty reduction strategy indicators.

Market Basket Measure

The Market Basket Measure (MBM) is Canada's Official Poverty Line and is included in Manitoba's 13 new poverty reduction indicators as Manitoba's preferred measure of poverty.

The MBM is a measure of low income with a threshold tied to the cost of a specific basket of goods and services representing a modest, basic standard of living. It includes the costs of food, clothing, footwear, transportation, shelter and other expenses such as personal care items or household supplies.

The Poverty Reduction Act requires Statistics Canada to conduct a comprehensive review of the MBM methodology on a regular basis "to ensure that it reflects the up-to-date cost of a basket of goods and services representing a modest, basic standard of living in Canada".

Following a two-year comprehensive review launched in 2018, Statistics Canada released on September 8, 2020 the 2018-base MBM low-income data series that starts with 2015 data. The 2018-base series reflects an improved methodology and replaces the previous 2008-base series.

The change in MBM methodology resulted in higher levels of poverty rates for all provinces across Canada.

The low income data presented in this Annual Report is based on the new 2018-base MBM series.

Manitoba Poverty Reduction Indicators

Manitoba child poverty rate improved by 25 per cent between 2015 and 2019 from 19.2 per cent in 2015 to 14.4 per cent in 2019, while Manitoba overall rate improved from 14.0 per cent to 11.4 per cent.

Table 1 provides information on the 13 indicators of poverty reduction. There is progress or stability on nine of the indicators.

Table 1: Manitoba Poverty Reduction Indicators				
Indicator	Baseline	Most recent data	Percentage change	Trend
Market Basket Measure (Canada's Official Poverty Line)¹ The cost of a basket of goods and services that individuals and families need in order to meet their basic needs and achieve a modest standard of living in communities across Canada. Source – Statistics Canada (Canadian Income Survey)				

- Poverty rate (All Persons) 14.0 11.4 18.6 per cent decrease progress

- Child poverty rate 19.2 14.4 25.0 per cent decrease progress

Table 1: Manitoba Poverty Reduction Indicators

Indicator	Baseline	Most recent data	Percentage change	Trend
Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)² The percentage of youth aged 15 to 24 years who are not in employment, education or training. Source – Statistics Canada (Labour Force Survey)	10.3% (2015)	11.7% (2021)	13.6 per cent increase	regress
Availability of licensed child care The percentage of children (ages 12 and under) for whom there is a regulated child care space. Source – Government of Manitoba (Families)	18.2% (2014/15)	18.4% (2020/21)	1.1 per cent increase	stable
Children in Care The percentage of children who are in the care of a child and family services agency. Source – Government of Manitoba (Families)	10,714 children 3.5 per cent of Manitoba children (March 31, 2017)	9,850 children 3.2 per cent of Manitoba children (March 31, 2021)	8.1 per cent decrease 8.6 per cent decrease	progress
Premature mortality rate³ Deaths occurring before the age of 75 measured by number of years of life lost per 1,000 population aged 1 to 74 years. Source – Government of Manitoba (Health and Seniors Care)	53.2 years of life lost (2014/2015)	51.3 years of life lost (2018/2019)	3.6 per cent decrease	progress

Table 1: Manitoba Poverty Reduction Indicators

Indicator	Baseline	Most recent data	Percentage change	Trend
Poverty entry rate The proportion of Manitobans who entered low income in the second year who were not in low income in the first year Source – Statistics Canada	3.9 per cent (2014/2015)	4.1 per cent (2017/2018)	5.1 per cent increase	regress
Poverty exit rate The proportion of Manitobans who exited low income in the second year who were in low income in the first year Source – Statistics Canada	25.2 per cent (2014/2015)	24.4 per cent (2017/2018)	3.2 per cent decrease	regress
Core Housing Need⁴ The proportion of households in housing that is below one or more of the adequacy, suitability, and affordability standards. Source – Statistics Canada	11.3 per cent (2006)	11.4 per cent (2016)	0.9 per cent increase	stable
Employment The percentage of people aged 15 and over who are employed Source – Statistics Canada (Labour Force Survey)	64.4 per cent (2015)	60.2 per cent (2020)	6.5 per cent decrease	regress

Table 1: Manitoba Poverty Reduction Indicators

Indicator	Baseline	Most recent data	Percentage change	Trend
High school graduation Manitoba's student-tracked high school graduation rate that follows individual students in public and funded independent schools from Grade 9 and calculates the percentage who graduate on time. Source – Government of Manitoba (Education)	77.3 per cent (June 2015)	81.9 per cent (June 2019) ⁵	6.0 per cent increase	progress
Income inequality (Palma ratio)⁶ The ratio of the richest 10 per cent of the population's share of after-tax income divided by the share of the poorest 40 per cent. Source – Statistics Canada	1.09 (2015)	1.01 (2019)	7.3 per cent decrease	progress
Literacy (reading skills)⁷ Average scores of 15-year old Manitobans in Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in Reading Source – Program for International Student Assessment	498 (2015)	494 (2018)	0.8 per cent decrease	stable
Numeracy (math skills)⁷ Average scores of 15-year old Manitobans in Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in Mathematics.	489 (2015)	482 (2018)	1.4 per cent decrease	stable

Table 1: Manitoba Poverty Reduction Indicators

Indicator	Baseline	Most recent data	Percentage change	Trend
Source – Program for International Student Assessment				
¹ Data based on new 2018-base Market Basket Measure (MBM) series released by Statistics Canada on September 8, 2020, reflecting an improved methodology and replacing the old 2008-base MBM series. Because of change in methodology, the 2015 data is different from data reported in previous annual reports.				
² Percentage of youth aged 15 to 24 years who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) during the first quarters of years 2015 or 2021. On January 25, 2021, Statistics Canada released the Labour Force Survey revisions for 2001 to 2020 to align with recently available population estimates, geographic boundaries, and occupation and industry classifications. Because of these revisions, the 2015 data shown is different from the data reported in previous annual reports.				
³ Deaths occurring before the age of 75 measured by the number of years lost per 1,000 population aged 1 to 74 years. The number of years lost is the difference between the age at time of death and age 75. The data was adjusted to allow for fair comparisons among areas with different population characteristics. Data reported for this indicator will not be comparable with those reported in annual reports for previous years as a different methodology was used to establish a new standard going forward.				
⁴ Data on core housing need is from census and available every five years. The 2011 core housing need data is not comparable with 2016. The 2011 data was based on National Household Survey while 2006 and 2016 data were based on the census. Therefore, the 2006 data is used as a baseline.				
⁵ Education is in the process of compiling the June 2020 graduation data at the time of writing this annual report.				
⁶ Ratio is derived from data from Statistics Canada's "Table 11-10-0193-01 Upper income limit, income share and average of adjusted market, total and after-tax income by income decile." (accessed: July 16, 2021)				
⁷ Data on literacy (reading skills) and numeracy (math skills) are available every three years from Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). The baseline data was changed from 2012 data to 2015 data when the 2018 PISA became available.				

Disaggregated Indicator Data

Certain demographic groups are more vulnerable to experiencing poverty in Manitoba. For a deeper understanding of poverty in Manitoba, the tables in this section show disaggregated data for some indicators where data is available.

Low Income Rate

The Manitoba government is committed to improving the lives of Manitobans who are disproportionately affected by poverty.

Table 2 shows the low income rates for various population groups from 2015 to 2019 using the Market Basket Measure.

While Manitoba overall poverty rate declined significantly between 2015 and 2019, the poverty rate for persons in youth-led families increased. In 2019, the poverty rates for persons in youth-led families, persons in lone-parent families, and single individuals (45-64 years) were more than twice the provincial rate; while the poverty rates for seniors and women were better than the provincial rate.

Table 2: Market Basket Measure Low Income Rates (Per Cent), Manitoba, Select Groups, 2015 - 2019¹

Population Group	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Per Cent Change	
						2015 to 2019	2018 to 2019
All Manitobans	14.0	12.3	11.0	10.9	11.4	-18.6	4.6
Children	19.2	15.6	12.7	13.1	14.4	-25.0	9.9
Seniors	5.9	4.9	5.4	5.8	5.4	-8.5	-6.9
Persons in Lone Parent Families	45.0	38.8	28.1	31.4	32.4	-28.0	3.2
Women	13.5	12.2	11.4	10.7	10.9	-19.3	1.9
Men	14.4	12.4	10.7	11.0	11.8	-18.1	7.3

Table 2: Market Basket Measure Low Income Rates (Per Cent), Manitoba, Select Groups, 2015 - 2019¹

Population Group	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Per Cent Change	
						2015 to 2019	2018 to 2019
Indigenous (off-reserve)	23.7	26.3	20.8	27.1	20.6	-13.1	-24.0
Persons with Disabilities	19.3	17.3	15.8	14.3	12.2	-36.8	-14.7
Persons in Youth-led Families ²	35.5	44.6	36.7	37.2	38.0	7.0	2.2
Single Individuals (45-64 years)	32.1	33.3	30.5	29.0	30.8	-4.0	6.2

¹Source – Statistics Canada, Canadian Income Survey, 2018-base Market Basket Measure (MBM) series. Data shown differ from data earlier reported in previous annual reports because of change in methodology from 2008-base series to the new 2018-base series.

²Age of primary income earner is 24 years or less.

Not In Employment, Education or Training (NEET)

The proportion of young people who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) is a well-recognized indicator that has been regularly reported by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and by Statistics Canada for many years.

Manitoba's NEET rate indicator is aligned with Canada's poverty indicator for youth engagement, defined as the proportion of youth aged 15 to 24 years who are not in employment, education or training. The Canada NEET rate is reported by Statistics Canada in Canada's official poverty dashboard.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Manitoba saw an increase in NEET rate for youth aged 15 to 24 years in the first quarter of 2021 compared to the first quarter of 2020.

The economic disruption, the health risk, and the change in the way education is being delivered under during the pandemic have had negative impact on the NEET rate. The challenges from the COVID-19 crisis could have caused some young Manitobans to delay their transition from education to the labour market, or to discontinue their educational programs.

The government is committed to improving the NEET rate among the Manitoba youth.

Table 3: Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) for Youth Aged 15 – 24 Years, Canada and Manitoba, 1Q2015 to 1Q2021¹

	1Q2015	1Q2016	1Q2017	1Q2018	1Q2019	1Q2020	1Q2021
Canada NEET rate (per cent)	10.6	10.6	9.6	9.8	9.3	11.8	11.4
Manitoba NEET rate (per cent)	10.3	11.3	11.3	11.5	11.8	11.3	11.7
- Number of persons (000)	16.7	18.4	18.7	19.4	20.1	19.2	19.6
- Rank (1 is best)	3	5	5	8	8	3	5

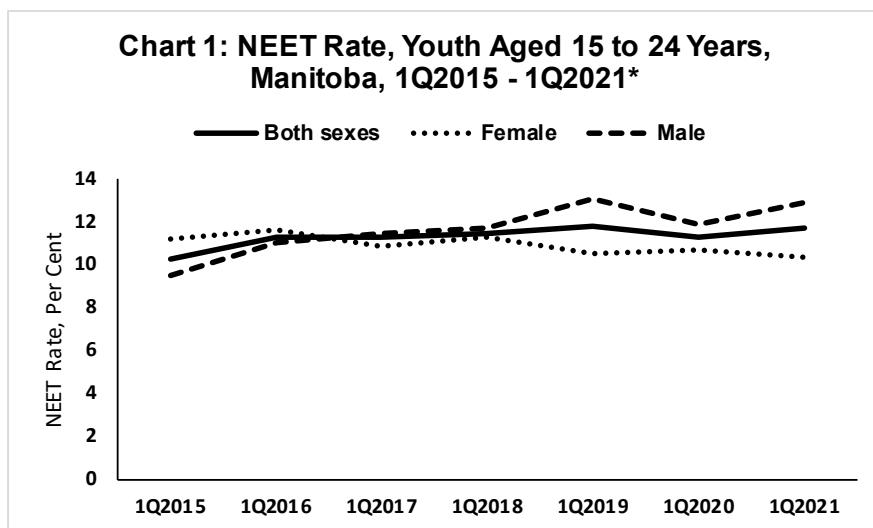
¹Statistics Canada, custom data for first quarter of 2015 to first quarter of 2021. On January 25, 2021, Statistics Canada released the Labour Force Survey revisions for 2001 to 2020 to align with recently available population estimates, geographic boundaries, and occupation and industry classifications. Because of these revisions, the data shown for 1Q2015 to 1Q2020 are different from the data reported in earlier annual reports.

Table 4: Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) rate (per cent), Youth Aged 15 – 24 Years, Canada and Provinces, 1Q2015 to 1Q2021¹

	1Q2015	1Q2016	1Q2017	1Q2018	1Q2019	1Q2020	1Q2021
Canada	10.6	10.6	9.6	9.8	9.3	11.8	11.4
AB	9.3	11.0	10.5	11.1	9.9	12.1	11.8
BC	11.5	9.6	9.1	9.3	8.6	12.5	12.4
MB	10.3	11.3	11.3	11.5	11.8	11.3	11.7
NB	14.2	15.9	14.5	14.5	12.1	12.0	12.8
NFL	13.5	15.3	17.0	11.4	13.9	16.6	15.8
NS	11.3	11.9	11.3	11.9	10.5	13.9	11.4
ON	10.1	10.0	9.3	9.6	9.5	11.2	11.5
PEI	13.5	13.6	16.0	9.6	10.2	11.2	11.6
QC	11.1	10.8	8.1	8.5	8.0	11.6	9.4
SK	11.1	11.6	11.5	11.1	9.3	13.7	13.6

¹Statistics Canada, custom data for first quarter of 2015 to first quarter of 2021. On January 25, 2021, Statistics Canada released the Labour Force Survey revisions for 2001 to 2020 to align with recently available population estimates, geographic boundaries, and occupation and industry classifications. Because of these revisions, the data shown for 1Q2015 to 1Q2020 are different from the data reported in earlier annual reports.

The NEET rate for Female has been better than the NEET rate for Male since 1Q2017.



*Statistics Canada custom data, first quarter of 2015 to first quarter of 2021.

Availability of Licensed Child Care

Availability of licensed child care measures the percentage of children (ages 12 and under) in Manitoba for whom there is a regulated child care space.

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the province was able to sustain the availability of child care spaces that registered a slight improvement in 2020/21 compared to 2014/15.

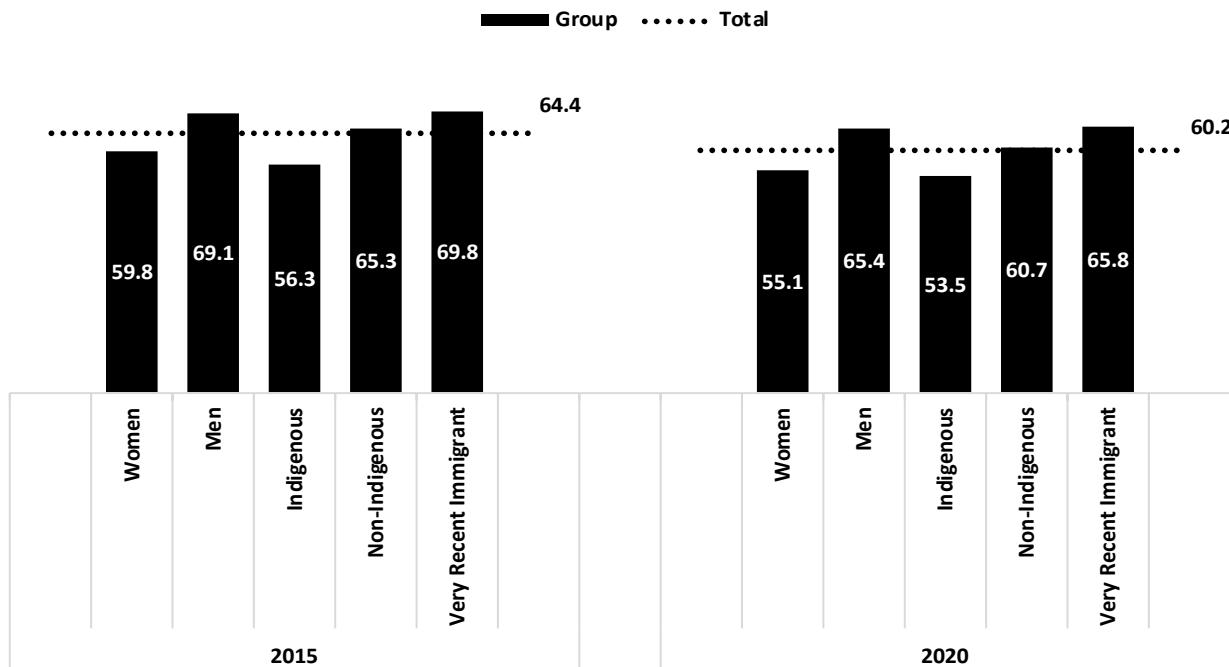
Table 5 shows the breakdown of availability of child care spaces by age group.

Table 5: Percentage of Children for Whom There is a Regulated Child Care Space			
Age Group	2014/15	2020/21	Per Cent Increase
0 to 5 years	26.1%	26.2%	0.4%
6 to 12 years	11.3%	11.6%	2.7%
Total 0 to 12 years	18.2%	18.4%	1.1%

Employment

The employment rate varies across population groups in Manitoba. The employment rates of women and Indigenous sub-populations are lower than the overall Manitoba employment rate. Men, very recent immigrants (landed within 5 years prior), and non-Indigenous Manitobans have higher employment rates than the provincial average rate.

Chart 2: Employment Rate (%) by Select Group, Manitoba, 2015 and 2020*



*Data may differ from data earlier reported in previous annual reports because of population rebasing made by Statistics Canada. Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

Core Housing Need

The Core Housing Need indicator uses the census data from Statistics Canada that are updated every five years. Most recent data available are from the 2016 census. The data from the 2021 census will be reported in 2022.

As this data is derived from the census, it will only be reported every five years.

Premature Mortality

The premature mortality indicator refers to deaths occurring before age 75 measured by number of years of life lost per 1,000 population aged 1 to 74 years. The number of years lost is the difference between age at time of death and 75. This measure is higher among Manitobans in lower income quintiles.

Table 6 shows the number of years of life lost per 1,000 population, by income quintile in 2014/15 and 2018/19.

Table 6: Premature mortality, Manitoba, by Income Quintile, Rural and Urban, 2014/15 and 2018/19¹

Income Quintile	2014/15	2018/19	Difference
Lowest - Rural	95.2	95.2	0.0
Second - Rural	68.6	61.8	-6.8
Third - Rural	53.6	45.6	-8.0
Fourth - Rural	47.1	44.5	-2.6
Highest - Rural	38.9	33.7	-5.2
Lowest - Urban	91.5	86.3	-5.2
Second - Urban	54.8	52.7	-2.1
Third - Urban	43.8	47.4	3.6
Fourth - Urban	35.8	36.0	0.2
Highest - Urban	28.2	24.9	-3.3
Manitoba overall	53.2	51.3	-1.9

¹Deaths occurring before age 75 measured by the number of years of life lost per 1,000 population aged 1 to 74 years. The number of years lost is the difference between age at time of death and age 75. The data were adjusted for age and sex to allow for fair comparisons among areas with different population characteristics. Data reported for this indicator will not be comparable with those reported in annual reports for previous years as a different methodology was used to establish a new standard going forward.

Source – Government of Manitoba (Health and Seniors Care)

A Data Perspective: COVID-19 Impact on Manitobans

The pandemic altered different aspects of Manitobans' lives. Some were directly affected by contracting the virus, while others experienced financial and emotional hardship while adjusting to the health and safety practices. As Manitobans spent more time at home because of their limited mobility, they experienced higher anxiety levels and feelings of depression and fear. These results are expected when routine changes are abrupt, and circumstances are uncertain.

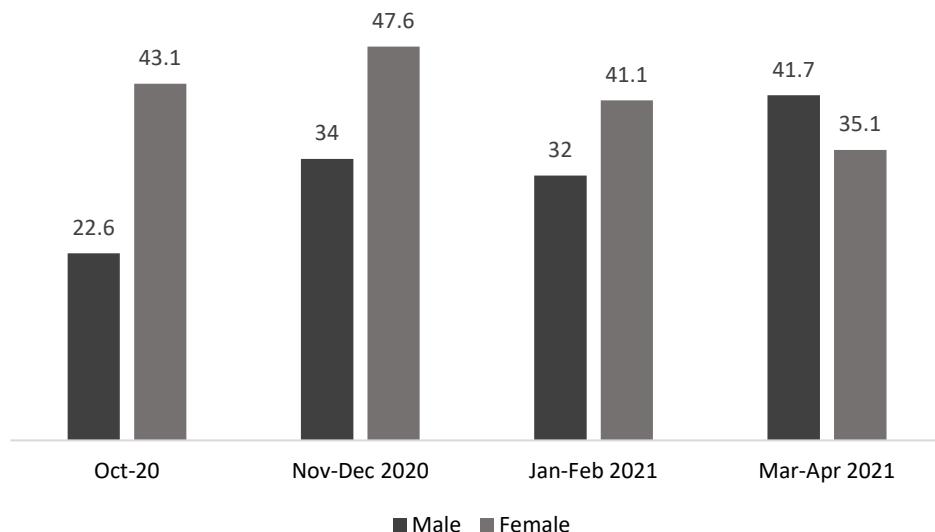
In addition, COVID-19 limited individuals' social interactions and created uncertainty about their labour opportunities. These lifestyle changes were felt most by youth, low-income Manitobans, and female individuals.

Mental Health

Chart 3 shows the current mental health status of females and males compared to the pre-pandemic status. A higher proportion of females than males perceived their current mental health to be worse or much worse than the pre-pandemic period. In the last survey (March-April 2021), fewer females than males reported that their current mental health deteriorated compared to the pre-COVID period.

According to Statistics Canada (2020a), females were more likely than males to report symptoms related to a moderate/severe generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) in May 2020. Similarly, more females than males tended to be "very" or "extremely" concerned about the potential impacts of COVID-19 on "vulnerable people's health," "overloading the health system," and "the world population's health." These results signal that the pandemic affected women and men differently, having more negative effect on women.

Chart 3: Current Mental Health Compared to Pre-Pandemic, Somewhat Worse or Much Worse Now. Percentage of People Aged 12 Years and Over By Gender, Manitoba*



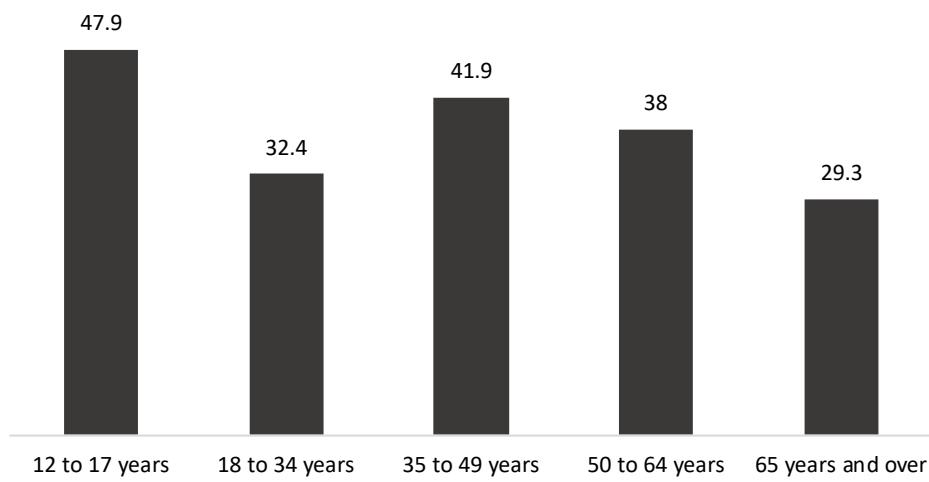
*Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), periodic data (2020 and 2021). Data reported by males in Oct 2020 and Nov-Dec 2020 should be used with caution. Data retrieved on July 22, 2021.

All age groups indicated that their mental health is somewhat worse or much worse now compared to the pre-pandemic. Using the survey data for January to February 2021, the more affected groups were those aged 12-17 and 35-49 years, with rates of 47.9 and 41.9 per cent, respectively.

Chart 4 is consistent with the results presented in the “Canada’s mental health during COVID-19”, in which more young people than seniors indicated that physical distancing harmed their mental health.

Chart 4: Current Mental Health Compared to Pre-Pandemic, Somewhat Worse or Much Worse Now. Percentage of People Aged 12 Years and Over By Age Group, Manitoba, Jan-Feb 2021*

*Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), periodic data (2020 and 2021). Data from age groups 12-17 and 18-34 should be used with caution. Data retrieved on July 7, 2021.



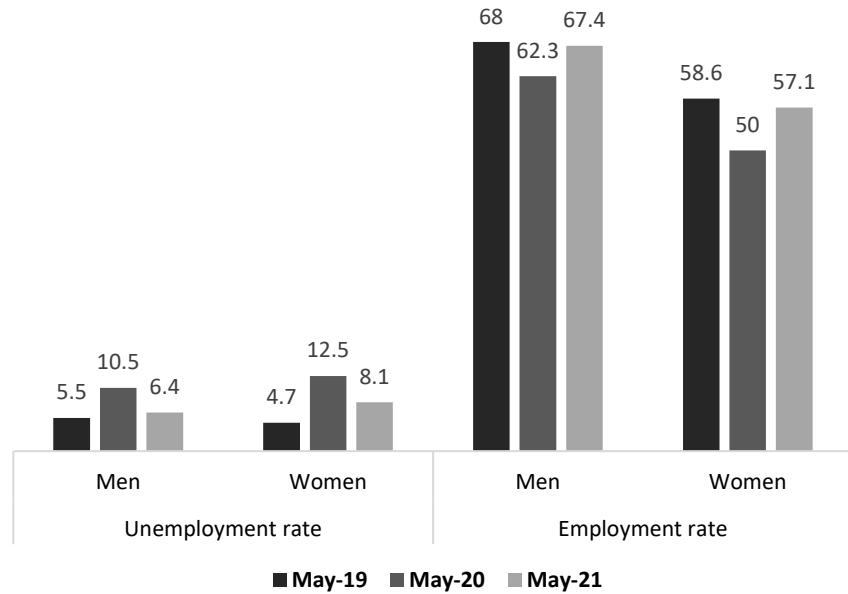
Employment and Unemployment

Even though the pandemic shrank the Manitoba labour force demand in various sectors, the employment rates in 2021 are getting closer to the pre-pandemic levels, reaching 67.4 and 57.1 per cent for men and women, respectively.

Chart 5 also shows that women have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, amplifying the existing gender inequalities. Although the unemployment rates are returning to the pre-COVID-19 levels, women still have a higher unemployment rate than men.

Chart 5: Monthly Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment and Employment Rates (%) by Sex, Manitoba, May 2019-2021*

*Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0287-01. A seasonally adjusted series is one from which seasonal movements have been eliminated. Seasonal movements are defined as those which are caused by regular annual events such as climate, holidays, vacation periods and cycles related to crops, production and retail sales associated with Christmas and Easter.



COVID-19 Cases by Income Quintile

In 2020/21, more Manitobans with low income were infected by COVID-19 than those from the highest quintiles. Out of 34,297 cases diagnosed with COVID-19 in Manitoba, 10,129 individuals were from the lowest income quintile.

Similarly, the age-adjusted case rates for fatality, hospitalizations (ICU/non-ICU), and ICU admissions were higher for those in the lowest income quintile (i.e., Q1).

Table 7 Counts and Age-Adjusted Case Rates of Death, Hospitalization, ICU Admission, and Severity Outcomes Among COVID-19 Cases in Manitoba by Area-Level Income Quintile*

Characteristics Area level income quintiles	Deaths		Hospitalizations		ICU admissions		Severe outcomes*		Total Count
	Count	Case rate (%)	Count	Case rate (%)	Count	Case rate (%)	Count	Case rate (%)	
Q1 (lowest)	189	2.7	816	10.1	190	2.3	853	10.6	10,129
Q2	127	2.1	433	7.3	87	1.6	472	7.9	6,326
Q3	109	2	319	6.5	64	1.4	363	7.3	4,844
Q4	145	2.3	355	6.3	71	1.4	418	7.2	5,586
Q5 (highest)	74	1.9	224	5.8	39	1	251	6.5	4,358
Unknown	323	3.9	312	8.3	46	1.8	555	10.4	3,054
<i>Total</i>	<i>967</i>	<i>2.5</i>	<i>2459</i>	<i>7.3</i>	<i>497</i>	<i>1.6</i>	<i>2912</i>	<i>8.3</i>	<i>34,297</i>

*Source: Manitoba Health and Seniors Care. Severe outcomes include deaths or hospitalizations (ICU/non-ICU). Rates are age-adjusted to remove the age effect as it is an important factor for developing severe outcomes in COVID-19 cases.

References

Statistics Canada. (2020a). Gender in differences in mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Statistics Canada. (2020b). Canada's mental health during COVID-19.

Web: www.gov.mb.ca/povertyreduction

Email: povertyreduction@gov.mb.ca

Available in alternate formats upon request

