

2018 BUDGET

COMMUNITY SAFETY HIGHLIGHTS

(a synopsis of <http://budget.ontario.ca/2018/budget2018-en.pdf>)

Board Training

The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services remains committed to working with OAPSB and eventually with educational partners to develop and delivery effective board training. While this is not specifically mentioned in the budget, this messaging has been consistent for some months now (a very positive development after years of disinterest).

Expanding Access to Naloxone

Naloxone, the overdose prevention drug, is now available free of charge at 2,390 participating pharmacies in nearly 260 cities and towns in the province. The government has distributed over 114,000 naloxone kits to date.

The government is addressing demand for naloxone by expanding access through front-line community organizations, as well as offering naloxone to police and fire services. (P. 19)

Mental Health

Starting in 2018, Ontario will invest an additional \$1.8 billion over three years to expand services for people living with developmental disabilities, including (among many other initiatives):

- Strengthening training for police and frontline justice sector workers to identify and potentially divert individuals with developmental disabilities from the justice system, directing them to more appropriate services when needed (p. 36)
- Hiring additional staff, including 176 correctional officers, 15 dedicated discharge planners, 120 new health care staff and 44 probation and parole officers to support efficient delivery of evidence-based services in the community
- Investing in staff through enhanced training programs that include mandatory education on human rights, antiracism, cultural competency, Indigenous rights, mental health and correctional best practices;

- Supporting adults with mental health and/or addiction issues involved in the justice system through increased access to community mental health and addictions services, including more supportive housing units, mobile crisis response teams, case managers and other therapeutic supports
- Providing social navigators to support First Nation, Métis and Inuit people in connecting with culturally appropriate services to prevent re-contact with the justice system
- Expanding bail beds in northern, rural and remote communities to provide community-based supervision for higher needs individuals who would likely otherwise be held in custody pending resolution of their criminal charge
- Building two new multi-purpose correctional centres in Thunder Bay and Ottawa (p. 46)

Community Justice Centres

Ontario is investing in Community Justice Centres (CJCs) to improve the delivery of justice to vulnerable accused people and their families by addressing the root causes of crime and criminal behaviour. (p. 37)

Ending Gender-Based Violence

Key strategies and investments, include:

- Domestic Violence Action Plan, which provides community supports for survivors and training for front-line workers and professionals, provides public education and improves Ontario's criminal and family justice systems
- It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment, which helps change attitudes, improve supports for survivors who come forward about abuse, and made workplaces and campuses safer and more responsive to complaints about sexual violence and harassment
- Walking Together: Ontario's Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women, in which Ontario and Indigenous communities are coming together to end the cycle of violence, and ensure future generations of Indigenous women can live in safety and with respect

- Ontario’s Strategy to End Human Trafficking, which focuses on prevention and early intervention, and expanded and improved community services for survivors
- It’s Never Okay: Ontario’s Gender-Based Violence Strategy – up to \$242 million over three years to help survivors and end the cycle of violence. (50-51)

Justice Sector

Justice sector expense is expected to be \$143 million higher, primarily due to resources for justice transformation including corrections reform and police oversight reform, increased post-traumatic stress disorder costs for first responders, higher-than-expected bad debt related to unpaid fines, expansion of the Brampton Courthouse project, and increased demand for death investigations. (p. 200)

Implementing Legalization of Cannabis

In response to the federal decision to legalize recreational cannabis, Ontario has passed legislation to establish a safe and sensible framework within the province that protects youth and reduces harm.

Ontario’s framework covers the sale, distribution, purchase, possession and consumption of cannabis in the province. Established as a Crown corporation and subsidiary of the LCBO, the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation, operating as the Ontario Cannabis Store, will be responsible for new stand-alone cannabis storefronts and an online distribution channel.

Public health, road safety, education and law enforcement initiatives include:

- Increasing the capacity of local law enforcement, including the Ontario Provincial Police, by funding sobriety field test training for police officers to help detect impaired drivers
- Creating a specialized legal team to support drug-impaired driving prosecutions
- Increasing capacity at the province’s Centre of Forensic Sciences to support toxicological testing and expert testimony
- Developing a program to divert youth involved in minor cannabis-related offences away from the criminal justice system

- Creating a Cannabis Intelligence Coordination Centre to shut down illegal storefronts and help fight the unsafe and illegal supply of cannabis products
- Providing public health units with support and resources to help address local needs related to cannabis legalization
- Raising awareness of the new Provincial rules that will take effect when cannabis is legalized federally, and making information available to educators, parents, guardians and students. (p. 200)

Unregulated Tobacco

Since 2008, the Ministry of Finance's enforcement activities have resulted in penalties of more than \$42.6 million assessed against retailers under the Tobacco Tax Act. In addition, more than 265 million untaxed cigarettes, 3.9 million untaxed cigars, and 196 million grams of untaxed fine cut or other tobacco products have been seized by the Ministry of Finance.

New compliance measures include:

- Proposing amendments to the Tobacco Tax Act to add penalty and offense provisions for failing to notify the Ministry of Finance prior to destroying raw leaf tobacco
- Exploring the implementation of automated "track and trace" technology and services that will monitor the movement and location of raw leaf tobacco through the supply chain, reduce its diversion into the unregulated market, and make it easier for registrants to comply with regulatory requirements
- Expanding the OPP-led Contraband Tobacco Enforcement Team to address linkages between organized crime and unregulated tobacco
- Expanding its partnerships with regional and local police services by establishing a local law enforcement grants pilot project that will make funding available to law enforcement partners in support of tobacco investigations
- Proposing an amendment to the Tobacco Tax Act that would allow the court to authorize the use of tracking devices in an investigation (p. 302-202)

Prepared by: Fred Kaustinen, Executive Director, 3 April 2018