



Vibrant COMMUNITIES Saint John

Vibrant Communities Saint John is a poverty reduction that

- Brings together community leaders to share, strategize, and champion a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy
- Provides knowledge and data about poverty to inform community planning;
- Is a voice to government, business, and the community about poverty in Saint John; and
- Encourages coordination and collaboration among individuals living in poverty, community organizations, business and government.

Poverty Reduction Policies

- Accessible services (e.g., case managers, career counseling). By accessible we mean appropriate (e.g., teens and young adult), neighbourhood based (satellite offices in neighbourhoods) with information easily available and comprehensive
- Engage the community (includes community organizations consisting of people living in poverty) in planning and restructuring programs (e.g., income assistance) and in meeting the target of 2,500 assisted in leaving income assistance

Level the Playing Field for Children and Youth

- Invest in **Early Childhood Learning Centres** in low income neighbourhoods/community schools. Early Learning Centres provide quality and flexible childcare + infant, toddler, and pre-school programs + parent programs + connection to essential health, education and employment services.

Align policies and improve incentives to remove the “welfare wall”

Consider these policy initiatives:

- Increase **minimum wage** to a living wage.
- Provide **health coverage** for all families whose incomes fall below the poverty line. This should include vision and dental.
- Offer a “**work supplement**” program for families to augment the household income until a living wage has been achieved (example: NB self-sufficiency program)
- Expand and improve **childcare** services (more spaces, more trained personnel)
 - increase the rate of \$2/hour subsidy for babysitting
 - increase the rate for children in licensed daycares so parents not paying the difference
- Increase **wage exemption** amount for SA recipients who work
- **Reconsider “transitional or interim” SA**. Implement innovative education to employment supports and provide adequate finances to ‘get back to work’. Eliminate the interim rate
- **Reconsider ‘authorization’ required for unchanging conditions (e.g., allergies)**. This process requires administration, uses precious health care resources, and is extremely inconvenient for recipients.

- Expand **First Steps program** for pregnant and parenting young women.
- Invest in “**fast track**” **education-to-employment programs** to enable adults who have low levels of education to achieve living wage employment with participating employers with follow-up supports and evaluation.
- Provide **financial supports** for single parents on income assistance going to post-secondary education

Help Cities to regenerate low income NEIGHBOURHOODS

- Convince the federal government to partner with the Province to help Cities eradicate public housing ghettos and revitalize low-income neighbourhoods.