

Poverty Elimination Policy (Last reviewed 2016)**PREAMBLE:**

The Green Party of Nova Scotia recognizes that a plan to build healthy sustainable communities must include a comprehensive strategy that addresses all aspects of poverty in Nova Scotia – its causes and effects. Poverty is a systemic problem that arises from low minimum wages, a precarious job market, a shortage of social housing, reductions in benefits and cuts in social programs.

The Green Party acknowledges the efforts of government departments and non-governmental organizations towards the relief of poverty in Nova Scotia. While poverty reduction strategies are important for immediate relief, in a province wealthy with natural resources and social capital, we should be working towards the elimination of the causes of poverty.

Before we expect Nova Scotians to become active social and economic investors in their communities, we must first ensure that they have secure access to affordable shelter, nutritious food, clean water, and a fair wage. Addressing poverty in our communities requires the collaborative effort of all government departments, along with thoughtful, considered policies and flexible service delivery.

To eliminate poverty, we must work toward a just society with a fair and compassionate social safety network

1. The Green Party of Nova Scotia supports a comprehensive strategy which:
 - 1.1. is informed by multiple stakeholders from the public and private sectors, along with community organizations and the citizens affected by poverty
 - 1.2. places affordable and suitable housing, food security, and equitable remuneration as the centerpiece
 - 1.3. sets realistic measurable targets, timelines and budgets which are accountable through evaluation and results reporting
 - 1.4. initiates policies informed by current research on the social indicators and full-cost accounting
 - 1.5. creates an infrastructure of support in the home communities of those living in poverty
 - 1.6. employs compassion and understanding as well as fiscal responsibility
 - 1.7. works to address and respond to the effects of poverty on physical, mental and community health.
2. The Green Party encourages the development of a housing strategy which:
 - 2.1. works to reduce class divisions in our communities by the strategic integration of affordable housing units, and avoiding the clustering of poverty
 - 2.2. is community-centered and integrates supportive and financial assistance into its plan
 - 2.3. addresses the complex housing needs of those living on the streets, including those suffering from mental health issues and our veterans
 - 2.4. recognizes the CMHC definition of affordable housing and works to bring affordable housing in line with this threshold based on the actual average earning of low-income Nova Scotians

3. The Green Party supports a comprehensive food security program designed to ensure that all Nova Scotians have access to and can afford sufficiently nutritious and safe foods, and would ensure that these aspects also were included
 - 3.1. encouragement for the development of rural, urban, and community gardens with support programs to assist low-income families to grow their own food
 - 3.2. promotion of the breakfast programs as part of curriculum planning around education on nutrition, placing no stigma around the reality that a missed meal is a choice for some and unavoidable for others
 - 3.3. direct support for food banks and meal programs in rural and urban Nova Scotia until the root causes of poverty are properly addressed
4. The Green Party of Nova Scotia supports wage standards which:
 - 4.1. correct the inequities between male and female workers
 - 4.2. re-frame the concept of “minimum wage” into that of “living wage”
5. The Green Party supports the concept of guaranteed annual income, the cost of which is much less than what poverty is costing society whether traditional or full-cost accounting figures are used
 - 5.1. The Green Party will work cooperatively nationally and provincially to reduce child poverty through a strong commitment to guaranteeing that all families have the ability to provide for their children
6. The Green Party calls for a review of services to those on social assistance and disability
 - 6.1. To ensure that necessary services are covered, such as basic telephone
 - 6.2. To revise clauses that disadvantage women to give gender equity
 - 6.3. To provide adequate support for transportation, child care, and senior care