

Poverty Reduction Working Group

Our Vision:

We believe that investing in people is essential to creating stronger communities, a better future and a prosperous Nova Scotia.

We envision a province where community, business and governments work together and invest in the measurable alleviation, reduction and prevention of poverty.

Overall Purpose/Goal:

Establishment of ongoing meaningful dialogue, monitoring and assessment, among all collaborative partners to ensure that public policies and the resulting programs and services are working to alleviate, reduce and prevent poverty in our province.

Our Guiding Principles:

Inclusion & Diversity

The development of equitable and just (both social and economic) *Recommendations for Poverty Reduction* requires meaningful input from those whose daily lives are directly impacted by public policies and the resulting programs and services.

- Recommendations will be developed based on impact assessment and existing evidence-based research and analysis (both qualitative and quantitative) - including previous participatory research reports with those living in poverty or at high risk of being so. In addition, the Working Group may request presentations to acquire the most current information and/or analysis on identified topic areas.
- It will include analysis to identify the differing realities in communities across Nova Scotia and from our mosaic of cultures. This will mean the utilization of a variety of analytical tools; for example, gender lens, rural/urban lens, disability lens, racialized lens, etc.

- Recommendations will be developed that are feasible in terms of time and in short, medium and long-term investment while being focused primarily on those presently living in poverty or at high risk of being so.

Equity & Social and Economic Justice

The *Recommendations for Poverty Reduction* will benefit everyone in Nova Scotia, including governments, with a primary focus of addressing the needs of those at the greatest risk (poorest of the poor).

Sustainable and Predicable Supports that Enable Self-determination, Independence and Self-Sufficiency

The *Recommendations for Poverty Reduction* and an *Implementation Plan* will be based on a Social Agenda that recognizes the central importance of social factors in meeting both social and economic sustainability.

Accountability & Transparency

The *Recommendations for Poverty Reduction* and an *Implementation Plan* will be developed in a democratic, inclusive and transparent process. The process of the Working Group is based upon respectful dialogue, clear communication, meaningful collaboration and strategic actions across sectors, including governments, for the social and economic benefit of all Nova Scotians.

Build on Existing Strategies, Assets, Strengths, Programs & Services and Explore Creative and Innovative Solutions

To develop effective *Recommendations for Poverty Reduction* and an *Implementation Plan* it is necessary to address the financial realities of living in poverty and the causes and consequences associated with poverty in our province. This will require building on what is working now (existing social and economic supports), ensuring accessibility to them and strengthening some. It will also require creating innovative solutions based on evidence-based research and impact assessment to enable income and social security for all Nova Scotians.

Flexibility & Responsiveness

In developing effective *Recommendations for Poverty Reduction and an Implementation Plan* it is essential that flexibility and quick response to changing demands and circumstances be built into the design, development, implementation and evaluation (ongoing monitoring and assessment). Integral to being an ‘inclusive’ and ‘integrated’ approach to alleviating, reducing and preventing poverty in Nova Scotia, is the clear and demonstrated recognition that our province is diverse in terms of rural/urban geography and individual needs and differing realities. Therefore, *recommendations and an implementation plan* must consider the need for legislation to enable overarching policies/programs that are able to respond to particular issues and needs facing individuals, families and communities (this again relates to the necessity of using a variety of lenses such as gender, disability, racialized, rural/urban, etc.). For an inclusive “people first” integrated approach to be effective, it must be a ‘dynamic’ process in order to become a truly comprehensive strategy.

Collaboration

Recognizing that poverty is complex and requires a variety of interrelated actions, it is essential that all sectors in our society work together. Governments must be committed to work cooperatively with many partners and to take action in achieving results. Labour and business organizations, community-based women’s, social justice and advocacy groups, academe, and individuals living in poverty working collaboratively with governments (all levels) is essential to developing and implementing actions that will alleviate, reduce, and in the longer-term prevent poverty and its consequences. Ongoing meaningful dialogue, monitoring and assessment, among all collaborative partners, is necessary to ensure that public policies and the resulting programs and services are working to alleviate, reduce and prevent poverty in our province.

APPENDIX I

Scheduled Meeting Dates of the Poverty Reduction Working Group

All meetings are scheduled on Tuesdays – the meetings will be daylong in length until otherwise noted by the Working Group.

| MONTH in 2008 | DATE | ANY COMMENTS |
|---------------|------------------|--------------|
| JANUARY | 15 th | |
| FEBRUARY | 12 th | |
| | 26 th | |
| MARCH | 4 th | |
| | 18 th | |
| APRIL | 1 st | |
| | 15 th | |
| | 29 th | |
| MAY | 13 th | |
| | 27 th | |
| JUNE | 10 th | |
| | 24 th | |

Appendix II - Work Plan and Timelines:

| Meeting Date | Action |
|--------------|---|
| February 26 | Vision/Direction Forward and discussion and scheduling of presentations |
| March 4 | Information gathering |
| March 18 | Information gathering |
| April 1 | Information gathering |
| April 15 | Results of consultation |
| April 29 | Provincial budget presentation |
| May 13 | |
| May 27 | 1 st draft |
| June 10 | 2 nd draft |
| June 24 | Final |