



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
ÎLE-DU-PRINCE-ÉDOUARD

POVERTY ELIMINATION STRATEGY ACT

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This document is *not* the official version of the Act. The Act and the amendments as printed under the authority of the King's Printer for the province should be consulted to determine the authoritative statement of the law.

For more information concerning the history of this Act, please see the *Table of Public Acts* on the Prince Edward Island Government web site (www.princeedwardisland.ca).

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CHAPTER P-14.1

POVERTY ELIMINATION STRATEGY ACT

WHEREAS poverty is a primary social determinant of health;

AND WHEREAS poverty leads to poorer social and economic outcomes, especially for children, and a lack of pro-active action to address poverty can increase the depth of poverty and make its elimination more difficult;

AND WHEREAS poverty is a complex issue and requires bold and creative approaches to understand and address the real causes and consequences of poverty in Prince Edward Island;

AND WHEREAS there is a need to establish clear definitions and measures of poverty in Prince Edward Island, so as to set appropriate legislative and policy targets;

AND WHEREAS there is expertise available from community organizations that have studied this issue and can provide insights;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Canada adopted the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals of reducing poverty by 50% in 2030;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Canada has directly increased financial resources for families with children and for seniors in its efforts to reach its poverty reduction targets;

THEREFORE BE IT ENACTED by the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island as follows:

PART 1 - INTERPRETATION

1. Definitions

(1) In this Act

- (a) “**children**” means persons under 18 years of age;
- (b) “**chronic homelessness**” refers to the condition of a person who is currently experiencing homelessness and

- (i) has a total of at least 180 days of homelessness over the past year, or
- (ii) has had recurrent experiences of homelessness over the past 3 years;
- (c) “**community sector**” means all those non-profit and non-governmental organizations that provide community programs and services in support of the needs of residents of Prince Edward Island;
- (d) “**Council**” means the Poverty Elimination Council established under section 5;
- (e) “**food insecurity**” means the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints;
- (f) “**Minister**” means the Minister of Social Development and Seniors;
- (g) “**PEI poverty rate**” means the poverty rate for the province measured under subsection 3(3);
- (h) “**poverty**” means the condition of a human being who is deprived of the resources, means, choices and power necessary to acquire and maintain economic self-sufficiency or to facilitate integration and participation in society;
- (i) “**social inclusion**” means the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights;
- (j) “**strategy**” means the strategy to reduce and eliminate poverty and increase social inclusion implemented under section 4;
- (k) “**young adults**” means persons between 18 years of age and 24 years of age.

Chronic homelessness further clarified

- (2) Chronic homelessness includes time spent
 - (a) staying in unsheltered locations, such as public or private spaces without consent or contract, or places not intended for permanent human habitation;
 - (b) staying in emergency shelters, including overnight shelters for people experiencing homelessness, shelters for people affected by family violence, and emergency shelters for people fleeing a natural disaster or destruction of accommodation; and
 - (c) staying temporarily with others without guarantee of continued residency or the immediate prospects for accessing permanent housing, or short-term rental accommodations without security of tenure. *2021,c.25,s.1; 2023,c.20,s.2.*

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Act is to guide the Government of Prince Edward Island in the creation of a long-term strategy that leads to the elimination of poverty. *2021,c.25,s.2.*

PART 2 - POVERTY REDUCTION AND ELIMINATION

3. PEI poverty rate reduction targets

- (1) The following targets are established for the purpose of reducing and eliminating poverty in Prince Edward Island:
 - (a) by January 1, 2025 and for each subsequent calendar year,
 - (i) the PEI poverty rate will be reduced below the PEI poverty rate for 2018 by 25% among all persons,

- (ii) the PEI poverty rate will be reduced below the PEI poverty rate for 2018 by 50% among persons under 18 years of age,
- (iii) food insecurity among all persons will be reduced by 50%,
- (iv) food insecurity among children will be reduced to 0%, and
- (v) chronic homelessness among all persons will be reduced to 0%;
- (b) by January 1, 2030 and for each subsequent calendar year,
 - (i) the PEI poverty rate will be reduced below the PEI poverty rate for 2023 by 50% among all persons,
 - (ii) the PEI poverty rate will be reduced below the PEI poverty rate for 2023 by 100% among persons under 18 years of age,
 - (iii) food insecurity among all persons will be reduced to 0%;
- (c) by January 1, 2035 and for each subsequent calendar year, the poverty rate in PEI will be reduced below the poverty rate for 2029 by 100% among all persons.

Additional targets

- (2) The Minister may establish additional or complementary poverty reduction and elimination targets for other years or periods, but any targets established under this subsection shall not be less stringent than the targets in subsection (1).

Poverty rate measurement

- (3) For the purposes of subsection (1), the poverty rate in the province shall be measured using the market basket measure published by Statistics Canada as the “Market Basket Measure” or “Canada's Official Poverty Line”.

Food insecurity measurement

- (4) For the purposes of subsection (1), food insecurity shall be measured using the Canadian Community Health Survey published annually by Statistics Canada. *2021, c.25, s.3.*

PART 3 – POVERTY ELIMINATION STRATEGY

4. Poverty elimination strategy

- (1) The Government shall
 - (a) implement a strategy to reduce and eliminate poverty and increase social inclusion across Prince Edward Island;
 - (b) establish or adopt poverty and social inclusion indicators to be used in measuring the progress of the strategy; and
 - (c) provide annual reports to the public on the progress of the strategy in accordance with section 7.

Strategy to address multiple needs

- (2) The development of the strategy shall include consideration of the following:
 - (a) quality, accessible education;
 - (b) training that prepares persons for employment;
 - (c) employment opportunities;
 - (d) income supports for persons who are unable to fully participate in the labour market;
 - (e) affordable housing and accessible housing;

- (f) mental health and addictions supports;
- (g) long-term supports for persons with disabilities;
- (h) supportive and safe communities;
- (i) supports for strong and healthy families; and
- (j) any other matters as determined by the Minister or the Council.

Principles

- (3) The strategy shall be based on principles that
 - (a) establish supports for, and eliminate barriers to, full participation by all people in the province’s economy and society and, in particular, persons who face discrimination;
 - (b) supportive, safe, and healthy communities are an integral part of the poverty elimination strategy;
 - (c) certain groups face a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion;
 - (d) families must be supported so that they can play a meaningful role in the elimination of poverty;
 - (e) all people in the province, including those living in poverty, are treated with respect and dignity;
 - (f) members of the province’s communities, particularly people living in poverty, are to be involved in the design and implementation of the strategy;
 - (g) sustained commitment to work together to develop strong and healthy children, young adults, adults, families and communities is required to effectively reduce and eliminate poverty; and
 - (h) the community sector is integral to a poverty elimination strategy by delivering the programs and services that matter to people, by strengthening communities and by making a positive contribution to the economy.

Groups to be considered

- (4) The strategy must consider a broad range of citizens in its development and implementation, particularly those groups who are at a greater risk of experiencing poverty, including:
 - (a) children;
 - (b) young adults;
 - (c) women and persons of all genders;
 - (d) Indigenous peoples;
 - (e) persons living with disabilities;
 - (f) persons living in rural communities;
 - (g) immigrants and refugees;
 - (h) LGBTQ2S + persons;
 - (i) persons of faith and spirituality;
 - (j) seniors;
 - (k) persons and families working and earning low incomes;
 - (l) persons living with or fleeing abuse;
 - (m) persons living with mental illness or addiction;
 - (n) black persons;
 - (o) persons of colour; and
 - (p) any other groups as determined by the Minister or the Council.

Strategy to be coordinated

- (5) The strategy shall be designed to ensure that programs and initiatives to implement the strategy are coordinated across the Government.

Review

- (6) The strategy shall be reviewed and updated at least once every five years or at such times as requested by the Minister.

Strategy to be publicly available

- (7) The Minister shall ensure that the strategy is publicly available. *2021,c.25,s.4.*

PART 4 – COUNCIL**5. Council on poverty reduction and social inclusion**

- (1) A council on poverty elimination and social inclusion, which may be referred to as the “Poverty Elimination Council”, is established, and is to consist of at least 7 persons, but not more than 11 persons, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Responsibilities

- (2) The responsibilities of the Council include
- (a) providing advice to the Minister on
 - (i) the content of the strategy,
 - (ii) poverty and social inclusion indicators,
 - (iii) proposed programs, policies or initiatives, and
 - (iv) the indicators and baseline used to measure the performance of the strategy;
 - (b) monitoring the implementation of the strategy;
 - (c) facilitating community involvement in the development and implementation of the strategy; and
 - (d) assisting the Minister in the preparation of the annual report under section 7.

Chair of Council

- (3) The Council shall appoint a chair from among its members.

Meetings

- (4) The council shall meet at least four times each year, at the call of the chair. *2021,c.25,s.5.*

PART 5 – BUDGET PROCESS**6. Role of strategy in annual budget process**

For each fiscal year, the Government shall take the strategy into account when preparing the budget for that fiscal year. *2021,c.25,s.6.*

PART 6 – ANNUAL REPORT

7. Annual report

- (1) Within six months after the end of each fiscal year, the Minister, in consultation with the Council, shall prepare a report that describes
 - (a) the actions taken to implement the strategy in that year; and
 - (b) the progress of the strategy using the poverty reduction and social inclusion indicators prescribed by regulation.

Report to be tabled

- (2) The Minister shall table the report in the Legislative Assembly upon it being completed or, if the Assembly is not sitting at that time, within 15 days after the next sitting begins.

Referral to standing committee

- (3) When the report is tabled in the Legislative Assembly, it stands referred to the standing committee responsible for matters relating to social development, or such other standing committee as the Assembly may order at the time.

Publication on website

- (4) When the report has been tabled in the Assembly, the Minister shall ensure that the report is made publicly available. *2021,c.25,s.7.*

PART 7 – GENERAL PROVISIONS

8. Regulations

The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations

- (a) prescribing indicators of poverty reduction and social inclusion for the purposes of this Act;
- (b) respecting any matter necessary or advisable to carry out the purposes of this Act; and
- (c) defining any term used but not defined in this Act. *2021,c.25,s.8.*

9. Existing poverty reduction strategies

Notwithstanding section 4, *Belonging and Thriving: A Poverty Reduction Action Plan for Prince Edward Island (2019-2024)* is deemed a strategy under this Act and is in effect at the time this Act comes into force and shall remain in effect

- (a) until the end date provided for that strategy; or
- (b) until such other earlier time as that strategy is ended. *2021,c.25,s.9.*