

PEI Poverty Reduction

DISCUSSION PAPER



princeedwardisland.ca/poverty-reduction



A Call to Action

Prince Edward Island is not immune to poverty and its effects on individuals, families, and our entire community. According to the 2016 census, one in six (over 23,000) Islanders lived in low income in 2015, while the same is true for one in seven Canadians (4.8 million people).



In November 2017, the provincial government committed to creating a collaborative Poverty Reduction Action Plan. It will **integrate and build on existing efforts** by government and the community to address poverty in Prince Edward Island.

All Islanders need to work together to help create this plan. From April through June 2018 there will be small-group conversations, community gatherings, and a survey for the public and for service providers.

Every Islander should take these opportunities to share their input as we seek to create a more inclusive and prosperous Prince Edward Island for all.



ABOUT POVERTY

POVERTY IS A COMPLEX ISSUE.

It takes many forms and can affect people in all walks of life and across the life span.

Poverty involves a number of challenges such as:

- access to healthy food;
- earning enough money;
- adequate housing;
- higher education opportunities;
- job opportunities;
- reliable transportation; and
- health services.

People living in poverty must often make hard choices. They must regularly decide between basic needs. People living in poverty experience poorer health, food insecurity, housing insecurity and a general lower quality of life than those not living in poverty. For more information about poverty, read our fact sheets at princeedwardisland.ca/poverty-reduction.

These challenges are unevenly spread across our population. Those at higher risk of living in poverty include

- women
- youth
- one-parent families
- single people
- persons with disabilities
- Indigenous people and
- newcomers



We will consider all the information collected through this community engagement process as we develop the PEI Poverty Reduction Action Plan.

Currently on Prince Edward Island

Community Food Security and Agriculture Awareness Program

The Community Food Security and Agriculture Awareness Program helps Islanders obtain safe, culturally acceptable, and nutritious foods from our own local, sustainable food system. It is a joint effort between the provincial and federal (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada) governments that will encourage entrepreneurship, planning, and education partnerships between community groups, government, and industry.



Prince Edward Island's RESPONSE

POVERTY IS A COMMUNITY CHALLENGE

Responding to poverty is a community responsibility.

Prince Edward Island has experienced many positive economic and social changes over the past decade including:

- a vibrant , growing economy;
- more people working;
- updated and new social programs;
- more childcare spaces and frontline education positions;
- raised Basic Personal Amount for provincial income tax; and
- a growing and more diverse population.

As a community we are responsible to make sure that all Islanders share in the benefits of these economic and social changes. We must also support people's ability to deal with the risks and impacts that may have resulted from such changes, especially for the most vulnerable or disadvantaged.

Through Prince Edward Island's **Poverty Reduction Action Plan** we will work to create more opportunities for everyone to:

- feel valued and contribute to their community;
- build on our communities' strengths, and
- find ways to better work together for our individuals, families and communities.

We hope to answer the following questions:

- what would success look like?
- how does poverty impact Islanders and communities?
- what is working well across the Island that can be built upon?
- what are some solutions or initiatives that could be implemented in PEI to address poverty in PEI? and
- how do we all (government, community organizations, academia and businesses) work together to address poverty?

Currently on Prince Edward Island

Programs to support seniors to stay in their own homes

There are a number of programs to support seniors to stay in their own homes for longer. Programs include Seniors Safe @ Home, Seniors Home Repair Program, and the Seniors' Independence Initiative.



Our Process

Whole-of-community, collaborative approach

A Poverty Reduction Advisory Council has been created to help guide the work. The council is composed of 12 appointed community members who work collaboratively with the provincial government to develop the action plan.

The whole-of-community, collaborative process will bring together those affected by poverty: community members; not-for-profit groups; other government sectors; academia; researchers; the private sector; and the public. It will include:

- reviewing action plans and approaches used elsewhere in Canada;
- drawing on previous consultation efforts in Prince Edward Island and current strengths and resources that can be used going forward;
- creating the action plan in fall 2018 and presenting it to government for approval;
- creating a body to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the action plan; and
- executing the plan.

Currently on Prince Edward Island

Trade HERizons

SkillsPEI funds this project to provide skills upgrading, career exploration and employability skills to women pursuing careers in trades and technology through classroom and hands-on learning environments. The objective is to increase the number of women in trades and non-traditional occupations and transition them from low-income to a sustainable livelihood.



HOW CAN ISLANDERS GET INVOLVED?

To create an effective PEI Poverty Reduction Action Plan and to chart a new path forward, we need to hear Islanders' experiences with — and thoughts — about poverty.

Our public engagement process is taking place between April and June 2018. It was created using input from 60 poverty-focused community groups who attended a half-day session on March 5, 2018.

The process includes the following chances to share your thoughts and ideas:

Small Group Conversations

Small group conversations will be held across the Island from mid April to late May for those who are affected by poverty, community groups, service providers, and community members with an interest in poverty.

PURPOSE: to learn how different communities and groups of people across the province experience poverty, to learn about the services and supports they access in times of need, and to identify potential priorities and solutions for reducing poverty.

Community Conversations

Six public community conversations for all Islanders (English and French) will be held in late May and early June 2018 across PEI. Details on the public community conversations will be advertised through the PEI Poverty Reduction Action Plan website and email group, social media, print media and/or radio media.

PURPOSE: to raise awareness of the poverty issues Islanders face, and to work with Islanders on a larger scale to identify potential priorities and solutions for reducing poverty.

Service Provider Survey

A service provider survey (English and French) will be offered online from late April to mid May 2018 to providers who work with, support, or advocate for Islanders living in poverty. A link will be posted on the PEI Poverty Reduction Action Plan website. It will be advertised through the PEI Poverty Reduction Action Plan website and email group, social media, print media and/or radio media.

PURPOSE: This survey will collect information from service providers about their experiences working with clients living in poverty and their perspectives on the issue.

Public Survey

A public survey (English and French) will be available to all Islanders online and in paper form between late April and mid May 2018. A link to the survey will be posted on the PEI Poverty Reduction Action Plan website and paper copies will be available at Access PEI sites and PEI Public Libraries and will be sent by mail upon request. It will be advertised through the PEI Poverty Reduction Action Plan website and email group, social media, print media and/or radio media.

PURPOSE: The survey will collect information on Islanders' experiences with poverty. Specifically, it will ask about how poverty impacts Island families and communities, challenges people living in poverty face and the types of services they access, service gaps, and potential priorities and solutions for reducing poverty on PEI.



REPORTING THE RESULTS

We will consider all the information collected through this community engagement process as we develop the PEI Poverty Reduction Action Plan.

We are committed to keeping you “in the loop” as we develop the PEI Poverty Reduction Action Plan. You can:

- Visit us regularly at our PEI Poverty Reduction Action Plan website at www.princeedwardisland.ca/poverty-reduction to keep up-to-date on our process and to learn more about opportunities for input.
- Join our email group at www.princeedwardisland.ca/poverty-reduction to receive regular updates via email.
- Contact us any time with questions or concerns povertyreduction@gov.pe.ca.

Poverty touches everyone’s lives. Now is the time to harness our collective energy and build upon the many great resources we have in Prince Edward Island.

Please join us and share your thoughts and ideas about poverty and how our community should respond in order to make Prince Edward Island the best possible place to live and prosper.

Currently on Prince Edward Island

Harvest & Prosper

Harvest and Prosper helps agriculture businesses hire during the busy harvest season while helping up to 50 newcomers – and social assistance and disability-support clients – overcome barriers to employment. It was piloted in 2017 and led by the Department of Workforce & Advanced Learning in partnership with other government departments, industry associations, and service providers (such as the Adventure Group). Harvest and Prosper is planned to be offered again in 2018.

Currently on Prince Edward Island

Family Resource Centres

Family Resource Centres offer programs and resources for children and families. These include parent education and support groups, parent resources, prenatal nutrition programs, drop-in play, toy-lending libraries, and outreach for smaller Island communities.

From working together, big things are possible



“We must work together to ensure everyone has the chance to be self-sufficient, healthy and able to thrive in our Island society.”

Tina Mundy
Minister of Family and Human Services

The Mighty Island

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