

POVERTY TO POSSIBILITY

United Way of PEI calls for commitment from all parties to prioritize actions to eliminate poverty.

For the past three years, the United Way of PEI has been at the forefront of the community emergency response. We have provided emergency and long-term funding, training for community leaders, and our 211 navigation service connected thousands of Islanders to the programs, services and supports available to them. As we recover from the pandemic and Post Tropical Storm Fiona, we need to apply the lessons we have learned to address the critical issues facing people living or at risk of poverty in our province.

We know Islanders require additional support in areas of mental health and addictions, diversity & inclusion, housing and homelessness, food security, and addressing the growing divide and polarization that exists within our communities. The social sector on PEI understands these needs best and is an essential part of the solution, but we can't do it alone.

As political parties make commitments leading into the provincial election, we want to see action and clear commitments in the following areas:

Shift 30% of project funding for charities and nonprofits to core/operational funding.

The provincial government relies on the non-profit social sector to deliver many of its services and also to fill in critical service gaps. However, the sector's capacity to serve is in serious jeopardy. When non-profits are reliant on project-based funding and cannot access funding to cover essential costs, it negatively impacts the quality of services they can offer their community, the employment conditions of non-profit workers, and the long-term sustainability of their organizations.

We want to see a new approach to the relationship and funding of non-profits and charities that reflects our role as trusted partners in delivering crucial programs and services to communities. This means providing funding in less restrictive ways, allowing organizations to use the funding to cover essential core operating costs so they can more effectively deliver their programs and services.

Partnering with a long-standing and trusted organization like the United Way to develop new funding and evaluation models that are evidence-based, outcome-focused, and reflective of the needs of our communities would allow the social sector to be more resilient, helping build communities that emerge from this period of turmoil stronger, more vibrant and more equitable than before.

Announce a Basic Income Guarantee on PEI.

While we support many organizations that are making food, social connections, and housing available to the community, we also realize these supports are not addressing the root of the problem. Income security is one of the most important social determinants of health and is critical to escape the poverty trap. A Basic Income Guarantee would mean Islanders living in poverty or on low incomes would spend less time and energy accessing basic needs to survive and would be better positioned to take advantage of educational opportunities and overcome barriers to living their best life.

We saw a version of the safety net in action during the COVID-19 pandemic. The CERB payments from the federal government were easy to apply for, accommodated people earning some wages, and gave those who experienced job loss a decent income. In the aftermath of Post Tropical Storm Fiona, we saw how challenging it was to provide much needed supports in a timely way to those who needed it most. A basic income guarantee is a better, more sustainable long-term solution that would ensure people don't fall through the cracks and are able to maintain a decent standard of living, both in times of emergency and every day.



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