

Excerpts from the Green Party Platform

http://www.greenparty.ns.ca/uploads/green_party_2009_platform.pdf

Health

- take steps to ensure that citizens requiring mental health support can access the care they need: by decentralizing mental health services; increasing the ease of access to psychological and psychiatric services by installing mental health care professionals in community clinics across the province; reducing the need for GP referrals to access mental health care; and increasing funding and resource allocation to mental health advocacy groups working directly with people with mental health issues
- immediately begin construction of affordable housing in communities across the province to meet the needs of Nova Scotians, which will alleviate two of the social determinants of health, employment and housing, by providing jobs and ensuring all Nova Scotians have a place to live
- launch research and feasibility studies to examine the institution of provincial pharmacare coverage and a province wide health formulary so that first line affordable medications are available to all Nova Scotians

Poverty

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. 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.

The Green Party acknowledges the efforts of government departments and non-governmental organizations towards the relief of poverty in Nova Scotia. We support the initiatives highlighted in the document *Preventing Poverty, Promoting Prosperity*, however we recognize that fundamental policies are missing from this Poverty Reduction Strategy. 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 poverty. Addressing poverty in our communities requires the collaborative effort of all government departments, along with thoughtful, considered policies and flexible service delivery.

The Green Party of Nova Scotia supports a poverty strategy which:

- is informed by multiple stakeholders from the public and private sectors, along with community organizations and the citizens affected by poverty
- places affordable and suitable housing, food security, and equitable remuneration as the centerpiece
- sets realistic measurable targets, timelines and budgets which is accountable through evaluation and results reporting
- initiates policies informed by current research on the social indicators of health
- creates an infrastructure of support in the home communities of those living in poverty
- employs compassion and understanding as well as fiscal responsibility
- works to address and respond to the effects of poverty on physical, mental and community health.

The Green Party encourages the development of a housing strategy which:

- works to reduce class divisions in our communities by the strategic integration of affordable housing units, and to avoid the clustering of poverty is community-centred and integrates supportive and financial assistance into its plan
- recognizes the difference between providing shelter and providing suitable, secure housing
- addresses the complex housing needs of those living on the streets and suffering from a multitude of mental health issues
- recognizes the CMHC 30% 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.

The Green Party supports a comprehensive food security program as outline as a Key Issue in this document. Such a program would include these aspects and more:

- be designed to ensure that all Nova Scotians have access to and can afford sufficiently nutritious and safe foods
- encourage the development of rural and urban and community gardens
- support local farmers markets as a source of affordable, nutritious food
- promote breakfast programs and curriculum planning around the Canada Food Guide in our schools
- directly support food banks and meal programs in rural and urban Nova Scotia

The Green Party of Nova Scotia calls for an evaluation of wage standards which:

- examines wage inequities between male and female professionals
- re-frames the concept of “minimum wage” into that of “living wage”
- challenges employers to facilitate the healthy lifestyles of their employees
- explores wage standards for Nova Scotians delivering essential services within our health and education systems