



Equality for Newfoundland and Labrador Women

A BRIEF SUBMITTED BY

**Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women
Newfoundland and Labrador**

TO THE HONOURABLE JEROME KENNEDY
MINISTER OF FINANCE

AT THE 2009 BUDGET CONSULTATIONS
January 16, 2009
ST. JOHN'S, NL

The Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women was established in 1980 by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. It was created to advise Government on issues affecting the status of women as well as raise awareness of women's equality issues within the general public. The Advisory Council is legislated by the *Status of Women Advisory Council Act*.

Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women

2009 Budget Recommendations

The Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women respectfully submits the following recommendations for Government consideration in preparing Budget 2009:

Recommendation 1:

Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Health Centre

- Increase funding to the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Health Centre to a minimum of \$100,000.

Recommendation 2:

Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador

- Strategically invest in the equality-seeking work of the Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador by approving their request for organizational funding.

Recommendation 3:

Violence against Women - Transition Centres, Shelters, and Safe Houses

- Provide full funding to the proposed shelter in Conception Bay North, recognizing the urgent need for the facility and the expertise of Kirby House.
- Provide full operational funding for the new Safe House in Rigolet.
- Provide funding for the development of Safe Houses in all isolated Labrador communities which do not currently have this service.
- As community capacity develops, provide full funding for additional Transition Houses, Shelters and Safe Houses throughout the Province.
- Continue to increase funding for the Violence Prevention Initiative and the ten Regional Coordinating Coalitions against Violence.

Recommendation 4:

Gender Inclusive Analysis

- Allocate resources for a designated, full-time Gender Equity Policy Advisor and student intern for each Provincial department and agency.

Recommendation 5:**Family Law**

- Increase Provincial funding for civil legal aid and target new funds to positions specifically designated for family law matters.
- Restore full services for pursuing child support applications through the court to members of the general public.

Recommendation 6:**Child Care and Early Learning**

- Significantly increase the wages and benefits of staff employed in child care and early learning programs.
- Increase funding to create new spaces.
- Increase child care subsidies for families who do not have access to publicly funded regulated child care.
- Find creative ways to provide child care in rural areas and for families working outside of the Monday to Friday, 9 am - 5 pm work day.
- Continue to lobby the Federal Government for a comprehensive publicly-funded National Child Care and Early Learning Program.

Recommendation 7:**Income Support Rates**

- Increase income support rates in all categories with a significant increase for single people regardless of their living situation.
- Re-examine the concept of a Provincial Guaranteed Annual Income.

Recommendation 8:**Home Support**

- Reduce income thresholds and increase the maximum number of hours of service for consumers.
- Include basic home maintenance, such as snow shovelling and minor repairs, within the basket of home support services.
- Increase wages and benefits for employees.
- Provide Workers' Compensation Benefits to all employees funded by the system.

**Recommendation 9:
Disability-Related Supports**

- Eliminate claw backs to funding for disability-related supports when individuals and families increase their income.

**Recommendation 10:
Dental Care**

- Expand coverage to include preventative care and the full cost of dentures, including repairs, to clients receiving income support.
- Expand the program to include low income adults.

**Recommendation 11:
Prescription Drug Coverage**

- Simplify the application process and provide more options for completing the application; and decrease the approval time.
- Actively promote the program throughout the Province using all means possible.
- Access Plan: increase the earning threshold for qualifying and decrease the percentage of co-pay for the consumer.
- Assurance Plan: decrease the cap on the percentage of net family income required to qualify for the program.

**Recommendation 12:
Medical Transportation**

- Provide adequate funding to cover the costs of medical travel.

**Recommendation 13:
Housing**

- Implement rent control legislation to mitigate against inflationary rent increases.
- Require companies to conduct social impact studies, ensuring they take responsibility for providing housing and services to employees rather than creating chaos in the surrounding communities and artificially inflating the cost of housing.
- Reduce the subsidized rental rate to 25% of gross income for all tenants.
- Increase the housing stock available for post-secondary students.

**Recommendation 14:
Home Ownership**

- Provide a low income home owner grant of \$50 per month to cover basic home maintenance.
- Develop a rent-to-own housing program.

**Recommendation 15:
Home Heating**

- Increase the amount of the home heating subsidy.
- Remove the provincial tax on home heating fuel and electricity.

**Recommendation 16:
Supportive Housing**

- Increase the funding available for new supportive housing programs and services throughout the Province and commit to providing operational funding for Marguerite's Place and Cara Transition House second stage housing.
- Increase the level of operational funding provided to currently funded supportive housing programs.
- Provide additional resources to ensure Government departments are able to provide a collaborative, comprehensive and timely response to the needs of individual clients and agencies delivering supportive housing programs.
- Develop processes which hold departments accountable for providing a collaborative, comprehensive and timely response to individuals and agencies.

**Recommendation 17:
K – 12 Education**

- Provide an annual non-taxable \$100 grant per child to families receiving the National Child Benefit to offset costs associated with school supplies and clothes.

**Recommendation 18:
Post Secondary Education**

- Increase student grants.
- Reduce the interest charged on the Provincial Student Loans to below prime.
- Provide increased debt relief.
- Eliminate tuition fees for post-secondary education and training.

**Recommendation 19:
Employment**

- Develop and implement a Provincial employment equity plan.
- Work with stakeholders to develop and implement a new set of progressive labour standards.

**Recommendation 20:
Pensions**

- Increase public pensions to a guaranteed, liveable income.

**Recommendation 21:
Poverty Reduction Strategy**

- Develop appropriate poverty indicators.
- Measure the effectiveness of each poverty reduction initiative.
- Provide an annual report on the effectiveness of each initiative.

**Recommendation 22:
Family-Friendly Treasury Board Guidelines**

- Authorize Treasury Board to include the reimbursement of family care in its guidelines for compensating volunteers and allocate the necessary resources to cover these costs.

**Recommendation 23:
Provincial Women's Conference**

- Provide funding for a Provincial Women's Conference, including funding for the following:
 - Minimum of one year salary for a full-time conference organizer,
 - Provision for pre-conference focus groups across the province,
 - A two-day pan-provincial conference of diverse groups of women,
 - Support for post-conference action groups as appropriate, and
 - Preparation of conference report and evaluation.



WOMEN
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ON THE STATUS OF
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Equity, Equality and Inclusion for Women