

# Basic Income Relevance for Women

Women's Advisory Committee, HRM

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Basic Income Nova Scotia  
(BIG-NS)



**Coalition Canada**

basic income  
revenu de base

# Basic Income Nova Scotia & Coalition Canada Basic Income

What do we do?

# We Advocate

## BIG-NS

- Organize at the grass roots level
- Do presentations and interviews
- Hold semi-annual Conferences (4)
- Support regional and national organizations
  - Atlantic Canada Basic Income Consensus statement
- Meet with Indigenous groups
- Meet with NS politicians, all parties
- 2018: petition for a feasibility study in NS presented to the NS legislature
- 2018: HRM & United Way Poverty Solutions report and accompanying action plan

## Coalition Canada

- Meet with federal MPs and Senators: all parties
- Develop relationships with national Indigenous groups
- Collaborate with local and other national groups
- Lead the PEI project
- Develop Cases for a Basic Income Series
  - Case for a BI & Municipalities

# Vulnerabilities for Women



Image by L'Oreal, Paris

## Intersectionality

- Gender, race/ethnicity, class (poverty)

## Care-giver responsibilities at home

- Unpaid work

## Precarious work

- Part-time, temporary, contract
- Few benefits
- Low paid work, particularly women-dominated jobs
- Poor workplace protections

## Unemployed

## Inflation

- Wages not keeping pace

## Home and work-place violence

## Others?

# LEAF: [Report](#) on Basic Income and the Care Economy

- ...“a basic income program would contribute to income security, income stability, and income equality for low-income women and gender-diverse people—and single parents and Black, Indigenous, and racialized, disabled, and migrant women and gender-diverse people in particular—by valuing the unpaid care work that they do.”
- A basic income must be accompanied by other supports for women:
  1. high-quality, affordable, accessible public care services;
  2. valuing paid caregiving work and other gendered occupations; and
  3. a shift in workplace norms to allow for flexibility and part-time work arrangements without significant financial penalty



The Basic Income We Want

# Definition

A direct payment from government to ensure that everyone has a sufficient income to meet their basic needs, participate in society and live with dignity, regardless of work status.



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# Principles



**Coalition Canada**  
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- **Essential component of universal supports and services.** Replaces income assistance (welfare) but not other services.
- **Unconditional.** Subject only to income and residency requirements.
- **Sufficient.** Full benefit at or above the poverty line. Indexed to the cost of living.
- **Accessible.** Everyone who needs it gets it. Simple application and administration process. No complex, demeaning, stigmatizing application or oversight processes.
- **Responsive to changing circumstances.** Delivered monthly or biweekly. Reduced gradually with increasing taxable income.
- **Respects autonomy.** Payable to individuals to be used at their sole discretion.
- **Respects Indigenous self-determination and autonomy.** Respects the rights of Indigenous people to determine whether a basic income is delivered in their communities and, if so, what form it will take and how it will be implemented.



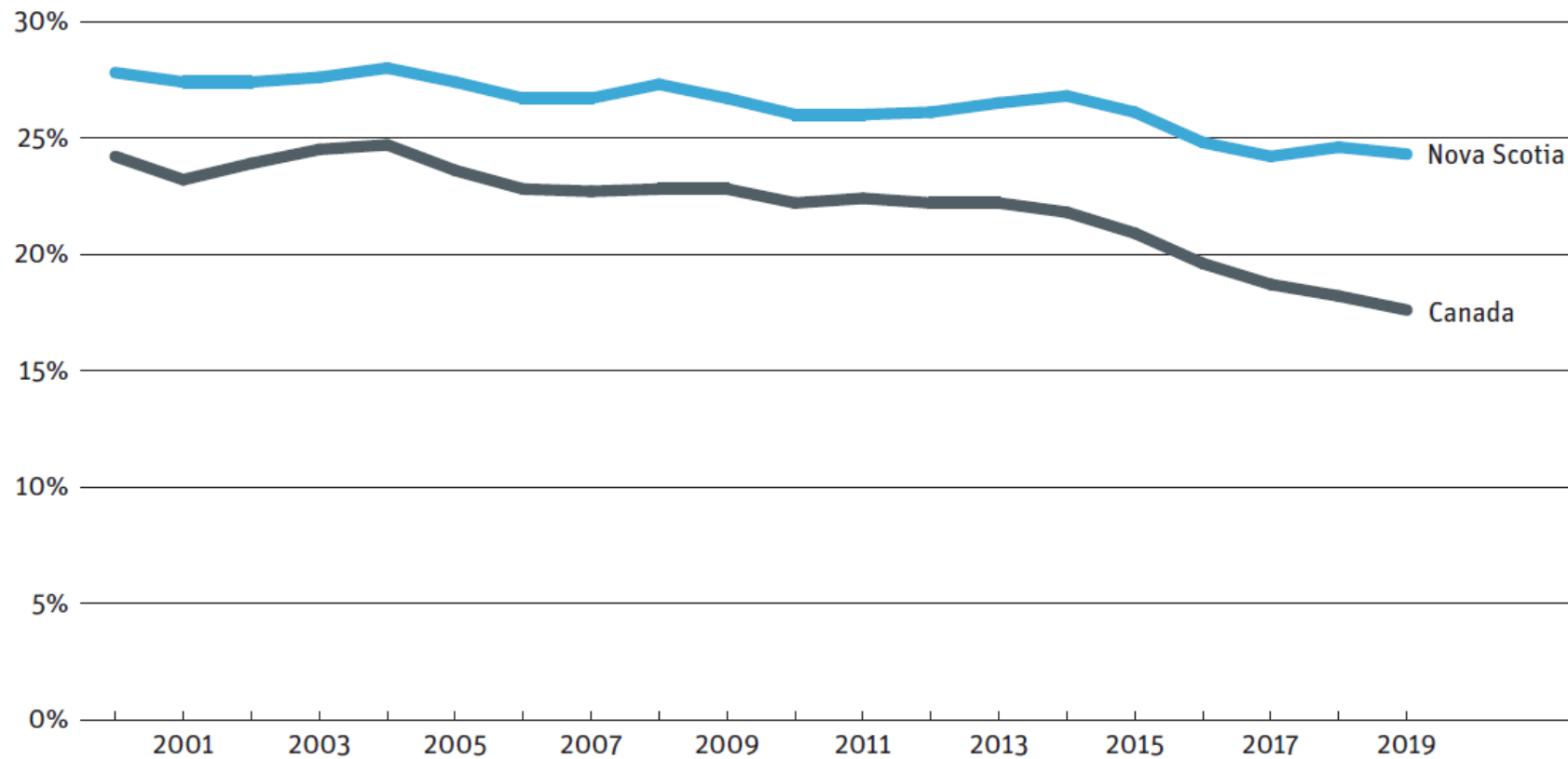
# Poverty and its impacts

# Poverty is:

**Not having enough money to meet basic needs including food, clothing and shelter; economic deprivation; lack of income**

“...the best predictor of early illness, early hospitalizations, longer hospital stays and earlier death. It is a reliable predictor of substance abuse, food insecurity, poor education outcomes, and for some, trouble with the law.”

**FIGURE 2** Nova Scotia, and Canada, Child Poverty Rate, (CFLIM-AT), 2000–2019, Age 0–17



Source: Statistics Canada, T1 Family Files, 2000–2019

Child poverty rate in NS, ~24% (LIM)

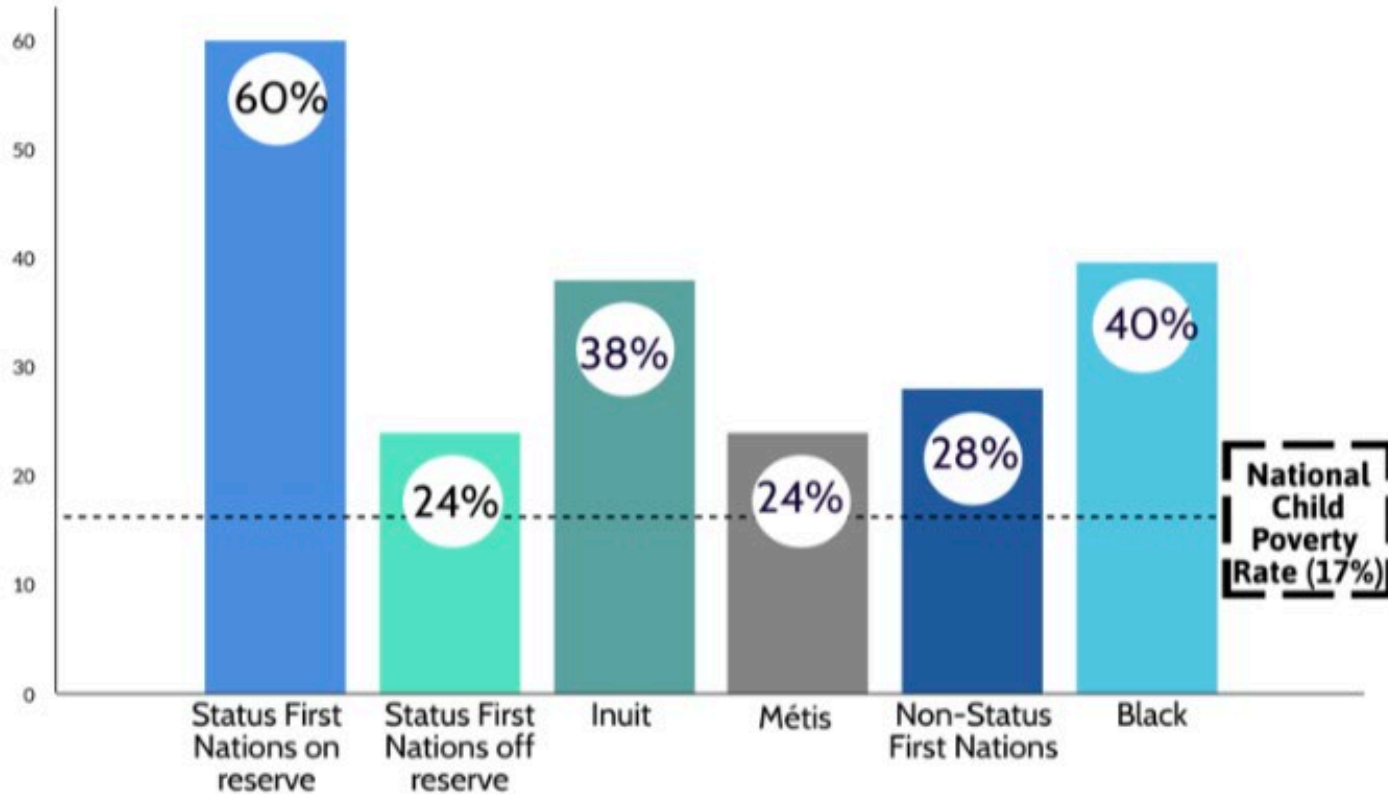
CCPA, NS Child and Family Poverty [Report](#), 2021

Poverty = Market Basket Measure

[First Report of the National Advisory Council on Poverty \(2021\)](#)

% of Canadians living in poverty by demographic group (2018 data)	
Overall	11.0%
Unattached individuals (18 - 64 years)	34.6% (males) 36.7% (females)
Sole-caregiver families	28.6% (female-led) 14.1% (male-led)
Recent immigrants	26.0% (0 to 4 years in Canada) 14.4% (5 to 9 years in Canada)
Indigenous people living off reserve	19.5%
Persons with disabilities	16.6%
Women	10.9%
Children (0 to 17 years)	10.8%
Indigenous people living on reserve	Data not available
LGBTQ2S individuals	Data not available
Racialized communities	Data not available

## Nova Scotia Rates of Child Poverty for Black and Indigenous Children



Racism and colonial practices have caused high poverty rates in Indigenous and Black communities

Frank et al. (2020) <https://policyalternatives.ca/newsroom/updates/child-and-family-poverty-nova-scotia-anti-racism-anti-poverty-statement> in conjunction with the Campaign 2000 press release <https://campaign2000.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/anti-black-racism-media-release-final.pdf> (LIM)

Poverty is a policy choice. We can choose differently.

If sufficient,  
a basic income would dramatically  
reduce poverty by providing an income  
floor for everybody, when they need it

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# Basic Income versus other programs

Income assistance

Living wage

Minimum wage





# Current NS income assistance levels

Household Composition		Standard Household Rate (Monthly)	
Recipient	Dependent Child/Student Family Member	Rent/Own	Board
1	0	\$686	\$608
1	1	\$962	\$627
1	2 or more	\$1,013	\$668
2	0	\$1,342	\$1,008
2	1 or more	\$1,393	\$1,049

"Enhanced", \$950/month disability, 16 – 18 years,  $\geq$  55 years, fleeing abuse  
 "Essentials", \$380/month: homeless

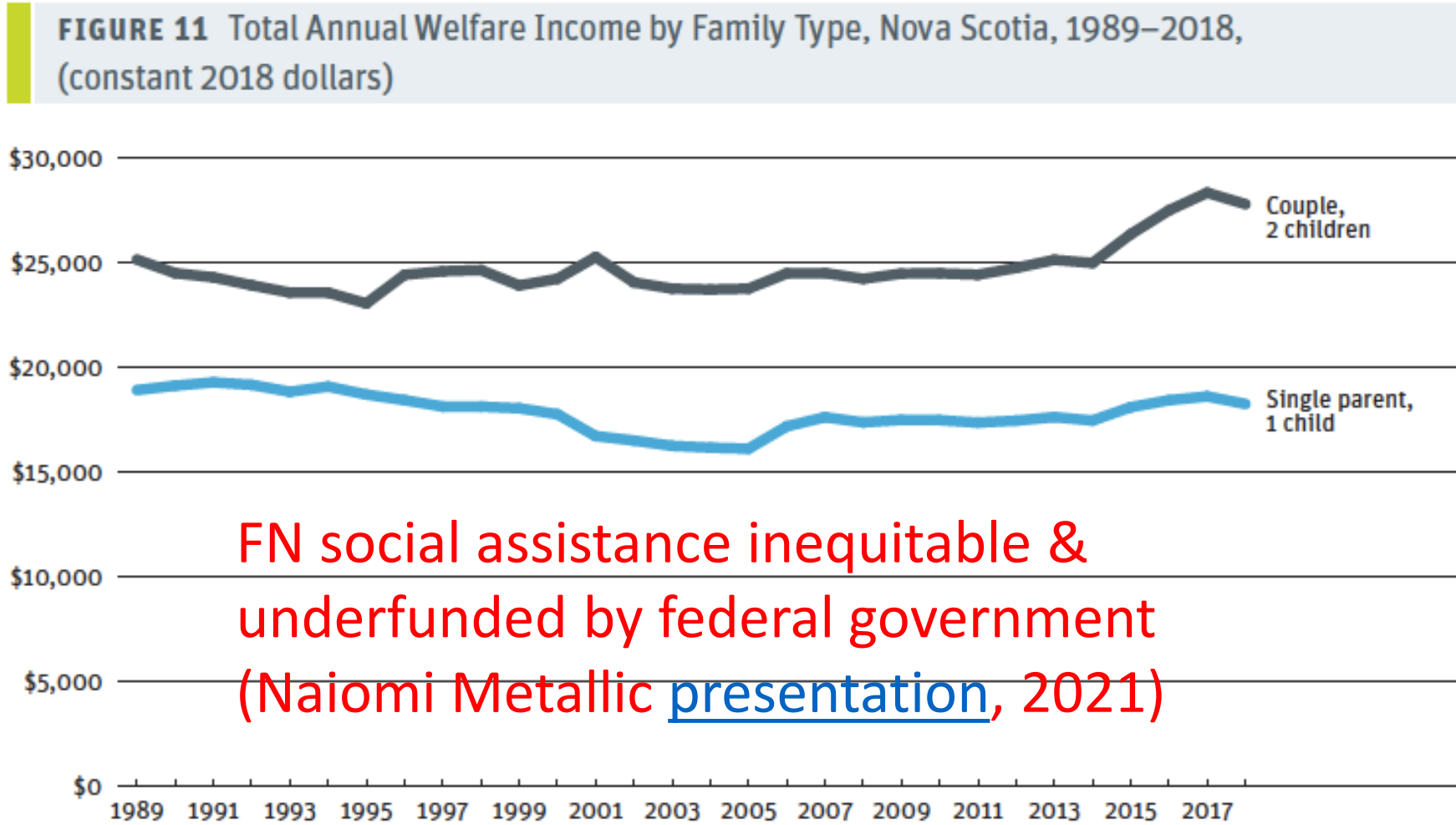
# NS Income assistance (welfare) as a % of MBM

## NOVA SCOTIA

The table below shows how welfare incomes in Nova Scotia for the four household types compared to the three low income thresholds. The LICO and MBM thresholds are for Halifax, the largest city in the province.

	Single person considered employable	Single person with a disability	Single parent, one child	Couple, two children
Total welfare income	\$7,433	\$10,264	\$18,182	\$27,663
<b>MBM</b>				
MBM threshold (Halifax)	\$19,348	\$19,348	\$27,363	\$38,697
Welfare income minus MBM threshold	-\$11,915	-\$9,084	-\$9,181	-\$11,034
Welfare income as % of MBM	38%	53%	66%	71%

Income assistance has not increased substantially since 1989. NS rates not increased in 2022-23 budget



FN social assistance inequitable & underfunded by federal government (Naiomi Metallic [presentation](#), 2021)

Source Welfare in Canada 2017, Maytree

Frank, L. and Fisher, L. (2019). 2019 Report Card on on Child and Family Poverty in Nova Scotia . <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/2019-report-card-child-and-family-poverty-nova-scotia>

# Basic Income versus Income Assistance

## Basic Income

- Sufficient to meet basic needs and live with dignity
- No onerous rules and demeaning oversight
  - e.g., challenging doctor's recommendation for a special diet (~\$18/week)
- For everyone who needs it
  - Only income tested
- Incentivizes work
  - Benefit slowly reduced with paid work

## Income Assistance

- Inadequate to meet basic needs
- Must deplete assets before eligible
- Onerous rules, demeaning oversight
  - i.e., “bureaucratic nonsense” (Kendal Worth, BIG-NS conference [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CcYq48gnLk0&list=PLDsGZX\\_ZQxQ0F-3mprWC60uy7tq5rvpmy&index=5&t=4s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CcYq48gnLk0&list=PLDsGZX_ZQxQ0F-3mprWC60uy7tq5rvpmy&index=5&t=4s))
- Disincentivizes work
  - Clawback rates high

# Basic Income versus Living Wage

## Basic Income

- For everyone who needs it
- Enough to meet basic needs and live with dignity
  - Income tested
- Combines with paid work
  - Benefit slowly reduces with paid work engagement

## Living Wage (supported by HRM)

- Only for the employed
- Optional for employers
- Much better than minimum wage
- Full-time work: income above the poverty line, up to a certain family size
- But, 24% of Canadian jobs are precarious
  - Part-time, limited term

Complementary policies

# Living Wage versus Minimum Wage, NS

- Living Wages
  - Halifax = **\$22.05/hr** (**\$45,864/yr**)
  - Cape Breton Regional Municipality = **\$18.45/hr** (**\$36,712/yr**) (Driscoll & Saulnier, 2021; CCPA)
- Minimum wage
  - **\$12.95/hr** (**26,936/yr**)
  - Does not apply to all workers
  - Women more likely to be low paid

MBM, Family of 4	
Nova Scotia, rural	42,812
Nova Scotia, population under 30,000	43,735
Nova Scotia, population 30,000 to 99,999	44,076
Halifax, Nova Scotia	46,527

# Canada Emergency Response Benefits (CERB)

- CERB was not a basic income
  - Targeted—only provided to those who lost earned income
  - Instituted reactively
  - Many gaps
  - Temporary
  - Intended to keep people home
- But CERB demonstrated
  - Governments could act swiftly and nimbly
  - A simple application and distribution process
  - Eliminated punitive means testing
  - Identified \$2000 a month as a basic income

Evidence  
for a  
Basic  
Income

The research





## Studies Show Basic Income

- Dramatically reduces poverty
- Reduces debilitating and intrusive oversight
- Reduces stigma
- Increases people's sense of well-being and trust in government
- Stimulates urban and rural economies

# Studies Show

Health care costs ↓ 8.5% (Forget, 2011)

Violent & property crimes ↓ 17.5%  
(Calnitsky et al., 2020)

Less oversight → more people find  
permanent work (Verlaat et al., 2020)

Basic income gives people choice,  
provides an escape route from abuse,  
nurtures entrepreneurs & gig workers,  
and values paid and unpaid work  
(Forget, 2018; Ferdosi et al., 2020)



## Final Word

“For a significant number of participants, basic income purportedly proved to be transformational, fundamentally reshaping their living standards as well as their sense of self-worth and hope for a better future.”

(Ontario BIG pilot, Ferdosi et al., 2020)





# Myths about Basic Income

Myth 1:  
People won't  
work.  
**Not true!**


Because the benefit declines gradually  
with paid work, incentivizing work



Research from pilot programs shows  
employment declines slightly

Those who choose to  
stay in school, go back  
to school

Those who choose to  
stay home and care for  
family members



Myth 2: A Basic  
Income is too  
Expensive

# It is expensive...but is it too expensive?

## Gross cost ~\$76 billion

- 75% LIM: \$16,900 per individual; \$24,027 per couple
- +\$500/month disability benefit
- 'phase out' rate: \$0.50, for each dollar of employment income

## Offset by

- ~\$32 billion in current federal spending: OAS, GIS, CCB, tax credits
- ~\$20 billion in provincial & territorial spending (Forget)

**Net cost ~\$24 billion**



Studies	Level	Revenue	Funding	Policies
<a href="#">PBO report, 2020</a>	75% of LIM	No New	Deficit Spending	Existing federal expenditures
Academic Studies	\$20-22,000	No New	Revenue Neutral	Tax Credit Changes, Income redistribution
BICN, 2020 <a href="#">Policy Options Report</a>	\$22,000 \$31,113 (couple)	New	Revenue Neutral	Tax Credit Changes, Tax Reform, New taxes, Income redistribution
<a href="#">UBI Works 2022</a>	\$18,300 75% of LIM	New	Revenue Neutral	New Taxes

## Also consider...

Future cost  
savings

Poverty currently costs Nova Scotia  
\$2 Billion/year

Health, Crime, Lost opportunity, Forgone  
Revenue, Intergenerational costs

[CCPA, 2021 Costs of Poverty](#)

Economic  
Benefits

“The economic activity generated by  
the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) is  
almost twice the size of the CCB  
payments themselves”

[CANCEA, 2019](#)

# Also consider, we make other expensive choices

- Canada Child Benefit: **~\$23.7 billion**
- Defense spending: **~\$28.4 billion**, new money represents year-over-year increases of between 1 - 5%
- Oil and gas subsidies: **~\$34 billion** (provincial & federal governments)
- Health care: **~\$308 billion**
- Net corporate taxes
  - “Between 2000 and 2006, the Chrétien and Martin governments cut the corporate rate from 28% to 21%; by 2012, the Harper government had taken it down to 15%.”
  - “Every 1% cut in corporate taxes costs the federal government ~ \$2 billion in annual revenue.” CCPA, Polacko, 2019

So, again it's a policy choice

We can choose how to  
raise and spend public  
funds



# Possible Advisory Committee Actions

# Encourage HRM to Implement the Recommendations of the Poverty Solutions Report

## **Action Item 1.5**

- Work with all levels of government and community partners to complete a feasibility study looking in detail at how to implement a basic income.

## **Action Item 3.4**

- Complete a pilot study and advocate for a full implementation of a basic income.



Support the HRM in implementing the

Guaranteed Livable Basic Income Resolution  
Passed 15-2 June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022!

Encourage other municipalities to do the same

Read and Sign the Atlantic Canada  
Basic Income NOW consensus  
statement

As a group or individually



## Keep Learning

- BIG-NS
  - <https://www.big-ns.org/>
  - <https://www.facebook.com/basicincomeNS/>
- Coalition Canada Basic Income
  - <https://basicincomecoalition.ca/en/>
- Case for a Basic Income series
  - <https://basicincomecoalition.ca/en/actions/case-for-basic-income/>
- FAQs
  - <https://basicincomecoalition.ca/en/actions/basic-income-week/the-bi-we-want/faq/>
  - <https://basicincomecanada.org/faq/>
- Green Resilience Project
  - <https://greenresilience.ca/>
- Basic Income Canada Network
  - <https://www.basicincomecanada.org/>
- Basic Income Canada Youth Network
  - <https://www.basicincomeyouth.ca/>
- Basic Income Now
  - <https://www.basicincomenow.ca/>
- UBI-Works
  - <https://www.ubiworks.ca/>
- Stanford Basic Income Lab
  - <https://basicincome.stanford.edu/>



Thank you!

Questions?

# Snapshot of the Market Basket Measure



Mom and dad live in **Winnipeg, Manitoba** with their two children.

A family of four living in Winnipeg **in 2017** would have to spend approximately the amounts shown below to meet their basic needs and maintain a modest standard of living over the course of a year.

**Clothing**  
\$1,863



**Transportation**  
\$3,184

**Food**  
\$11,223



**Shelter**  
\$10,425

**Other**  
\$9,862



**Total threshold**  
**\$36,558**

In 2017, a family such as this one that had an annual, disposable income below **\$36,558** would be living in **poverty**.

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0066-01 Market Basket Measure (MBM) thresholds for the reference family by Market Basket Measure region, component and base year.