

CONNECTING THE DOTS

The connection between poverty and Basic Income

What is a Basic Income?

A **basic income** ensures that everyone can meet basic needs and live with dignity regardless of their work status. It is:

- unconditional income from government sent directly to individuals, providing financial security;
- freedom to decide how best spend your own time and money;
- a foundation for health, well-being, and a better life.



A collaboration between Eastern Zone Community Health Boards and Mental Health and Addictions Health Promotion team.

Busting Basic Income Myths

It's money you "didn't earn"

All people have the right to have their basic needs met and to live a dignified life.

It will make people lazy

Basic income improves peoples' mental and physical health. Healthier people are more able to seek employment, retain jobs, and seek education that will expand their future employment opportunities.

It will hurt the economy and there will be staffing shortages

- Basic Income stimulates the economy. To a large extent, a basic income would be spent locally. Because people have more money to spend, the demand for goods and services in a community will increase. Thus, a basic income could become a catalyst for increasing profits, expanding existing businesses, opening new businesses, and increasing available jobs.
- Basic income helps families make employment decisions that are right for them.



It's the same as CERB

CERB was intended to keep people home during a global pandemic and keep covid transmission as low as possible. It was a short-term emergency measure. BI is intended to ensure an equitable economy and standard of living.

It's never been done before

BI is not new. Canada has forms of partial basic income guarantees for seniors and families with children already via Old Age Security Pension (Guaranteed Income Supplement) & the Canada Child Tax Benefit.

Why should we care about Basic Income?

- A BI leads to positive job growth and lower school dropout rates.
- 42% of jobs are at risk of automation over the next 20 years.
- Short-term, part-time jobs are on the rise. A BI would complement a good minimum wage.
- A BI guarantees income for non-working parents and caregivers, thus empowering important traditionally unpaid roles, especially for women.



Cost of Poverty

The financial cost of poverty in Nova Scotia is \$2 billion per year [The Cost of Poverty in the Atlantic Provinces](#)
The human cost is devastating - poorer mental and physical health, fewer early childhood and post-secondary education opportunities, and increased social isolation and stress.

Basic Income gives options

Basic income gives people power to make healthier choices. They can choose not to take that low-paying part-time job with no benefits, providing employers with an incentive to improve work conditions, increase pay, and reverse precarious work trends.



That being said, studies show (de Wispelaere & Forget, 2022) that engagement in paid work does not substantially change when a basic income is introduced. When people choose not to work, they are caring for family members, staying in school or returning to school.

What Can You Do?

- Check out Coalition Canada basic income revenu de base [website](#).
- Check out Basic Income Canada Network [website](#).
- Check out Basic Income NS's [website](#).
- Read and if you agree, sign the Basic Income NOW Atlantic Canada [consensus document](#).



Basic Income has worked in other areas...

Ontario

Government of Ontario Basic Income Pilot Project

The project aimed to create a Basic Income Pilot Project to test a growing view at home and abroad that basic income could provide a new approach to reducing poverty in a sustainable way.

[Click here to learn more.](#)

Basic Income Canada Network Réseau canadien pour le revenu garanti

Articles, Papers, and Reports

This list of resources provides an excellent introduction to basic income. For those new to the concept, these readings will help you and for long-time supporters, this is a great list to revisit when you want to refresh your knowledge.

[Click here to learn more.](#)

Community Poverty Rates by Census Area

Christine Saulnier & Charles Plante. (2021) [The Cost of Poverty in the Atlantic Provinces](#)

★ = in our zone

