

10 Poverty Reduction Priorities for Saint John

Help CHILDREN in poverty to succeed in school

- Invest in demonstrating **Early Learning Centres** that combine pre-school, licensed childcare and family supports into a single accessible program for young children and their families. Locate the demonstration ELCs in low income neighbourhoods / communities and, where possible, in community schools.
- Maintain and continue to develop the **community school program** to enrich in-school and after-school programs for at-risk children.

Improve programs for TEENS-at-risk to enable high school completion and work readiness

- Increase **alternative high school programs** for teens and young adults who have dropped out of school or who are at risk of not graduating.
- Significantly expand **education-to-employment counseling and services** for teens and young adults.
- Expand **student bursary program** to ensure 'cost' is not a barrier to post-secondary education and training.
- Fund **after-school programs** that engage teens in positive learning and recreational activities.

Help SINGLE PARENTS transition from Social Assistance to Employment:

- **Align policies and improve incentives to remove the “welfare wall”.**
Consider these policy initiatives:
 - Provide **health insurance** for all families whose incomes fall below the poverty line.
 - Offer a **“work supplement”** program for families to augment the household income until a living wage has been achieved (example: NB self-sufficiency program)
 - Expand **childcare** services to enable low income families to access licensed programs
 - Increase **wage exemption** amount for SA recipients who work
 - Replace “transitional or interim” SA with **innovative education to employment supports**
- Expand **First Steps program** for pregnant and parenting young women.
- Invest in **“fast track” education-to-employment programs** to enable adults who have low levels of education to achieve living wage employment with participating employers.

Improve Housing Options and Neighbourhoods for low income families

- Help Cities to increase affordable housing options for low income households, revitalize vulnerable neighbourhoods, and achieve an income mix in all neighbourhoods.