

Provincial Election 2014

New Brunswick Common Front for Social Justice Inc.

Questionnaire for Political parties

**Response from
the Green Party of New Brunswick**

April 2014

Provincial Election 2014 Responses from the Green Party

1- Increase revenue - The Green Party aims to ensure everyone has a dignified income

a) Minimum Wage

The Green Party will apply the concept of a livable wage as the basis on which the legal minimum wage is calculated. We will use reliable data on family expenses in our region to determine what constitutes a livable wage in New Brunswick. This will be phased in over four years by raising the minimum wage annually to achieve that livable wage threshold.

We will immediately index the minimum wage to the cost of living.

b) Social Assistance

Immediately raise social assistance rates to match those of Newfoundland and Labrador, the jurisdiction with the highest rates in Atlantic Canada.

From there, set an objective of moving the social assistance rates upwards until they reach the market basket measure established by Statistics Canada. The rate would be adjusted as Statistics Canada adjusts their market basket measure.

Enter into negotiations with Ottawa to combine existing social assistance support into a Basic Income Guarantee to ensure everyone has sufficient income to live with dignity.

Eliminate barriers that keep people from entering the workforce such as clawbacks on earned income below \$20,000 and premature withdrawal of prescription drug benefits.

c) Pay Equity

The Green Party is committed to pay equity and will legislate pay equity in the private sector.

2- Public programs

a) New Brunswick Drug Plan

Individuals earning less than \$25,000 and families of four earning less than \$50,000 would pay no annual premiums for drug coverage, but would pay the required co-payment.

b) Child Care

The Green Party will establish a universally accessible child care system built around the Early Childhood Education Centres located in school buildings as piloted by the McCain Foundation and the Province of New Brunswick.

The wages for child care workers will be commensurate with their training and responsibility.

c) Home Care

The Green Party would establish standards of care and remuneration for Home Care workers.

d) Social Housing and Homelessness

The Green Party is committed to tackling homelessness with the "Housing First" model to provide housing and support for those without housing.

We will develop a comprehensive social housing program which includes cooperative and non-profit community housing designed to high standards of energy efficiency to minimize energy costs. The waiting lists for social housing is unacceptably long, so we will increase the supply of social housing.

e) Literacy

The Green Party would institute a family centred literacy program in our elementary schools, modelled on the Kenan Family Literacy project successfully used in the United States, and piloted in selected Saint John neighbourhoods. It would consist of four essential elements.

1. Adult Education
2. Children's Education
3. Parent and Child Together at School (Interactive Literacy Activities)
4. Parent Time at School

f) People with Disability

The Green Party would fully implement the Employment Action Plan for Persons with a Disability in New Brunswick.

Where disabilities are the result of chronic disease, the Green Party's plan to transform primary health care from solitary physicians backstopped by hospital waiting rooms to a network of community health centres housing collaborative care or family practice teams will provide the institutional capacity to help people manage their chronic disease so they are capable of maintaining employment. About 60% of people with chronic disease don't believe they have a way of self-management. Collaborative care practices will ensure they can.

3. A Fair Tax System

The Green Party will institute a fourth tax bracket on income over \$120,000 to increase the progressivity of our tax system and restore income tax rates to the levels of 2008.

We will raise the corporate tax to maintain equivalence with corporate taxation in Nova Scotia.

We will reform the HST so that it provides the flexibility to raise revenue from increases on luxury goods and services while maintaining or lowering the HST on necessities.

