

Employment and Income Assistance

Poverty in the province is a major cause of homelessness and housing insecurity, and low pay and welfare support compared to the rest of Canada also contribute to the high number of Nova Scotians living with core housing need. Nova Scotia has had the lowest welfare income in the country relative to poverty thresholds, for both single persons deemed employable and households comprised of one parent and one child.⁷⁸ The additional \$100 a month in the most recent budget is a start, but leaves a significant gap. The gap remains between \$14,000 to \$18,000 per year.

The right to decent work opportunities and conditions is recognized internationally as integral to sustainable development and well-being. The notion of decent work for all is built into the United Nation’s sustainable development goals with ambitions to “achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value” by 2030.

In Canada, over two million people work in precarious and temporary employment, a figure exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the wake of the pandemic and detrimental effects on millions of workers around the globe, organizations have called for a new social contract that emphasizes decent work as a cornerstone for economic recovery and building a new global economy.¹⁴⁹ The notion of decent work and well-being must be central and governments have a significant role to play in ensuring workers have decent wages, conditions, standards, and supports.

