



Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Budget 2019 Pre-Budget Submission

The Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Social Workers (NLASW) is the regulatory body and professional association for over 1500 social workers in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL). The vision is Excellence in Social Work.

As an organization, NLASW is committed to advancing health and social policy through a social justice framework. The NLASW believes that health and social policy development must reflect the social determinants of health framework. This includes policies to address poverty, inadequate wages, and the growing economic gap; investments in affordable and sustainable housing; programs/policies to address food insecurity; support for early intervention and prevention programs; investments in early childhood learning and childcare; and the creation of conditions to promote social inclusion.

In our submission for 2019, we continue to advocate for a provincial budget that places an emphasis on the social determinants of health with the goal of enhancing health outcomes for individuals, families and communities, and reducing inequities in access to services, programs and supports. Links to full policy submissions on these recommendations have been included in the document and can be assessed on the NLASW website at <http://www.nlasw.ca/social-work-in-nl/health-social-policy>.

Mental Health

- Integration of social workers in the K-12 education system.
- Enhance services to support those with addictions and problematic substance abuse including cannabis.
- Increase access to mental health services in correctional facilities.

http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/social_workers_in_education_system.pdf

[http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Enhancing Mental Health and Addictions Services.pdf](http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Enhancing_Mental_Health_and_Addictions_Services.pdf)

Seniors

- Increase in housing options in the community for seniors with complex mental health needs to ensure appropriate and supportive living arrangements.
- Greater access to more affordable assisted living for seniors.
- Increase in the number of hours seniors can access home support services.
- Improved access to convalescent services and respite care.
- Heightened policy initiatives to assist seniors who are living, or at risk of living in poverty, regardless of the setting in which they live (i.e., enhanced transportation services, elimination or reduction in dispensing fees for prescriptions that are filled monthly; enhanced dental and vision care coverage, and greater access to specialized equipment).
- Increase to the allowance seniors receive in long term care.
- Continue to increase capacity for portable subsidies for personal care home for seniors and protective care residencies.

[http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Long Term Care and Community Support Services Strategy.pdf](http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Long_Term_Care_and_Community_Support_Services_Strategy.pdf)

Poverty Reduction

- Annual increases to the minimum wage that are indexed to inflation or tied to the average wage increase for the province, whichever is higher.
- Monitor and increase income support rates to ensure this program adequately meets the needs of those requiring support.
- Investments in social programming and safe and affordable housing for those with complex mental health needs.
- Investments in programs and services to address the depth of poverty and those living in extreme low poverty.
- Ensure that poverty reduction strategies are integrated with health care reform.
- Continued support for community-based organizations who are working with populations who experience poverty.
- Investments to address the rising economic gap between the rich and the poor.

[http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Minimum Wage Consultation.pdf](http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Minimum_Wage_Consultation.pdf)

<http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Poverty%20Reduction%20Strategy%202015%20Consultation%20Written%20Submission.pdf>

http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Poverty_Reduction_Strategy_2010.pdf

Children and Families

- Eliminate the claw back of child support payments from income assistance benefits.
- Continue to increase access to regulated, accessible and high-quality child care; infant to pre-teen.
- Ensure that issues such as capped caseloads, appropriate supervision ratios, access to continuing professional education and human resource planning remain a priority in the delivery of child protection and in care services.

<https://nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Letter%20to%20Minister%20Hawkins%20%28child%20support%20and%20income%20assistance%29.pdf>

http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Adoption_Consultation.pdf

http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/CYFS_10-Year_Child_Care_Strategy.pdf

http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Children_and_Youth_Care_and_Protection_Act_2016_Review_%28Final%29.pdf

Health Care Service Delivery

- Improved access to primary health care services that includes evenings and weekends.
- Ensure any health care reform incorporates the social determinants of health.
- Advance primary health care initiatives that integrates interdisciplinary teams including social work.

http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Social_Determinants_of_Health.pdf