

Thematic Brief

Basic Needs

The Basic Needs theme refers to food security, transportation, housing and access to health and social services. You may choose to answer one or more of the questions. You may answer directly in the questionnaire and use as many pages as you need. You may also submit a separate document on the topic.

Once the questionnaire is completed, please send it to esic-sies@gnb.ca or the following mailing address:

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P. O. Box 6000
Fredericton, NB
E3B 5H1
Canada

As you are reviewing the questions related to Basic Needs, we encourage you to consider:

1. The Spirit of the Overcoming Poverty Together Plan
 - At the heart of Overcoming Poverty Together is the desire for every New Brunswicker to be included and to have the opportunity to thrive. True economic and social inclusion cannot be reached without addressing the needs of the most vulnerable and those who are at risk of falling into poverty.
2. That economic and social inclusion means the ability of a person to participate fully in the economic and social activities of society.
3. That poverty means the condition of a person who lacks the resources, means, opportunities and power necessary to acquire and maintain economic and self-sufficiency or to integrate into and participate in society.
4. The realities experienced by people living in poverty or at risk of falling into poverty.
5. The different levels of intervention (local, provincial and national) that impact poverty and inclusion.
6. The cross-sectoral approach necessary for defining the problems and identifying solutions.

The information that you submit will be disseminated and analyzed as part of the *Overcoming Poverty Together* plan renewal. Participation in the process is voluntary and the information received during the public engagement process is designed to be collected and reported on anonymously. You are not required to provide your identifying information to submit a brief,

but we welcome submissions with names and contact information that will allow us to reach out for additional thoughts and collaboration. We will make every effort to preserve anonymity and dignity throughout this process.

Thank you for seizing the opportunity to be part of renewing the plan to overcome poverty and increase economic and social inclusion in New Brunswick.

The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation

Additional Context Related to Basic Needs in New Brunswick

Food Security

Health Canada defines food insecurity as “*the inability to acquire or consume an adequate diet quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so.*” Household food insecurity is often linked with the household's financial ability to access adequate food.

Monitoring the prevalence of food insecurity was identified as a key indicator in the *2018 Opportunity For All – Canada’s First Poverty Reduction Strategy*.¹ The Household Food Security Survey Model (HFSSM) is a tool used to measure food insecurity in Canada. As part of that ongoing monitoring, Statistics Canada released a report on Food Insecurity among Canadian Families in November 2023. The report was based on statistics gathered from the 2021 Canadian Income Survey. More information about the report and the report itself can be found at the following link: [Food insecurity among Canadian families \(statcan.gc.ca\)](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/98-646-x/2023001/article/00001-eng.htm).

In 2022, 18% of Canadian families reported that they had experienced some level of food insecurity over the past 12 months. Levels of food insecurity vary across the country from a low of 14% in Quebec to a high of 23% in Newfoundland and Labrador and 22% in New Brunswick. Recent trends indicate that food insecurity is on the rise.

Some groups of people are at a significantly higher risk of experiencing food insecurity. Food insecurity is an important determinant of an individual’s health.

Transportation

Transportation access is critical to poverty reduction, particularly in rural New Brunswick. It is imperative for New Brunswickers to have access to medical care, food, family support, banking services and vital connections to their communities.

Housing

New Brunswick is facing a housing crisis unlike anything we’ve ever seen before in this province. We are not alone. Canadians across the country are struggling with a tight housing market impacted by a number of factors.

The human right to adequate housing is recognized under international law, appearing as early as 1948 in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Canada committed to this in 1976 when its signature on the *International Covenant on the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* came into force. The 2019 *National Housing Strategy Act* reacknowledged access to housing as a human right for everyone in Canada. Housing is the responsibility of all levels of government; while provincial, territorial, and municipal governments across the country have jurisdiction over many housing and homelessness policies, laws and programs, the federal government has a leadership role to fill.

¹ <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/canada/employment-social-development/programs/poverty-reduction/reports/poverty-reduction-strategy-report-EN.pdf>

The *National Housing Strategy Act* states that those in greatest need of housing security are “members of vulnerable groups, persons with lived experience of housing need and persons with lived experience of homelessness”. This includes Indigenous people, adults and children fleeing domestic violence, seniors, people who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, people with disabilities, people with disabilities related to mental health or addiction, veterans, young adults, members of racialized groups, and recent immigrants and refugees.

When looking at statistics relating to housing, we hear the term “core housing need” which refers to the ability of a household to find affordable, suitable, and adequate housing in their community. Statistically, renters are more likely to be in core housing need than owners. Statistics Canada data from 2021 shows that one in ten were in core housing need across Canada.²

Health and Social Services

According to the World Health Organization, “everyone should have access to the health services they need, when and where they need them, without suffering financial hardship”.³

The Province of New Brunswick began a public consultation on healthcare in 2021 and subsequently issued the *NB Health Plan*, a five-year road map for evolving health care in New Brunswick. The *Plan* can be found in full at the following link:

www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/Stabilizing-health-care.pdf Within the plan is an acknowledgement that the current system is in crisis and in need of stabilization.

A number of stakeholders, including the New Brunswick Medical Society, have emphasized that increasing access to primary care and addressing the social determinants of health, which include housing and income, are crucial to improving the healthcare system overall.⁴

The New Brunswick Health Council conducts regular surveys of the population. A recent 2022 survey contained quality of life indicators related to health status where 34.8 % of respondents perceived their health as very good or excellent and 40.8% perceived their mental health as very good or excellent.

Many respondents identified chronic mental health conditions: 25.6 % reported anxiety, 20.5% reported depression and 4.6% reported mood disorders. Of the respondents identifying mental health and substance use issues, 24.3% identified a need to talk to a health professional and 34.6% perceived that their need had not been met. Of those with an unmet need, 63.9% reported that the wait time was too long and 45.6% reported that they did not know how or where to get help.⁵

² <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2022056-eng.htm>

³ <https://apps.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/fundamental-human-right/en/index.html>

⁴ <https://www.nbms.nb.ca/addressing-the-challenges-in-new-brunswicks-healthcare-system/>

⁵ <https://nbhc.ca/table/needs-new-brunswickers?cuts=NB&sid=5284&gid=8207&nid>

Questions Relating to Basic Needs

Food Security

1. In your opinion what are the difficulties experienced by people living in poverty as they relate to food insecurity?
2. What are the courses of action or potential solutions related to food security that could improve the living conditions of people living in poverty?
3. What other points could you make in relation to food security among people living in poverty?
4. In your opinion, do you think that certain population groups face greater barriers when it comes to food security? And if so, which groups? And what solutions would you consider to reduce the barriers?

Transportation

5. In your opinion, why is transportation important to reducing poverty and increasing economic and social inclusion?
6. What are the courses of action or solutions related to transportation that could improve the living conditions of people living in poverty and increase their rates of economic and social inclusion?
7. What other points could you make in connection with transportation as it relates to supporting people living in poverty by increasing opportunities for economic and social inclusion?
8. In your opinion, do you think that certain population groups face greater barriers when it comes to transportation? And if so, which groups? And what solutions would you consider to reduce the barriers?

Housing

9. In your opinion, what are the difficulties experienced by people living in poverty or those at risk of falling into poverty in relation to the issue of housing?
10. What are the courses of action or solutions related to housing that could improve the living conditions of people living in poverty or at risk of falling into poverty?
11. What other points could you make in connection with housing as it relates to supporting people living in poverty or at risk of falling into poverty?
12. In your opinion, do you think that certain population groups face greater barriers when it comes to food security? And if so, which groups? And what solutions would you consider to reduce the barriers?

Health and Social Services

13. In your opinion, what are the difficulties experienced by people living in poverty in relation to access to health and social services?
14. What are the courses of action or solutions related to health and social services that could improve the living conditions of people living in poverty?

15. What other points could you make in connection with health and social services as it relates to supporting people living in poverty?
16. In your opinion, do you think certain populations face greater barriers when it comes to accessing health and social services? And if so, which groups? And what solutions would you consider to reduce the barriers?