

# PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATION RECOMMENDATIONS 2023-2024



**PREPARED BY THE**  
New Brunswick Association of Social Workers

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## **Pre-Budget Consultation Recommendations 2023-2024** *From the New Brunswick Association of Social Workers*

The New Brunswick Association of Social Workers (NBASW) is an organization representing more than 2,250 social workers across New Brunswick. The NBASW works to promote excellence in social work practice and to protect the public.

Put plainly, social workers are regulated health professionals who respond to the needs of individuals, families, groups, and communities across New Brunswick. Social workers work from a person-in-environment perspective and understand individual challenges and experiences within the broader social context. Social workers understand that people are influenced by their environments just as they influence their environments. They look at how family, community, legal, social, spiritual, and economic influences impact well-being and work to address any barriers that may exist. Social workers identify people who need help and then work with those people to improve their situations.

Social workers work every day to support the well-being of all individuals to protect the most vulnerable in our society. They provide vital services to the citizens of New Brunswick, working in a variety of fields such as healthcare, mental health and addictions, child and adult protection, long-term care, education, non-profit organizations, policy, and more. To ensure a better, more equitable society where every citizen can reach their full potential, social workers are hopeful that New Brunswick's 2023-2024 provincial budget will reflect the needs of its citizens and will include the key priorities highlighted below.



## 1. How do we build capacity to increase the supply of housing in response to strong population growth?

The COVID-19 pandemic brought along with it a lot of changes, including an increase in New Brunswick's population. According to Statistics Canada, New Brunswick's population grew by nearly 25,000 people in 2022 alone<sup>1</sup>. New Brunswickers continue to navigate the ever-rising cost of living and continue to see skyrocketing housing and rental prices. It is critical that the provincial budget addresses this need and allocates the appropriate funds to support housing initiatives along the housing continuum. The government's commitment to invest in public housing and build and renovate public housing across New Brunswick is a positive step in the right direction<sup>2</sup>. But, for New Brunswickers to have access to safe and affordable housing, the government's involvement can't stop there.

Housing is so much more than only a roof over our heads, it's foundational to meet our needs and to be able to participate fully and meaningfully in society. Only once people's fundamental needs are met and stability is attained can people begin to reach their full potential. These foundational needs, such as access to stable employment, nutritious food, secure housing, quality health services, and more, are all social determinants of health; the non-medical factors that influence health outcomes and have an important influence on health inequities. Supporting New Brunswickers to attain and retain safe and affordable housing, would enhance population health outcomes.

Using data from the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System and the By Names List, the Human Development Council finds that there are 560 unhoused people living outside, in New Brunswick's three major cities<sup>3</sup>. Recognizing that this may not represent the full scope of individuals who are unhoused, housing remains a key issue in the province.

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada (2022). Population estimates, quarterly. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1710000901>

<sup>2</sup> Government of New Brunswick (2022). Investment of \$102.2 million for construction and renovation of public housing units. Retrieved from [https://myid.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/social\\_development/news/news\\_release.2022.10.0579.html](https://myid.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/social_development/news/news_release.2022.10.0579.html)

<sup>3</sup> Renic, K. & Sturgeon, N. (2022). New Brunswick's homelessness crisis and how it's reaching a boiling point. *Global News*. Retrieved from <https://globalnews.ca/news/9328885/new-brunswick-homelessness-crisis-part-one-boiling-point/>

The government should recognize the economic and humanitarian benefits of Housing First policies, as it is found that the cost associated with housing people is far less than the costs associated with leaving people unhoused. Housing First policies include immediate access to permanent housing, in addition to individualized supports to help people achieve well-being, engage in meaningful activities, and more<sup>4</sup>. Housing First policies save money by reducing the need for other government and non-profit services and it has been found that every \$10 invested in Housing First saved an average of \$21.72 in costs, including healthcare, social service, and justice system costs<sup>5</sup>.

For those who are housed, housing affordability remains a concern. Affordable housing is less than 30% of a household's before-tax income, according to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation<sup>6</sup>. In addition to increasing the supply of housing, the government should focus on increasing accessibility to affordable housing.

New Brunswick tenants remain vulnerable to rent increases and housing instability. While the government has introduced certain amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act, including greater time periods for being notified of rent increases, the changes do not contain a cap on rent increases and do not provide adequate protection for New Brunswick tenants. New Brunswick continues to be one of the few provinces in Canada without rent caps, with the previously established 2022 rent cap of 3.8% having expired and the end of the year<sup>7</sup>. The province must immediately implement rent control legislation, ensuring that policies are in place to adequately protect renters. If this is not done promptly, the province will continue to see a rise in poverty, homelessness, reliance on social assistance programs, and the negative health outcomes of living in poverty.

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<sup>4</sup> Davidson, S. (2021). Homelessness in Fredericton New Brunswick: debunking myths and working towards solutions. *Journal Of New Brunswick Studies / Revue d'études Sur Le Nouveau-Brunswick*, 13(2), 3-7. Retrieved from <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/JNBS/article/view/32607/1882527844>

<sup>5</sup> Mental Health Commission of Canada (2018). National final report. Retrieved from [https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/mhcc\\_at\\_home\\_report\\_national\\_cross-site\\_eng\\_2\\_0.pdf](https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/mhcc_at_home_report_national_cross-site_eng_2_0.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2018). About affordable housing in Canada. Retrieved from <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/professionals/industry-innovation-and-leadership/industry-expertise/affordable-housing/about-affordable-housing/affordable-housing-in-canada>

<sup>7</sup> Budhathoki, A. (2022). Mock funeral held to mourn death of rental control in New Brunswick. Retrieved from <https://www.commediaportal.ca/en/media/mock-funeral-held-mourn-death-rental-control-new-brunswick>

In addition to a rent cap, tenants would benefit from innovative laws and policies that increase the availability of affordable housing, such as inclusionary zoning<sup>8</sup> laws, restricting short-term rentals<sup>9</sup>, and more. While New Brunswick pushes for increased housing, the need for that housing to be affordable and accessible to New Brunswickers cannot be lost.

## 2. What supports need to be put in place to help our vulnerable population deal with the rising cost of living?

Canadians have continued to see an increase in the cost of goods and services and New Brunswickers have experienced no differently. The 2022 Consumer Price Index (CPI) review found a 6.8% rise in 2022, which followed a 3.4% increase in 2021. As noted in the review, the 2022 increase marked a 40-year high, and “Canadians felt the impact of inflation, as prices for day-to-day basics such as transportation (+10.6%), food (+8.9%) and shelter (+6.9%) rose the most”<sup>10</sup>. In September 2022 the food inflation rate reached a whopping 11.4%<sup>11</sup>, the highest it’s been since 1981<sup>12</sup>. To promote resiliency in society, citizens must have access to the vital services they need, when they need them. The government has an important role to play in helping citizens, especially vulnerable populations, deal with the rising cost of living.

The focus on reducing poverty and expanding access to safe, affordable housing, along with other systems that allow people to thrive and fully engage as citizens, including access to food,

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<sup>8</sup> Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2017). Inclusionary zoning: domestic and international practices. Retrieved from [https://assets.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/sf/project/archive/publications/research\\_insight/69138\\_w.pdf?rev=00a59cf2-cad5-4425-b359-f1c0ad523008](https://assets.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/sf/project/archive/publications/research_insight/69138_w.pdf?rev=00a59cf2-cad5-4425-b359-f1c0ad523008)

<sup>9</sup> Cline, J. (2021). Doubling rent and denying dignity: the affordable housing crisis in New Brunswick. *International Human Rights Internship Program, Working Paper Series*. 10(1). Retrieved from [https://www.mcgill.ca/humanrights/files/humanrights/cline\\_johanna\\_-\\_doubling\\_rent\\_and\\_denying\\_dignity\\_the\\_affordable\\_housing\\_crisis\\_in\\_new\\_brunswick.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/humanrights/files/humanrights/cline_johanna_-_doubling_rent_and_denying_dignity_the_affordable_housing_crisis_in_new_brunswick.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada (2023). Consumer price index: annual review, 2022. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/230117/dq230117b-eng.htm>

<sup>11</sup> Statistics Canada (2022). Price growth for food purchased from stores exceeds headline inflation for ten consecutive months. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/221019/cg-a005-eng.htm>

<sup>12</sup> Yun, T. (2022). Are we headed for a recession? Here are the signs to look out for. *CTV News*. Retrieved from <https://www.ctvnews.ca/business/are-we-headed-for-a-recession-here-are-the-signs-to-look-out-for-1.6150172>

transportation, housing, and affordable childcare, is vital. With New Brunswick having agreed to implement the \$10-a-day childcare plan, the provincial government must do its part to ensure there are sufficient licensed childcare facilities in the province to meet the demand for services, while also expanding eligibility criteria for daycare assistance programs and providing employment supports and skills training opportunities to parents who are looking to enter or reenter the workforce.

As a result of low incomes and increasing food prices and housing costs, New Brunswickers are increasingly forced to rely on food banks and other community supports to meet their basic needs. The budget should include sustained funding for poverty reduction programs and for supporting and sustaining grassroots initiatives at a community level. The budget also must adequately support the provision of social services, recognizing that social determinants of health account for 30-55% of health outcomes and can be more important than health care or lifestyle choices in influencing health<sup>13</sup> and reflecting the reality that social services are preventative measures that ultimately reduce the cost of healthcare services<sup>14</sup>.

Last year the provincial government loosened, but did not remove, the social assistance Household Income Policy. The changes made to the policy allow roommates, who are not in a romantic relationship, to be assessed separately for social assistance eligibility. While this change represents a positive step in the right direction, it does not apply to New Brunswickers living with a significant other, who will still be considered an economic unit<sup>15</sup>. This continues to present a significant barrier for many marginalized and vulnerable New Brunswickers, such as those living with a disability who are at risk of losing their disability benefits if they should move in with their partner<sup>16</sup>.

To best support vulnerable New Brunswickers and to allow them to live well and with dignity, the government must continue to reform restrictive policies such as the Household Income Policy. Reforming the Household Income Policy is also an important change when considering the

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<sup>13</sup> World Health Organization (n.d.). Social determinants of health. Retrieved from [https://www.who.int/health-topics/social-determinants-of-health#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/social-determinants-of-health#tab=tab_1)

<sup>14</sup> Dutton, D., Forest, P.-G., Kneebone, R. & Zwicker, J. (2018). Effect of provincial spending on social services and health care on health outcomes in Canada: an observational longitudinal study. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. 190(3), 66-71. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5780265/pdf/1900e66.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Poitras, J. (2022). Roommates in New Brunswick can now apply for social assistance separately. *CBC News*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/new-brunswick-social-assistance-income-roommates-1.6372906>

<sup>16</sup> Balintec, V. (2021). Woman with disabilities wants change to province's household income policy. *CBC News*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/household-income-policy-stops-couple-from-living-together-1.6105746>

ongoing housing affordability and supply crisis. Consideration should also be given to other opportunities for social assistance reform, such as increasing social assistance rates to a livable amount and increasing income exemptions. Increasing support for working New Brunswickers is an important component of reducing poverty and improving labour market participation, particularly during a time when the labour market is still tight, unemployment rates are returning to near historical lows and there is a widespread labour shortage<sup>17</sup>.

Recognizing the ever-increasing cost of living, modifications also must be made to the current foster care model to ensure that it provides proper incentives and support for foster families while protecting and meeting the needs of New Brunswick's children in care. Foster parents and group home staff play a vital role with child welfare clients, interacting with children when they are struggling the most.

Social workers in child welfare are often involved with foster parents and/or group home staff. Unfortunately, these groups are struggling with being overburdened and underappreciated. Compensation for group home staff must be increased to recruit and maintain skilled workers in these roles. Often, group home employees leave their positions for other, better-paid roles in the community. Prompt action must be taken to retain these necessary individuals.

Similarly, all foster families must receive fair and adequate payment for the vital services they provide. A great deal is expected from foster parents. They are expected to provide unfettered attention to high-needs children while being ever-flexible and dedicated. Recognizing the dire need for foster parents in New Brunswick, it must be recognized that properly compensating foster parents will also make the role more appealing to others. With a rigorous screening and approval process already in place for foster parents, only high-quality individuals are approved as provincial foster parents. The cost of living has increased and foster parents deserve to earn an honest wage for the work that they do.

The government must extend the professional care model of fostering as an approach to all provincial foster homes. All approved placement families and facilities must receive proper compensation, as creating a two-tiered system is problematic both in the short and long term. The government must ensure that placement resources are improved. Without access to required services, social workers are faced with impossible challenges. The recruitment and retention of social workers in the area of child welfare cannot improve without improving the resources for children in care.

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<sup>17</sup> Bank of Canada (2023). Monetary policy report January 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/mpr-2023-01-25.pdf>

### 3. What opportunities are there to modernize our health care system so that it is accessible, responsive, and meets the needs of a growing population?

Mental health is a vital component of the health care system and it's recognized that mental health conditions result in significant levels of impaired functioning and increase the risk of disability and premature mortality from other diseases<sup>18</sup>. Social workers have always played a vital role in the healthcare systems, supporting people throughout programs and hospital units and providing vital mental health and addiction services across New Brunswick. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, health care needs have continued to skyrocket and the demand for social work services is greater than ever before.

Over the past few decades, the need for social workers has expanded and, based on the pre-pandemic demand for service, the Department of Health has projected that by 2030 there will be a shortage of 272 social workers in New Brunswick<sup>19</sup>, resulting in a tangible gap in services. With population needs rising since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been increasing demand for social work services across sectors. With widespread social work vacancies currently being seen across the province, we believe the social work shortage is already here.

To address the current and future social work shortage in the province, the NBASW is leading the development of a Social Work Recruitment and Retention Strategy. The Strategy's 5-year Action Plan is being developed by a Steering Committee which includes representatives from various government departments<sup>20</sup>, health authorities, schools of social work, colleges, unions, and more. With the Action Plan to be released in March 2023, the NBASW calls upon the provincial government to identify social work recruitment and retention in the provincial budget and commit to providing the necessary funding and support needed to maximize the success of the Strategy.

The Strategy also aligns with the Department of Health's (DOH's) *Inter-Departmental Addiction and Mental Health Action Plan*, which includes priorities in areas of resource enhancement, staffing increases, education, prevention, treatment, and more. Social workers play a role in and

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<sup>18</sup> World Health Organization (2013). Investing in mental health: evidence for action. Retrieved from [https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/87232/9789241564618\\_eng.pdf?sequence=1](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/87232/9789241564618_eng.pdf?sequence=1)

<sup>19</sup> New Brunswick Department of Health (February 23, 2022). HHR supply & demand model: methodology & results for social workers [PowerPoint Presentation].

<sup>20</sup> Including the Departments of Health, Social Development, Education and Early Childhood Development, Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour, and the Finance and Treasury Board.



are vital to each of these priorities, making social work recruitment and retention a fundamental component to the success of the provincial plan.

To ensure the Recruitment and Retention Strategy is effective in meeting the needs of social workers, the NBASW surveyed its members<sup>21</sup> in the Spring of 2022 and found that most respondents have experienced unmanageable stress over the past year, with almost half nearing or experiencing burnout. Respondents identify stress and burnout as key issues that may lead them to consider leaving their jobs, something that would result in an even greater social work shortage if not immediately addressed.

One of the many actions that will be taken as part of the Social Work Recruitment and Retention Strategy is the introduction of a social work paraprofession, being referred to as Social Work Technicians. Introducing these paraprofessionals into systems is one of the solutions to alleviate some of the pressures currently placed on social workers, as Social Work Technicians would take on some of the transferrable (non-social work specific) tasks currently assigned to social workers and would work with clients to provide services often contracted to unregulated third-party individuals, allowing social workers to focus on their responsibilities as professionals.

Other Canadian jurisdictions, such as Ontario, already have this regulated paraprofession working in communities and alongside social workers. The New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) adapted the educational curriculum from Ontario's Humber College, in the development of the two-year Social Service Community Worker (SSCW) program, which will be graduating its first cohort in June 2023. The Collège Communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick (CCNB) is also working on developing a French SSCW program to offer in its' colleges. Social Work Technicians will have completed their post-secondary education from an approved college program, such as the two-year NBCC SSCW program.

Another key action included in the Strategy is the development of a new provincial school of social work. Becoming a Registered Social Worker requires a Bachelor or Master of Social Work degree. Research shows that students who complete their post-secondary education in New Brunswick are more likely to stay in New Brunswick after graduating<sup>22</sup>. To maximize the number of Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) graduates in the province, University of New Brunswick - Saint John (UNB-SJ) is currently in the process of developing a new provincial school of social work.

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<sup>21</sup> New Brunswick Association of Social Workers (2022). Report: results from the social work recruitment and retention strategy member survey. Retrieved from [23389-002-NBASW-Member-Survey-Report-EN-11-14-22-FINAL-1.pdf \(nbasw-atsnb.ca\)](https://www.nbasw-atsnb.ca/23389-002-NBASW-Member-Survey-Report-EN-11-14-22-FINAL-1.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> New Brunswick Institute for Research, Data and Training (2023). How many New Brunswickers are leaving after graduation? NB-IRDT's 2019-2020 update on graduate retention. Retrieved from <https://www.unb.ca/nbirdt/datanb/2023/01/how-many-new-brunswickers-are-leaving-after-graduation-nb-irdts-2019-2020-update-on-graduate-retention.php>



Developing the UNB-SJ school of social work is an important step, as it will increase provincial BSW seats, and there is a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in place with NBCC confirming the college-to-BSW bridging program that will take place. The MOU between NBCC and UNB-SJ promises the development of a streamlined pathway from the SSCW program to the BSW program, recognizing completion of the SSCW program as equivalent to the first two years of a BSW degree. UNB-SJ has committed to reserving half of the BSW seats for NBCC SSCW program graduates and CCNB and Université de Moncton (UdeM) are also working together in the development of a similar pathway for francophone students in New Brunswick. Providing these educational pathways will support the continuum of learning and will increase the feasibility for SSCW graduates who are interested in upgrading their education to do so.

Government funding will be required to ensure that the new school of social work and the educational pathway becomes a reality, and to ensure further upgrading and learning opportunities are in place for social workers, among other strategic actions aimed at recruiting and retaining social workers. Together, with the help of the government and other partners, we look forward to enhancing the profession of social work in the province and continuing to strive for wellness in our communities.

#### **4. What is needed to strengthen the province's education systems to prepare our students for success in the modern work environment?**

Productivity should not be measured solely based on output but on well-being, as well-being is fundamental to an active and participatory society, ready to successfully engage in a modern work environment. While academic achievement is important, it does not supersede fundamental needs like physical and emotional safety and well-being. A productive society is a society that is well; both physically and emotionally.

Mental health is a huge component of well-being, with mental health struggles being particularly salient among school-aged New Brunswickers. The New Brunswick Health Council's *New Brunswick Student Wellness Survey* is conducted in all provincial public schools and aims to evaluate several aspects of student wellness, including social and emotional development,

physical health, substance use, and experiences at school and in the community<sup>23</sup>. Recent survey results found that symptoms of anxiety and depression are increasing among grade 6 to 12 students, with half reporting experiencing symptoms<sup>24</sup>. The survey also found that mental health concerns are especially high for non-binary individuals<sup>25</sup>.

The 2019 New Brunswick Education Summit noted that teachers and students recognize that mental health struggles disrupt classroom learning, hurting both the students affected and those around them. The report also states that mental health professionals are in short supply, with the need continuing to increase exponentially<sup>26</sup>.

Recognizing the increase of pressure on the government to deliver accessible and affordable mental health services to New Brunswickers, the government should continue to expand on and reduce barriers to participation in the Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) approach that brings together Education and Early Childhood Development, Social Development, Health, Public Safety, school districts, and regional health authorities. Social Workers play an important role in the Child and Youth Teams within the ISD model<sup>27</sup> and work closely with social workers and other professionals in other organizations and departments to provide holistic support to students in need. Revising the Medical Consent of Minors Act to reduce barriers to children and youth accessing a range of health services is a vital component of expanding access to mental health services for children and youth.

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<sup>23</sup> New Brunswick Health Council (n.d.). About the New Brunswick student wellness survey. Retrieved from <https://nbhc.ca/surveys/about-new-brunswick-student-wellness-survey>

<sup>24</sup> New Brunswick Health Council (n.d.). 2021-2022 student wellness survey 6-12: social and emotional development. Retrieved from <https://nbhc.ca/table/social-and-emotional-development?cuts=NB>

<sup>25</sup> Urquhart, M. (2022). Mental health declined in N.B. students, especially those identifying as non-binary. *CBC News*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/nb-student-wellness-survey-results-1.6590152>

<sup>26</sup> Province of New Brunswick (2019). Succeeding at home: a green paper on education in New Brunswick. *New Brunswick Education Summit*. Retrieved from <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ed/pdf/promo/summit/GreenPaper.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> Horizon Health Network (n.d.). Child and Youth Teams – Integrated Service Delivery (ISD). Retrieved online from <https://horizonnb.ca/services/addictions-mental-health/child-and-youth-services/child-and-youth-teams-integrated-service-delivery-isd/>



While school social workers are a new addition to New Brunswick school districts and their presence in provincial schools is currently limited, they are found to be valuable members of the education teams, supporting students and their families in a timely manner and providing referrals to Child and Youth Team social workers, and other professionals, as needed. In using the person-in-environment perspective that is unique to the field of social work, school social workers understand the multitude of personal and societal factors that impact one's ability to learn and work with students and families facing challenges, while also providing ongoing prevention work with students of all ages.

Recognizing the current and future shortage of mental health professionals, such as social workers, in the province, the NBASW social work recruitment and retention strategy is focused on recruiting social workers to and retaining social workers in New Brunswick. As previously discussed, a component of this strategy is the introduction of a regulated social work paraprofession, titled Social Work Technicians, and graduates from approved college programs, such as NBCC's SSCW program, would be eligible for registration.

While this work is ongoing, Social Work Technicians would be paraprofessionals who are specially trained to support social workers and implement portions of social worker intervention plans, allowing social workers to better focus on social work-specific tasks and interventions in their roles. As was mentioned, it would also provide a pathway to the social work profession through college-to-BSW bridging programs aimed at increasing the number of provincial BSW graduates in the province.

Once regulated, investments should be made to have Social Work Technicians within education systems along with school social workers. Investments should also be made to implement Social Work Technicians to the other vital services provided by government departments, such as in the areas of child welfare and mental health and addictions.

## 5. What investments are needed to transition to a low-carbon green economy?

Climate change is something that concerns us all and is an important area to focus on and invest in. Not only does the rapidly warming climate have significant implications on the environment and animals; climate change has significant effects on human life well-being as humans and the environment are interconnected. Globally, we're seeing melting glaciers and ice sheets contributing to sea level rise which has and will result in land being submerged in water, mass migration of coastal communities, a loss of freshwater habitats and drinking water, destruction of crops and food sources, and more<sup>28</sup>.

The provincial government has an opportunity to be a provincial leader in community climate change efforts and recognition. Implementing taxation structures that incentivize the use of green and renewable energy sources and providing other financial incentives for personal energy-saving measures are some ways to foster a greener province. The government also has the responsibility of ensuring that New Brunswick's land and natural resources are being used in a way that fosters sustainability and resilience for this generation and generations to come.

Investing in safe and reliable public transportation across the province also is an important step in reducing transportation-based greenhouse gas emissions. In addition to its environmental benefits, public transit is also recognized as being an essential service that provides many health and social benefits<sup>29</sup>. By increasing access to and affordability of transportation, the government would, in effect, be increasing environmental and personal equity and well-being. In addition to expanding public transportation in urban centres and in recognizing that New Brunswick is largely a rural community, innovative transportation solutions in rural parts of the province should be explored.

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<sup>28</sup> Schibli, K. (2020). Climate change and social work. *Canadian Association of Social Workers*. Retrieved from [https://www.casw-acts.ca/files/documents/SW\\_and\\_Climate\\_Change\\_Final\\_PDF.pdf](https://www.casw-acts.ca/files/documents/SW_and_Climate_Change_Final_PDF.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> Perrota, K. (2021). Public transit backgrounder. Retrieved from <https://www.cpha.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/resources/climateaction/hgjr-public-transit-backgrounder-e.pdf>