



FIRST VOICE
Urban Indigenous Coalition

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Universal Basic Income Proposed to Address Cost-of-Living Crisis

Tuesday, April 30, 2024

St. John's, NL — First Voice Today released a policy brief proposing that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador consider implementing a Universal Basic Income (UBI) to address the growing cost-of-living crisis. The policy brief was shared with the provincial government in March as part of the biannual minimum wage review process.

Entitled [*Universal Basic Income: A Strategy for Reducing Indigenous Poverty in Newfoundland and Labrador*](#), the policy brief draws heavily on publicly available data from Statistics Canada showing that Indigenous Peoples – particularly women and children – are more likely to be impacted by the rising cost of living. Indigenous Peoples, both on-reserve and in urban centres, face significant disparities in income and higher rates of poverty compared to the general population. For instance, half of all Inuit children in the province live in poverty, defined as households with an annual income of about \$25,000 or less.

“In one of the most prosperous countries in the world, there’s no reason why every resident of Newfoundland and Labrador should not be able to enjoy a minimum standard of living and the basic human dignity that goes along with it,” said Justin Campbell, Director of Advocacy with First Light St. John’s Friendship Centre, the Lead Partner in First Voice. “Even with the recent increase, the minimum wage doesn’t come close to covering what it actually costs to live in the province. It’s time for government to consider more innovative solutions.”

Results of UBI pilot projects carried out in other countries, as well as some Canadian provinces, have shown that a guaranteed income can improve outcomes in health, education, food security, and even employment – all while reducing the administrative costs involved in providing what would otherwise be a patchwork of tax credits, rebates, employment supports, and social assistance programs.

An initiative of First Voice to advance [Call for Change 16](#), the policy brief is supported by First Light, the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Stella’s Circle, the St. John’s Status of Women Council, and YWCA St. John’s.

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About First Voice

Launched in 2019 by First Light in collaboration with Indigenous Services Canada, First Voice is a coalition of 11 organizations representing Indigenous Peoples, service providers, and all levels of government working together to advance truth and reconciliation in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. Our work focuses on promoting and supporting local implementation of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).