

PERTH-WELLINGTON

New Democratic Party Ethan Rabidoux



Liberal Party Stephen McCotter



Does your party plan to introduce a national anti-poverty strategy? If so, what specific targets would it include and what issues would it prioritize? (response limited to 1500 characters - approx. 250 words)

An NDP government will introduce the NDP's Poverty Elimination Act, which requires a national anti-poverty strategy, including targets and timelines, to be developed in consultation with provinces, territories, municipalities, Indigenous governments and communities, low income Canadians, and civil society. In addition to setting an overarching set of goals, the strategy will also target specific vulnerable populations, including Indigenous peoples, persons living with disabilities, seniors, racialized Canadians and newcomers.

The strategy will include measures to address income security, including wages from employment and government income support programs, to increase access to affordable housing and affordable childcare, and to combat social exclusion. By law, the strategy will be required to confirm to Canada's obligations under international law, including internationally recognized human rights.

Our anti-poverty strategy will be supported by immediate measures we will undertake to improve income security and expand access to affordable housing. This includes boosting the level of the Working Income Tax Benefit, the National Child Benefit Supplement, and the Guaranteed Income Supplement, lifting thousands of families and seniors out of poverty. We will also restore the federal minimum wage and progressively raise it to \$15 an hour, to ensure that work pays a living wage for more Canadians. Finally, we will invest more than \$2.7 billion over 4 years in affordable housing and homelessness programs to ensure that more Canadians have an affordable, secure, and adequate place to call home.

We will also lift more Canadians – including children and seniors – out of poverty.

Poverty and inequality are not just problems for individual Canadians – all of Canada is affected. For Canadians, poverty makes it more difficult to get and stay healthy, and more difficult to find and keep good work. For Canada, the costs of poverty – seen in higher health care costs and greater demand for social assistance – are immense.

Our plan will lift Canadians out of poverty starting immediately after the next election.

We will introduce a new Canada Child Benefit. Tax-free, tied to income and delivered monthly, this benefit provides greater support to those who need help most: single-parent families and low-income families. It will lift 315,000 children out of poverty.

We will help to lift hundreds of thousands of seniors out of poverty by increasing the Guaranteed Income Supplement for single low-income seniors by ten percent. This will give one million of our most vulnerable seniors – who are often women – almost \$1,000 more each year.

And, as part of our new investment in social infrastructure, we will prioritize investments in affordable housing and seniors' facilities, build more new housing units and refurbish old ones, give support to municipalities to maintain rent-geared-to-income subsidies in co-ops, and give communities the money they need for Housing First initiatives that help homeless Canadians find stable housing.

2. Do you support the following proposal: Develop and implement a National Housing Strategy based in human rights, with a focus on reducing homelessness and securing

adequate, accessible and affordable housing for Canadians?	
Yes	
3. Do you support the following proposal: Preserve and renew federal investments to sustain and create new affordable housing?	
Yes	
4. Do you support the following proposal: Increase the supply of affordable rental housing?	
Yes	
5. How will you and your party address the affordable housing issue? (response limited to 1000 characters - approximately 200 characters)	
The NDP has worked for many years to achieve the creation of a national housing strategy. In fact, we nearly succeeded too when a private member's bill presented by Libby Davies made it to third reading in 2011. Unfortunately, when that bill was re-introduced following the election, the Conservatives voted to kill it. An NDP government will pass An Act to Ensure Secure, Adequate, Accessible and Affordable Housing for Canadians. This Act would legally require the Minister responsible for housing to sit down with the provinces, territories, municipalities, indigenous governments, housing providers, and civil society organizations to create a multi-year strategy to address housing and homelessness. The strategy would address both the needs of local communities and of particular populations, including indigenous peoples, persons living with disabilities, and seniors. The strategy would also give priority to those who are most vulnerable, including those who are currently homeless. By law, the strategy would need to conform to Canada's international human rights obligations regarding housing. In support of this strategy, we will provide more than \$2.7 billion over 4 years. This funding will be used to renew long-term social operating agreements where necessary, for capital repairs, for homelessness programs, and to build new affordable housing. It also includes \$500 million in incentives for the construction of new affordable and market rental units. This funding will be allocated across the country based on need.	We will make it easier for Canadians to find an affordable place to call home. Today, one in four Canadian households is paying more than it can afford for housing, and one in eight cannot find affordable housing that is safe, suitable, and well maintained. When affordable housing is in short supply, Canadians feel less secure and our whole economy suffers. We will renew federal leadership in housing, starting with a new, ten-year investment in social infrastructure. We will prioritize investments in affordable housing and seniors' facilities, build more new housing units and refurbish old ones, give support to municipalities to maintain rent-geared-to-income subsidies in co-ops, and give communities the money they need for Housing First initiatives that help homeless Canadians find stable housing. We will encourage the construction of new rental housing by removing all GST on new capital investments in affordable rental housing. This will provide \$125 million per year in tax incentives to grow and renovate the supply of rental housing across Canada. We will modernize the existing Home Buyers' Plan to allow Canadians impacted by sudden and significant life changes to buy a house without tax penalty. This will ease the burden on Canadians facing job relocation, the death of a spouse, marital breakdown, or a decision to accommodate an elderly family member. We will direct the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the new Canada Infrastructure Bank to provide financing to support the construction of new, affordable rental housing for middle- and low-income Canadians.

	We will conduct an inventory of all available federal lands and buildings that could be repurposed, and make some of these lands available at low cost for affordable housing in communities where there is a pressing need. We will review escalating home prices in high-priced markets, like Toronto and Vancouver, and consider all policy tools that could keep home ownership within reach for more Canadians. We will also immediately restore the mandatory long-form census to ensure that decisions on housing are made using the best and most up-to-date data available.
6. Do you support the following proposal: Develop and implement a National Food Strategy, as part of a broader anti-poverty plan?	
Yes	
7. Do you support the following proposal: Introduce a Basic Income Guarantee to ensure all Canadians can afford sufficient, safe, healthy and culturally appropriate food?	
No	
8. Do you support the following proposal: Increase investments in affordable housing, so that people don't need to decide between paying rent and feeding themselves and their families?	
Yes	
9. How will you and your party address the food insecurity issue? (response limited to 1000 characters - approximately 200 characters)	
The NDP is proud to be the only party with a comprehensive food strategy. Our strategy contains policies to improve food security and ensure that every Canadian can afford a healthy meal. We will implement a whole-of-government approach to food security, reducing reliance on food banks by improving incomes and supports for Canadians, allowing healthy food to be in the reach of every family. This includes our plan to reinstate the federal minimum wage and progressively raise it to \$15 an hour and our plan to raise the poorest families out of poverty through increases to the National Child Benefit Supplement and the Working Income Tax Benefit. For seniors, we have committed to raising the Guaranteed Income Supplement, as well as restoring the age of eligibility for Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement to 65.	
10. Do you support the following proposals: Introduce a Basic Income Guarantee?	

No	
11. Do you support the following proposal: Enhance the Canada Social Transfer to include an increase in funding to the provinces to support poverty reduction efforts?	
No	
12. Do you support the following proposal: Increase the Guaranteed Income Supplement by the amount required to lift the income of all seniors out of poverty?	
Yes	
13. Do you support the following proposal: Reform the Employment Insurance program by easing eligibility requirements, extending benefit?	
Yes	
14. How will you and your party address the income insecurity issue? (response limited to 1000 characters - approximately 200 characters)	
The NDP believes that every Canadian should have the right to live in dignity and participate fully in society. That is why we will tackle income insecurity, both through direct and indirect supports. This includes boosting the level of the Working Income Tax Benefit, the National Child Benefit Supplement, and the Guaranteed Income Supplement, lifting thousands of families and seniors out of poverty. We will also restore the federal minimum wage and progressively raise it to \$15 an hour, to ensure that work pays a living wage for more Canadians. We will create a new, universal threshold of 360 hours for Employment Insurance, to ensure that more Canadians are able to access unemployment benefits and special benefits in times of need. We will also take the pressure off household budgets by investing in affordability for Canadian families. This includes our commitment to affordable childcare, with parents paying no more than \$15 a day, to accessible public transit, and to expanding affordable housing.	We will fix Employment Insurance to better serve Canadians now, and help boost Canada's economic growth now and in the long-term. Employment Insurance provides economic security to Canadians when they need it most. Those who have lost their jobs, through no fault of their own, or are out of work to raise children, provide care for a loved one, or get needed skills training, should not struggle to get the support they need. We will strengthen the Employment Insurance system to make sure that it works for our economy and for all Canadians. Starting in 2017, we will reduce the waiting period for benefits. When a worker loses their job and applies for Employment Insurance, they will only be without income for one week, not two. We will also reverse Stephen Harper's 2012 EI reforms that force unemployed workers to move away from their communities and take lower-paying jobs. We will ensure that the Employment Insurance system is providing real income security to workers, including those with precarious work. Mark is a seasonally employed worker in New Brunswick's lobster fishery. Under our plan, when his seasonal work comes to an end and he applies for Employment Insurance, he will only lose one week's worth of income, not two. This will put hundreds of dollars more in his pocket at a time when he needs it most.

15. Do you support the following proposal: Set national wage standards to ensure that no fully employed individual lives below the poverty line?	
Yes	
16. Do you support the following proposal: Develop a jobs creation and training strategy to ensure all jobs have all the advantages of secure employment, including equitable access to occupational benefits, labour standard protections & opportunities for post-secondary education & training?	
Yes	
17. Do you support the following proposal: Reduce federal student debt and offer youth facing employment barriers job opportunities with inclusive work settings, supported employment and job retention, and targeted wage subsidies?	
Yes	
18. How will you and your party address the jobs and prosperity issue? (response limited to 1000 characters - approximately 200 characters)	
Nearly 300,000 more Canadians are unemployed than there were before the recession. For those who do have jobs, many are still not able to make ends meet: according to CIBC the quality of jobs is at an all-time low. The NDP has a plan to create the quality jobs that help Canadians to thrive. We will kick-start manufacturing and small business job creation. We will partner with the private sector and NGOs to create an additional employment opportunities for 40,000 young Canadians. We will expand access to EI-funded training to an additional 70,000 Canadians, and boost funding for training by \$1.5 billion over three years. And we will put an end to the abuse of unpaid interns in federal jurisdiction, ensuring that young Canadians are fairly paid and receive important workplace protections.	We will help Canadians get the training they need to find and keep good jobs. In a changing economy, Canadians need more opportunities to improve their skills and upgrade their credentials. We will make it easier for adults to access training programs by increasing investment in skills training. To help those receiving Employment Insurance get the training they need to rejoin the workforce, we will invest \$500 million more each year in provincial and territorial Labour Market Development Agreements. To help those who do not qualify for Employment Insurance or are not currently employed, we will invest an additional \$200 million in training programs led by the provinces and territories. We will also invest \$50 million to renew and expand funding to the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy, and provide \$25 million each year for training facilities, delivered in partnership with labour unions. We will work with employers and workers to determine an appropriate apprenticeship ratio for all federal infrastructure projects. Our total investment of an additional \$775 million per year for job and skills training will help Canadians get the training they need to find and keep good jobs.

19. Do you support the following proposal: Develop and implement a National Drug Coverage Plan that is public, affordable, and safe, so that everyone in Canada can access the medicine they need?

Yes

20. Do you support the following proposal: Support and invest in programs that include oral health promotion and disease prevention strategies?

Yes

21. Do you support the following proposal: Implement the National Mental Health Strategy developed by the Mental Health Commissions of Canada?

Yes

22. How will you and your party address the health inequities issue? (response limited to 1000 characters - approximately 250 words)

Universal, comprehensive public healthcare is necessary to ensure that all Canadians receive the healthcare they need, regardless of income. But under the Conservatives, our cherished public healthcare system has been under attack. The Conservatives have refused to meet with the provinces and territories to address the challenges confronting our healthcare system, and they have imposed reckless, unilateral cuts to healthcare funding. The NDP is the only party promising to restore healthcare funding. We will work collaboratively with the provinces and territories to develop a new Health Accord and to bring Medicare into the 21st century. We will target new investments to areas that are needed most: more doctors and nurses, seniors care, investments in mental health and preventive healthcare, and universal, comprehensive public drug coverage.

We will make home care more available, prescription drugs more affordable, and mental health care more accessible.

Canada's publicly-funded universal health care system is a source of pride for Canadians – and a source of economic security for the middle class and those working hard to join it. When Canadians are in good physical and mental health, they are able to work better, be more productive, and contribute more fully to our economy while living healthier, happier lives.

Despite our health care system's value and importance, it has been more than a decade since a Canadian Prime Minister sat down with provincial and territorial Premiers to strengthen the program, and ensure that it can meet current needs and the challenges that come with an aging population.

We will restart that important conversation and provide the collaborative federal leadership that has been missing during the Harper decade. We will negotiate a new Health Accord with provinces and territories, including a long-term agreement on funding.

As an immediate commitment, we will invest \$3 billion, over the next four years, to deliver more and better home care services for all Canadians. This includes more access to high quality in-home caregivers, financial supports for family care, and, when necessary, palliative care.

To help families care for their loved ones at home, we will make the Employment Insurance Compassionate Care Benefit more flexible and easier to access, so that it

provides help for more than just end-of-life care.

We will also develop a pan-Canadian collaboration on health innovation, and will improve access to necessary prescription medications. We will join with provincial and territorial governments to buy drugs in bulk, reducing the cost Canadian governments pay for these drugs, and making them more affordable for Canadians.

We will make high-quality mental health services more available to Canadians who need them, including our veterans and first responders.

To eliminate systemic barriers and deliver equality of opportunity to all Canadians living with disabilities, we will consult with provinces, territories, and other stakeholders to introduce a National Disabilities Act.