

**All Party Committee on Basic Income**

Meeting #5 Minutes – March 24, 2023

9:00am – 12:00pm

West Block, Confederation Building

**In attendance:**

Hon. John Abbott - Minister, Children, Seniors and Social Development (CSSD)

Scott Reid, MHA, St. George's - Humber (alternate for Hon. Bernard Davis)

Sherry Gambin-Walsh – MHA, Placentia - St. Mary's

Jim Dinn – MHA, St. John's Centre

Craig Pardy – MHA, Bonavista

Aisling Gogan, Assistant Deputy Minister, CSSD

George Bradley – Executive Assistant, CSSD

Keith Jewer – Senior Policy and Planning Development Specialist, CSSD

Scott Fleming - Policy Analyst, Third Party Caucus

**Guests:**

Melanie Martin – Executive Director - Arts NL

Valerie Tarasuk, PROOF, University of Toronto

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

- The Chair welcomed Melanie Martin from Arts NL to the meeting.

**2. Presentation by ArtsNL**

- The presentation provided by the Arts NL's Executive Director provided information on the artistic community in NL, including statistics and challenges faced.
- Processes and costs associated were presented for a potential three-year pilot Basic Income for Artists NL, modeled after a similar scheme to the pilot currently underway in Ireland, including:
  - Vetting of applicants to ensure they are part of the artistic community in the province and are between the ages of 18-64, with a potential lottery system implemented if the number of eligible applicants exceeded participant caps.
  - A \$22,000 base amount with a cap of 300 participants would cost \$6.6M per year or \$19.8M over the three-year pilot duration.
  - Participants would have to commit to participating in research to evaluate the project.

**3. Discussion**

- Attendees discussed:
  - Use of alternate eligibility determinants such as income testing as opposed to a lottery system;
  - Opportunities to serve a broader segment of our population; and
  - Early findings from the Ireland pilot.

**4. Concluding Remarks**

- The Chair thanked Melanie Martin for attending and committed to re-engage once options are developed.

The guest from Arts NL left the meeting and the guest from the University of Toronto joined.

## **5. Welcome and Introductions**

- The Chair welcomed Dr. Valerie Tarasuk from PROOF, an interdisciplinary research program at the University of Toronto.

## **6. Presentation by the PROOF program**

- The presentation by Dr. Tarasuk gave an overview of findings from research conducted on food insecurity, including:
  - Providing statistics related to food insecurity in Canada with some specific focus on NL;
  - Illustrating how food insecurity increases the likelihood of higher health care costs for those affected;
  - Discussing how household income is directly connected with food insecurity; and
  - Concluding that policy interventions designed to address underlying income problems (such as a Basic Income) are required to reduce household food insecurity.

## **7. Discussion**

- Attendees discussed:
  - The implications of not addressing food insecurity, particularly for children;
  - Opportunities for improvements based on targeted initiatives;
  - Potential approaches for phasing in a Basic Income program; and
  - Approaches taken in recent PEI policy proposal.

## **8. Concluding Remarks**

- The Chair thanked the guest for attending and sharing her expertise.

Only All-Party Committee members remained for the rest of the agenda.

## **9. Updates**

- CSSD continues to work with the Department of Finance to finalize the document on current benefit levels requested at the last meeting and expects it to be completed in time for the next meeting.
- CSSD has been working with NLHC to schedule a meeting with the Executive Directors of the NLHC Community Centres and anticipates it taking place in April.

## **10. Review and Approval of Minutes**

- February 9, 2023 meeting - approved

## **11. Next Steps**

- The committee will consult the Hon. Steve Crocker, Minister, Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation for input on a potential pilot of Basic Income for Artists NL.
- The committee will reach out to counterparts in Prince Edward Island for information on recent proposals being considered.
- The Chair will reach out to Federal MPs in order to arrange a discussion with the All Party Anti-Poverty Caucus.

Keith Jewer, Recorder