

Annual Report

2022

2023

Economic and Social
Inclusion Corporation

Ensemble Pour vaincre
la pauvreté
Overcoming Poverty Together

The Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC)
Annual Report 2022-2023

440 King Street – Suite 423
P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton New Brunswick
E3B 5H1
Canada
<http://www.gnb.ca/poverty>

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ESIC Team

Stéphane LeClair

Executive Director

Althea Arsenault

Manager of Resource Development

Vacant

Policy Advisor

Marc Gosselin

Coordinator

July Synnott

Coordinator

Vacant

(Pamela Robichaud until Feb. 2023)

Coordinator

Catherine Evans

Administrative Assistant

Board of Directors

Jim Mehan

President

Deputy Minister of Social Development

Honourable K. Dorothy Shephard

Co-Chair

Minister responsible

Jean Allain

Co-Chair

Non-Profit Sector

Shelley Clayton

Co-Chair

Citizens

Michel Guitard

Co-Chair

Business sector

Juliette Breau

Citizens who live or have lived in poverty

Paul Levesque

Citizens who live or have lived in poverty

Mary Lesage

Citizens who live or have lived in poverty

Melissa Gillis

Citizens who live or have lived in poverty

Mark LeBlanc

Citizens who live or have lived in poverty

Germaine Guimond

Non-profit sector

Chantal Landry

Non-profit sector

Kevin Darling

Business sector

Ashley King

Business sector

Honourable Jeff Carr

Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure

Honourable Tammy Scott-Wallace

Minister of Tourism, Heritage and Culture

Minister responsible for Women's Equality

Robert Gauvin

Official opposition

Contact Information

New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation

Kings Place, 440 King Street – Suite 423

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

Telephone: 506-444-2977

Toll-Free: 1-888-295-4545

Fax: 506-444-2978

esic-sies@gnb.ca

www.gnb.ca/poverty

Transmittal letters

From the Minister to the Office of the Lieutenant-Governor

Honourable Brenda L. Murphy
Office of the Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick

May it please your Honour,

Pursuant to subsection 28(1) of the *Economic and Social Inclusion Act*, it is my privilege, as Minister responsible for the New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation, to submit the Annual Report of the corporation for the fiscal year April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,



Honourable Jill Green
Minister responsible for the New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation

From the President to the Minister

Honourable Jill Green
Minister responsible for the New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation

Madam:

I am pleased to be able to present the Annual Report describing operations of the New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation for the fiscal year April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,



Jim Mehan
President

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Minister's Message

As Minister Responsible for the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation, I am pleased to report on the activities of the corporation for the fiscal year 2022-2023.

The vision of *Overcoming Poverty Together 2020-2025* is that everyone living in New Brunswick has the opportunities, resources, and security to thrive and actively participate in community life. All New Brunswickers shall be included as full citizens through opportunities for employment, personal development and community engagement. The corporation, and its board of directors, aims to achieve this vision through the collaboration of government, businesses, the non-profit sector and all New Brunswickers.

It is a privilege for me to work closely with ESIC and its board.

In 2021, our government brought changes to the social assistance programs to leave more money in the hands of low-income New Brunswickers. These changes include:

- New exemptions in the calculation of eligibility to social assistance.
- Wage exemption increased
- Elimination of the shelter deduction
- New definition of deaf
- Indexation of all social assistance rates to inflation

The measures put in place as part of the reform represent an investment of \$22.6 million and are expected to impact the support provided to almost 29,000 New Brunswickers, including children. They line up with OPT3 Priority Action number 1: *Conduct a social assistance reform to remove barriers to employment for employable clients and provide adequate income support for multi-barriered clients who do not have the capacity to work.*

Our government also announced an investment of \$8 million over three years to better support emergency shelters and help reduce chronic homelessness. The Canada-New Brunswick Housing benefit program to support low-income working families and individuals was expanded, and investments of \$102 million were made to build new affordable housing and make immediate renovations to vacant units.

An increase of \$1 per hour increased the minimum wage to \$14.75 per hour, the highest in Atlantic Canada.

I want to commend ESIC, the Community Inclusion Networks (CINs) and the twelve Regional Service Commissions (RSCs) for their outstanding collaborative work during the past 12 months, which resulted in the integration of the CINs with the RSCs, as part of the reform on local governance that took effect January 1st, 2023.

It is important to remember that *Overcoming Poverty Together* is not a government plan or a business plan, or a non-profit plan or a citizen's plan. It is the New Brunswick plan, created by New Brunswick, for New Brunswick. It is crucial that all members of our society work together to provide opportunities for all New Brunswickers to reach their potential. Everyone has a role to play in the process of improving the lives of our fellow citizens. This has been even more the case during the pandemic.

In closing, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the members of the CINs, their project partners, as well as ESIC board members and staff for their work over the past year. Your dedication, commitment, and cooperation speak to the vitality and effectiveness of our collaboration and devotion to meet the needs of so many people.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jill Green', is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Honourable Jill Green
Minister responsible for the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation

Co-Chairs' Message

As New Brunswick, like the rest of the world, tries to go back to some degree of stability and routine, we take a moment to reflect on the past fiscal year and the progress of *Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan 2020-2025*.

During these difficult times in the past three year, ESIC and the Community Inclusion Networks have stayed the course by focusing on their priority actions to deliver essential support to vulnerable New Brunswickers.

ESIC's board of directors is pleased to see the progress with the development and implementation of OPT3's nine priority actions and other initiatives in the past fiscal year. The main areas of focus were:

Transportation

Priority #7 of OPT3 is to develop and implement regional transportation services to increase accessibility, affordability and availability to transportation services. The past fiscal year has seen tremendous movement and development with respect to transportation of people in the province. As of March 31, 2023, 12 community transportation services funded in part by ESIC, were in operation in New Brunswick. ESIC also hosted a successful symposium on community transportation which attracted 200 participants with an interest, mandate, knowledge or experience in public and community transportation. Guest speakers and transportation experts from New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Québec and Ontario helped guide the discussions.

Community Inclusion Networks and Regional Service Commissions

All 12 community inclusion networks across the province have now been integrated into their respective regional service commissions.

Under local governance reforms that took effect January 1, 2023, the commissions are now responsible for regional leadership on matters such as community development and transportation. The board is looking forward to a fruitful collaboration between ESIC and the RSCs in the years to come.

Social Enterprise

OPT3's priority # 3 goal is to make investments through a new social finance fund to increase the capacity and sustainability of social enterprises within non-profit organizations in New Brunswick. A Social Economy Working group, lead by ESIC, works to increasing the number of successful non-for-profit social enterprises in New Brunswick. ESIC is partnering with the Pond-Deshpande Centre at UNB for support and development services. Also in fiscal year 2022-2023, ESIC has launched a new social finance fund to increase the capacity and sustainability of social enterprises within non-profit organizations in the province.

Financial Literacy

Since 2010, ESIC has been a strong proponent of Financial Literacy. In the past fiscal year, ESIC continued to support and promote programs such as free help with the preparation of income tax returns, Canada Learning Bond, Financial Education Network and Financial Literacy Month.

211NB

Priority #5 of OPT3 to implement a One-Stop-Shop to help New Brunswickers access information and navigate government and community programs and services they need more easily, was implemented in October 2020. The new service, called 211NB, has since been extended with more offerings in the past fiscal year. Every year, this service receives an increasing number of calls and requests for information.

The ongoing participation and support of citizens as well as the non-profit, business, and government sectors are the main asset of *Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan*. The collective commitment across the province and the non-partisan nature established at the outset make the plan unique and remain a cornerstone for ensuring its success. We hope to be able to count on those principles in the years ahead.

We wish to commend the twelve Community Inclusion Networks (CINs) for their outstanding work in the past year. These networks are very active in their communities, and year after year, they succeed in bringing together citizens, groups and other partners to help their fellow citizens improve their quality of life.

We also thank the members of ESIC's board of directors. This group of people from around the province represent the four activity sectors. As with the CIN representatives, they dedicate many hours of their precious time to improving the quality of life of many New Brunswickers.

ESIC's board of directors is supported daily by a small but efficient team of employees. We appreciate their efforts and commitment. We hope we can continue to count on the support of all New Brunswick stakeholders and residents as we move forward with this innovative and unique social project.

The Co-Chairs

Jean Allain

Shelley Clayton

Honourable Jill Green

Michel Guitard

Mandate

The prevention and reduction of poverty in New Brunswick is very complex. The causes and effects are many, and not one solution is universal in preventing or eradicating poverty. No matter how poverty is defined, it is an issue that requires everyone’s attention. It is important that all members of our society work together to provide opportunities for all New Brunswickers to reach their potential.

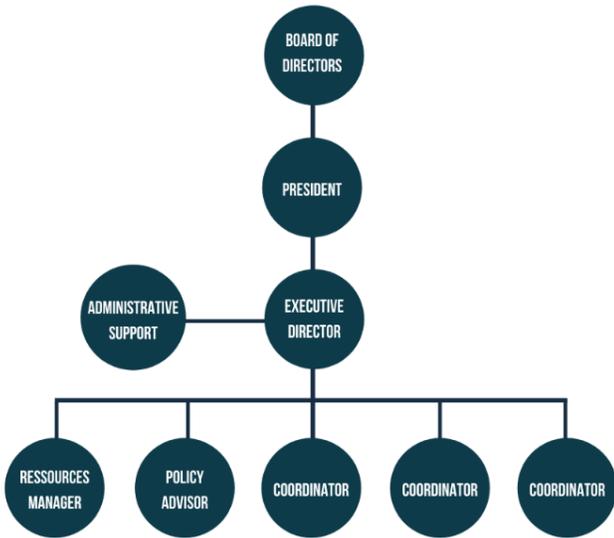
Following an extensive engagement process based on public dialogue with New Brunswickers from all walks of life, the province’s first poverty reduction plan, *Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan, 2009-2014* (OPT1) was developed. The Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC) was established to implement and manage this unique approach to addressing the issue of poverty in New Brunswick.

ESIC was established to:

- Ensure the implementation of OPT and development and adoption of any other economic and social inclusion plan;
- Co-ordinate and support the Community Inclusion Networks (CINs) in developing their plans and in reaching objectives of the provincial plan set out in their regional plans;
- Administer the Economic and Social Inclusion Fund established under section 29 of the *Economic and Social Inclusion Act*; and
- Exercise the other functions or activities authorized or required by this act or the regulations or as directed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

In addition, the *Economic and Social Inclusion Act* stipulates that a new economic and social inclusion plan shall be adopted every five years through a public engagement process led by ESIC. A second plan, *Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan 2014-2019* (OPT2) was created and implemented to build on the success of OPT1. Plan number three: *Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan* (OPT3) was adopted in March 2020, following a comprehensive public engagement process.

ESIC is governed by a board of directors. The board met three times in 2022-2023. As per the *Economic and Social Inclusion Act*, the board administered the business and affairs of the corporation, including financial, operational, setting policies and monitoring the progress of OPT.



Historical Background

In October 2008, the provincial government announced a public engagement initiative that gave New Brunswickers the opportunity to become involved in reducing and preventing poverty. It was decided that everyone should be included in finding solutions to the economic and social problems related to poverty.

After a comprehensive consultation process that included almost 2,500 participants, including people living in or who have experienced poverty, representatives from the non-profit community, the business community, the provincial government and the official Opposition, *Overcoming Poverty Together* (OPT1) was developed and adopted.

The Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC) was created to incubate, foster and drive the plan. The *Economic and Social Inclusion Act* was adopted at the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick to support the plan and the corporation's efforts in its implementation.

The act stipulates that the plan must be renewed every five years through a public engagement process. In the fall of 2013, ESIC conducted a second public engagement initiative – Public Dialogues – which led to the creation of a second plan, *Overcoming Poverty Together 2014-2019* (OPT2). Another public engagement process took place in the spring of 2019, leading to the creation of the third plan: *Overcoming Poverty Together 2020-2025* (OPT3). This third plan, which has a new vision, was presented to New Brunswickers on March 5, 2020.

OPT1 and OPT2

Through the collaboration of governments, business and non-profit sectors, persons living in poverty and individuals – all men, women and children in New Brunswick – shall have the necessary resources to meet their basic needs and to live with dignity, security and good health. Furthermore, all New Brunswickers shall be included as full citizens through opportunities for employment, personal development and community engagement.

OPT3

Everyone living in New Brunswick has the opportunities, resources, and security to thrive and actively participate in community life.

Delivery and accountability

The success of the poverty reduction initiative has its roots in the recognition that all individuals and sectors of society play a key role in the reduction of poverty. There is an ongoing commitment to continue this partnership in a governance model with the following components:

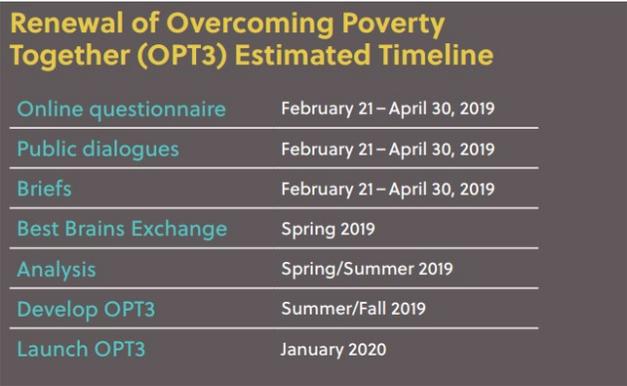
1. Community economic and social inclusion networks established at the local level composed of representatives of persons living in poverty, non-profit, business and government sectors.
2. A provincial economic and social inclusion board consisting of representatives of the provincial government (ministers and deputy ministers), community, business and low-income persons, presided over by four co-chairs.
3. A coordination unit providing coordination and administrative support to the board and community inclusion networks.

Overcoming Poverty Together 3

The New Brunswick *Economic and Social Inclusion Act* states that a new economic and social inclusion plan shall be adopted every five years through a public engagement process.

In 2019, ESIC led its most comprehensive public engagement process on poverty since the adoption of the first plan in 2009. It brought together individuals who have experienced poverty, community members, non-profit organizations, the business community, government officials, stakeholders and academics.

For details on the renewal process leading to the creation of OPT3, click [here](#).



Renewal of Overcoming Poverty Together (OPT3) Estimated Timeline	
Online questionnaire	February 21 – April 30, 2019
Public dialogues	February 21 – April 30, 2019
Briefs	February 21 – April 30, 2019
Best Brains Exchange	Spring 2019
Analysis	Spring/Summer 2019
Develop OPT3	Summer/Fall 2019
Launch OPT3	January 2020

OPT3 places emphasis on community capacity building. It recognizes that each individual and community has a role to play in fostering economic and social inclusion and suggests that communities be empowered to tackle poverty reduction and other issues in New Brunswick.

To consult the OPT3 plan, please click [here](#).

Global Objective

In alignment with [Canada’s Poverty Reduction Strategy](#) and the [United Nations 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals](#), the global objective of the OPT3 Plan is to reduce income poverty by at least 50% by 2030. A 50% reduction in the Market Basket Measure (MBM) for New Brunswick would decrease it from 14% in 2015 to 7% in 2030. Achieving this target would mean lifting 50 000 New Brunswickers out of income poverty.

Priority actions

OPT3 includes 9 priority actions, grouped in three pillars:



1. Income Security

Supporting New Brunswickers to move through the income security continuum and providing adequate income support to those who cannot work.

1. **Social Assistance Reform**
2. **Changes to Employment Standards Act**
3. **Sustainability of social enterprises**



2. Coordination of Programs and Services

Helping New Brunswickers access the programs and services they need.

4. **Review of government programs, services and tax policies**
5. **Implementation of One-Stop-Shop (211NB)**



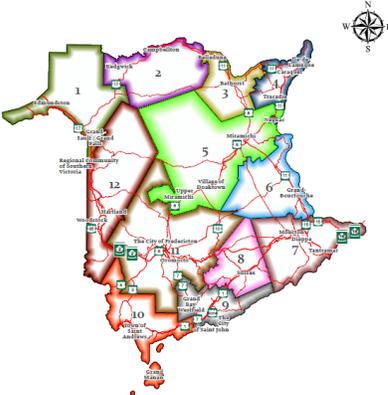
3. Inclusion and Healthy Communities

Helping New Brunswickers live with dignity.

6. **Improved access to mental health/addiction services**
7. **Regional Transportation services**
8. **Opportunities for sport, recreation and leisure activities**
9. **School Food programs**

Community Inclusion Networks

The Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation oversees 12 Community Inclusion Networks (CINs). The CINs’ objectives are to identify, through a collaborative process, regional poverty issues and priorities; and to develop and implement a regional poverty reduction plan that aligns with the OPT plans.



The CINs, now integrated with the Regional Service Commissions (RSCs), are at the heart of building community capacity and raising the level of engagement through collective and collaborative impact. They play a coordination role with local organizations and support them in the development and implementation of diverse community projects that promote economic and social inclusion with the aim of reducing poverty. The CINs provide a new model for economic and social inclusion. Rather than relying on the various levels of government to eradicate poverty, ESIC in partnerships with the CINs have empowered communities and individuals to participate in and contribute to poverty reduction in New Brunswick.

There were several meetings between ESIC and the CINs during 2022-2023. These meetings provide an opportunity for the CINs and ESIC to share information, knowledge, resources and best practices. Meetings were held by videoconference due to restrictions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, with one face-to-face meeting taking place for the first time since the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020.

ESIC provides financial resources and support to the CINs. Projects funded by ESIC generate community engagement that comes in various ways: financial contribution, in-kind donations and volunteer time. The percentage of community investment per project is a representation of this community engagement.

Provincial picture:



Note: These numbers reflect projects that received funding from ESIC. The CINs were involved in additional community development projects that were not funded by ESIC.

During this year of transition, ESIC and the CINs stayed the course by focusing on three priority actions to deliver essential support to vulnerable New Brunswickers: Transportation, Food Security and Community Capacity.

The CINs demonstrate a high level of adaptability and creativity in offering services to communities. They work continuously to develop, maintain, and expand their services, particularly those related to transportation. While many ESIC funds are directed to these essential transportation services, efforts are made by the CINs to seek available funding from many external organizations to ensure the continuation of various programs, such as food security.

While COVID-19 restrictions have been easing up in the past fiscal year, the ESIC Team has resumed participating in conventions and annual meetings to promote OPT3, the Community Transportation services and the integration of the CINs with the Regional Service Commissions (RSCs).

As of March 31, 2023, 12 community transportation services funded by ESIC were in operation in New Brunswick.

Over 454 volunteers contributed to the transportation services throughout New Brunswick. They ensured that services like the delivery of food and other goods to households without transport were maintained and carried out safely and efficiently. These dedicated people have also put a lot of time and effort to keep services running during the pandemic. These people brought support to community transportation and delivery of essential goods in a time where New Brunswickers needed it the most. This ensured that communities could keep benefiting for services, even in the different phases of lockdown in the province.

ESIC will continue to closely monitor the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of New Brunswickers and adjust its efforts based on this everchanging situation, as well as related data and evidence as it becomes available. ESIC believes New Brunswick will emerge stronger from the pandemic, thanks to the resilience of all New Brunswickers.

Here is a list of funded projects that took place in the last year:

Note: The Community Inclusion Networks names and numbers have changed following their integration to the Regional Service Commissions January 1st, 2023. They are presented below with their new names and regions, with their old names in brackets.

Region 1

Northwest Community Inclusion Network (Northwest Community Inclusion Network #4)

- **Green Friendships** – Improving access to healthy food and reducing isolation of vulnerable persons
- **Déplacement Nord-Ouest – Urban/Rural Rides** – Launch of transportation service
- **School Food Program Facilitator** – Implementation of sustainable school feeding programs

Region 2

Restigouche Community Inclusion Network (Restigouche Community Inclusion Network #5)

- **Restigouche Community Transportation** – Community Transportation Coordination for the Restigouche region (pulled from the former CIN region 4)
- **A Healthy Mind in a Healthy Body** – Providing healthy meals
- **School Le Galion at the table** – Purchase of equipment and coordination of providing school food program
- **Mosaïque Market** – Distribution of healthy snacks on the weekend in territory of Bois-Joli
- **Reopening of school cafeteria** – Providing hot meals at the school

Region 3

Chaleur Community Inclusion Network (Chaleur Community Inclusion Network #6)

- **Chaleur Community Transportation** – Alternative transportation system for the Chaleur region (pulled from the former CIN region 6)

Region 4

Community Inclusion Network Acadian Peninsula (Community Inclusion Network Acadian Peninsula #12)

- **Déplacement Péninsule** – Community-based transportation program that include dial-a-ride type service and carpooling (pulled from the former CIN region 12)
- **Inclusive activities for all** – Providing access to inclusive opportunities for sports and various activities for children and seniors
- **Planète jeunesse** – Implementation of recommendations from survey completed by young people to improve access to mental health and addictions services
- **Breakfast for children of Acadian Peninsula** – To increase awareness to accessibility of school food programs

Region 5

Greater Miramichi Community Inclusion Network (Northumberland Community Inclusion #7)

- **Northumberland Community Transportation** – Community transportation needs and provide a service delivery model for the Northumberland region (pulled from the former CIN region 7)
- **Northumberland Regional School Food Program (Phase1)** – To improve the health being of children, youth, and their families by increasing access to food and providing resources to the schools and their surrounding communities

Region 6

Kent Community Inclusion Network (Kent Community Inclusion Network #11)

- **Community Transportation** – Dial-a-ride volunteer driver program providing key service to the most vulnerable in Kent County (pulled from the former CIN region 11)
- **Building food resiliency in Kent County schools** – Support of mental wellbeing and learning of children in Kent area by making school food programs available
- **Initiative Je prête l'oreille** – Organize and promote a series of SafeTALK and ASIST workshops to reduce mental health stigma
- **Initiative P.R.O. Jeunesse Kent** – Evaluate feasibility of PRO Jeunesse in Kent area to support young people in accessing sports, recreational and cultural activities

Region 7

South-East Community Inclusion Network (Westmorland-Albert Action #1)

- **Urban/Rural Rides** – Volunteer driver program (pulled from the former CIN Region 1) – To provide a community transportation service for the Northumberland region

Region 8

Kings Community Inclusion Network (formerly part of Living SJ and Sussex Wellness Network #2)

No projects

Region 9

Fundy Community Inclusion Network (Living SJ and Sussex Wellness Network #2)

No projects

Region 10

Southwest Community Inclusion Network (Vibrant Communities Charlotte County #8)

- **Charlotte Dial-a-Ride** – Volunteer Driver Program (pulled from the former CIN region 8)
- **ASAP @ SSMS – Skating** – To provide a healthy physical activity for the youth of our school
- **VMES Student Chefs** – To hire a coordinator to help implement food security project - Teach students how to be self-sufficient in taking care of their own nutritional need

- **Recovery Peer Support for women in outlying communities in Charlotte County and region** – Connect women in outlying communities with individualized peer support and connection to Sophia Recovery Centre programming
- **Fundy Shores - Recreation/Leisure Library Phase 1** – Encourage Active Living and Social Inclusion by Providing equipment that can be borrowed from a resource library
- **Microwaves for Campobello Island Consolidated School** – To purchase equipment to ensure that all students have access to hot lunch items at the school. We want to make sure that all our children are fed.
- **Our Amazing Place** - Increasing inclusive opportunities and focused design elements in leisure activity Our Amazing Place

Region 11

Capital Social Inclusion and Community Development (Greater Fredericton Community Inclusion Network #3)

- **Urban/Rural Rides-Fredericton region** – An affordable Transportation service in the region (pulled from the former CIN region 3)
- **Creating Inclusive Recreational Opportunities in Harvey** – To work with community partners to provide inclusive opportunities for sport, recreation, and leisure activities, offered through the Harvey Community Center
- **Creating Inclusive Recreational Opportunities in Nackawic** – To create a space and develop programming to provide social, recreational and sport activities for seniors living in the communities of Nackawic, Millville and Dumfries; to overcome barriers to participation such as affordability and transportation, for the purpose of improving their quality of life, as well as physical and mental health and wellness
- **Creating People, Place and Purpose at Hayes Farm** – Creating the opportunity to grow “people, place and purpose” for individuals struggling with the crippling mental anxiety associated with living on low income and situations of continuous scarcity of resources
- **Infrastructure Needs for School Breakfast Program** – To ensure that required equipment to feed children through a universal, free breakfast program is available at each school. In addition, new volunteer recruits will receive required Food Safety training certification.
- **Outreach and Inclusion through Geocaching in Capital Region** – To increase awareness of geocaching as a recreation and social opportunity for people and communities in the Capital Region (with specific focus on groups that may traditionally have barriers to participating in recreation opportunities – low income New Brunswickers, seniors, people with different physical abilities, etc.)
- **Promoting Mental Health in Harvey** – To offer a Community Education Day on Mental Health to be held in April 2023, spearheaded by the Harvey Community Hospital Foundation, with a focus on empowering the community to support each other in addressing mental health issues and to raise awareness of available resources

Region 12

Western Valley Community Inclusion Network (Carleton-Victoria Community Inclusion Network # 10)

- **Urban Rural Ride Western Valley** – To provide affordable transportation to seniors and low-income families to reduce the effects of aging, poverty, and isolation

Transportation Services Success Story

Michael has been using *Urban/Rural Rides* for several years now. He has been dealing with a multitude of medical needs and relies on *Urban/Rural Rides* for his transportation into the city for his appointments.

“They are always kind when I interact with them – the drivers and the staff. They listen and are very helpful. Volunteer drivers give up their time to make sure I get to my appointments. That makes me feel like I matter because someone is willing to give up their own time to help me.”

“The benefit of this service goes well beyond the ride itself. I have a lot of health issues and I am in constant pain. However, when I am in the car having a friendly conversation with a driver, I am distracted in a way. I feel better. My pain is lower for a time because I am interacting with someone.” said Michael.

Michael is one example of the many lives being changed one ride at a time. This service ensures people get to their appointments and opens up opportunities for friendly conversations and interaction. Users know that they matter enough for someone to take the time to help them. This goes a long way to improving the lives of those without transportation who may be isolated from people and services.

Projects and Initiatives Update

Local Governance Reform

The Government of New Brunswick has undertaken a local governance reform to better support viable communities and regions around the province.

In November 2021, the government released the White Paper [Working together for vibrant and sustainable communities](#) outlining the reform. As a result, the twelve Regional Services Commissions (RSCs) already in place in the province will benefit from enhanced authority and resources to better support community development and programs locally and regionally.

Regional Service Commissions mandate has been expanded to include community development, regional transportation, and social focus in urban centres. ESIC is called upon to play a major role in the development and implementation of certain focus areas that are part of the RSCs extended mandate:

Community development

The commissions will play an important role to ensure a coherent regional vision and plan in areas such as affordable housing, newcomer settlement services and diversity promotion, social inclusion and healthy communities. This will be supported by the integration of the Community Inclusion Networks within the Regional Service Commissions. The Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation will partner with the commissions. A stronger cooperative approach will help ensure that investments in infrastructure and programs are more effectively delivered within regions and have a greater overall impact.

Regional transportation (community transit)

Community and regional transportation services provide people with access to medical care, food, family support, banking services, and vital connections to their communities. In some cases, Regional Service Commissions are leading or participating in community transportation initiatives. The commissions will be tasked with bringing stakeholders and local governments together, in collaboration with the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation, to develop and implement strategies and services to better serve residents.

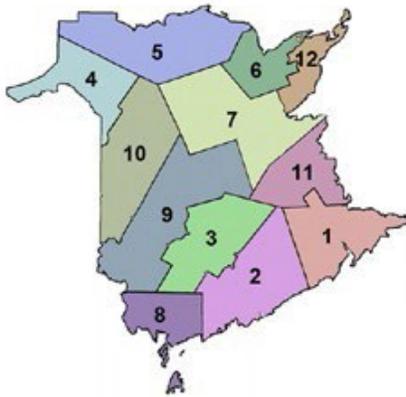
Additional social focus

To recognize the critical challenges posed by a growing vulnerable population settling in larger urban centres, the Regional Service Commissions of South-East, Fundy and Capital region will provide a regional approach to address the most urgent pressures starting in 2024, with the other regions deciding their own timelines to address their specific challenges. Specifically, these commissions will partner with government departments and existing local organizations to fund service delivery in the areas of homelessness, poverty reduction and mental health.

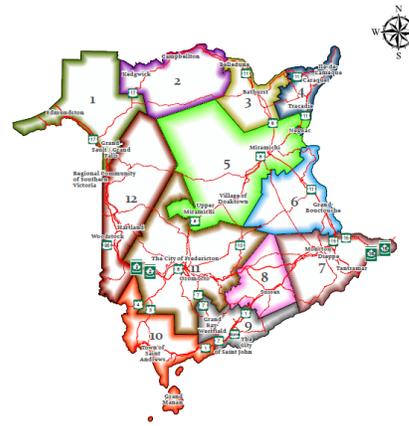
As soon as the reform was announced, ESIC initiated a process of collaboration and partnership with the various stakeholders of the reform, in particular the RSCs, GNB officials, a working committee and government-appointed transition leaders, as well as the current CINs' representatives. As stipulated in the reform, the CINs integrated their respective RSCs on January 1st, 2023, and continue working on their specific Priority Actions already established in OPT3. RSCs may assign other responsibilities to their CINs, as per the requirements laid out in the Local Governance Reform. RSCs became the host organization of their regional CIN and are now responsible for its management and operation. They will continue carrying out the implementation of OPT3 and other tasks to expand community development based on needs and capacities.

The integration of CINs into RSCs has resulted in some changes to their names, geographic boundaries, including region number. The illustration below presents two maps of the province: the first shows the region numbers and geographical limits of the RICs before their integration into the RSCs. The second map shows the new map of the CINs integrated into the RSCs.

Map 1 – Former CIN Regions



Map 2 – New RSC/CINs Regions



For the list of communities included in each RSC, please visit [Regions Regulation – Regional Service Delivery Act](#).

211NB

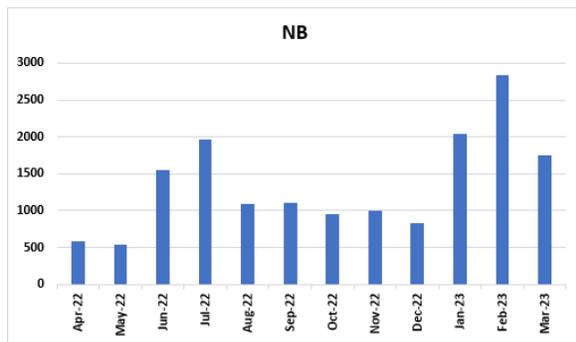
211NB, a free and confidential resource to help New Brunswickers navigate services was launched in October 2020 by the provincial government in partnership with the federal government, the United Way and ESIC. 211NB is an information and referral service that connects New Brunswickers to critical human, social, community and government support. This service helps people navigate government and community programs and services quickly to find what they need for their unique situation. Phones are answered 24/7, 365 days a year, in both official languages and 170 other languages through interpretation services.

The website www.nb.211.ca was launched in August 2021, with a search function for accessing information on community resources. An online chat service was activated in November 2021.

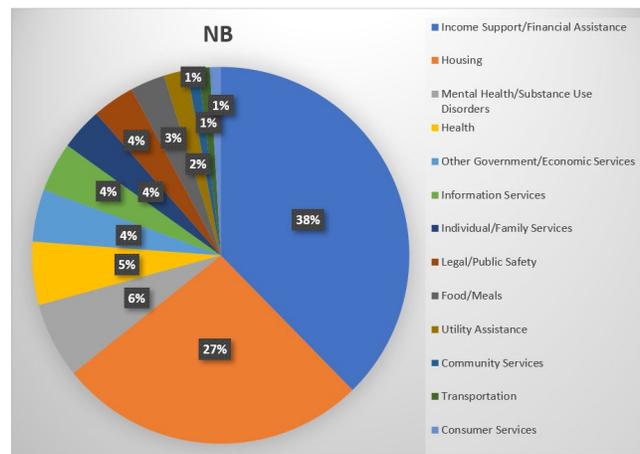
211NB has provided much-needed support to citizens to help navigate services and resources, like housing and food access, mental health services, services to seniors and youth, and much more. The program has helped fill many gaps, especially during the pandemic.

The call volume has been increasing in 2022-2023, particularly with new initiatives such as the fuel and housing benefit. From April 1st, 2022, to March 31st, 2023, a total of 16,266 contacts were answered by 211NB Navigators. Another 608 conversations took place via chat, email or social media. Most of the calls were seeking information on temporary financial assistance, housing expense assistance and basic income programs. Over 42,000 users visited www.nb.211.ca at least once since its launch in August 2021.

Number of calls received from April 2022 to March 2023



Identified Needs of Calls from April 2022 to March 2023



211 Success Story

A 211NB Service Navigator took a call from a female older adult who was looking for a free cellular phone. The lady also let the Service Navigator know that she had a visual impairment.

The Service Navigator searched for resources. She found a program that gives eligible persons with visual impairments free smartphones loaded with accessible apps. The organization also provides training on how people with visual impairments can use smartphones. The caller was happy to hear of this service and said that she would contact them.

Canada Learning Bond

ESIC is leading in New Brunswick the promotion of the Canada Learning Bond (CLB) which is a benefit program offered by the Department of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). The CLB is free money for children born after 2004, in a family whose net income is less than \$49,020 or for a family of up to three kids.

Eligible children receive \$500 and will receive \$100 more for each year they are eligible (to age 15 or a maximum of \$2,000). Benefits are also available for all the years the child was eligible prior to the application. The money must be deposited into an appropriate child's Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) and can be used to help pay for education or training after high school. An ESIC staff member is also the National Co-Chair for ESDC's CLB Champions Network which is a working group of cross-Canada organizations that actively promote the CLB.

ESIC and ESDC collaborated on a February 2023 mail-out to over 54,000 eligible parents and children, informing them about the *Get Your Benefits* income tax Super Clinics and that they could obtain information about the CLB application process at a clinic. Many parents visited these Super Clinic to find out how to register for the CLB, receive tips on how to open an RESP and for some, to visit Service Canada and get their Social Insurance Number.

COVID-19 impacted the promotion and the accessibility to register children for the CLB in NB and across Canada. From the past year's experiences, plans are being developed to research the option of a fully online application process and a launch of a provincial CLB campaign.

Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy

[*Opportunity for All – Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy*](#), was launched in August 2018 with the vision to help reduce poverty, support Canadians working hard to join the middle class and build a diverse, prosperous and truly inclusive country where everyone benefits from economic growth – a country where all Canadians can realize their full potential.

Opportunity for All recognizes that poverty is about more than money. In addition to tracking the incidence of poverty (through the *Market Basket Measure*), the Government of Canada has committed to developing a dashboard of indicators to monitor other meaningful dimensions of poverty, including: food insecurity, unmet health needs, unmet housing needs and chronic homelessness, deep income poverty, literacy and numeracy, the number of youth (aged 15-24) who are not in employment, education or training, the proportion of Canadians in relative low income, the bottom 40 per cent income share, the median hourly wage, poverty entry and exit rates, the average poverty gap, and asset resilience (as measured by the ability to cover expenses for three months from savings).

The global target of the federal plan is to reduce poverty by 20% by 2020 and by 50% by 2030, compared to the 2015 level, as measured by the *Market Basket Measure*. The 50% poverty reduction target aligns with one of the [United Nations 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals](#) that Canada adopted in 2015. The target for ESIC's OPT3 also aligns with the federal plan.

Changes to the Employment Standards Act

Department of Postsecondary, Education, Training and Labor is completing the statutory review of minimum wage. The issue of annual indexation of the minimum wage has been addressed. In December 2021, government announced that it will increase the minimum wage by \$2 per hour in 2022. A scheduled increase of \$1 per hour in April and another \$1 per hour increase in October will boost the province's minimum wage to \$13.75 per hour, the top rate in Atlantic Canada. The 17 per cent increase represents the most significant jump in the rate since 1980.

Financial Education Network

The Financial Education Network (FEN) is a group of government, non-profit, and private organizations that have come together to provide New Brunswickers with increased access to the knowledge, skills and tools needed to help them make responsible and informed financial decisions. ESIC is one of the founding members of FEN and an ESIC staff member chairs the New Brunswick Network.

The mission of FEN is to create and maintain a province-wide network of trusted leaders in financial literacy information and education creating a more financially literate province by providing improved access to easy-to-understand tools and resources for all New Brunswickers. FEN's strength is the collaborative network of individuals sharing resources, materials and information to better service New Brunswickers.

Get Your Benefits – Income Tax filing program

In 2011, ESIC started collaborating with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and the Department of Social Development (SD) of New Brunswick to promote Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP). The program, called *Get Your Benefits* in New Brunswick, has been greatly promoted by ESIC ever since. Individuals and families on low income who do not file their yearly income tax miss out on several provincial and federal tax credits and benefits that will help improve their lives, as eligibility to these programs is income based. This project has helped New Brunswickers access over \$424 million in benefits for their families.

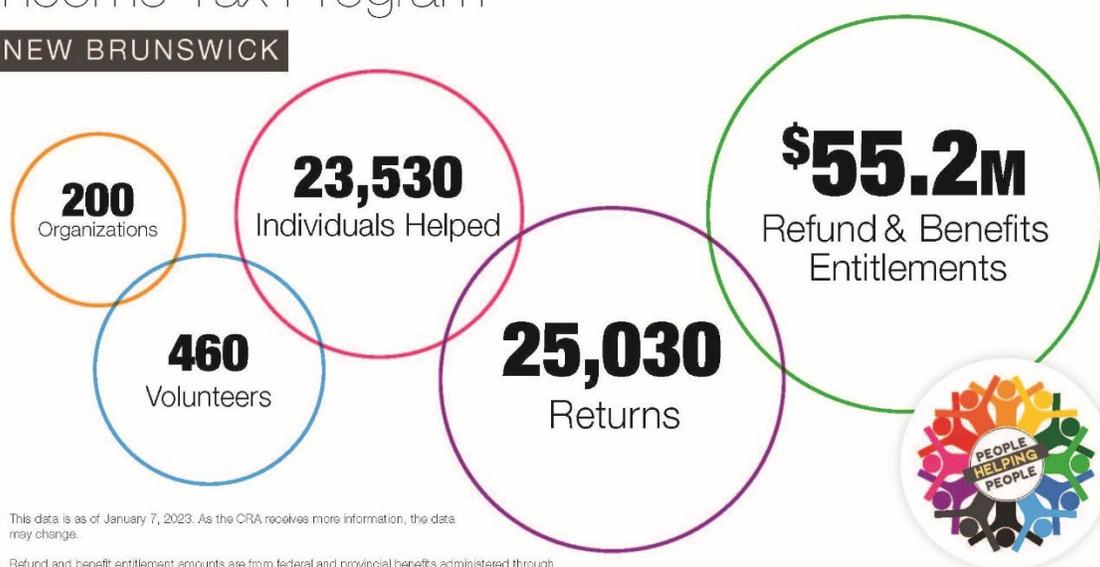
The strength of New Brunswick's *Get Your Benefits* project continues to be the collaborative partnerships developed amongst the organizations. ESIC is project lead and assists CRA in connecting with individuals and communities, enabling the program to expand throughout the province. *Get Your Benefits* is unique in that it is a provincially operated program connecting provincial and federal departments and agencies like Service Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada and the New Brunswick Public Library Service.

During the 2023 tax season ESIC, CRA and Service Canada collaborated to host eight Super Clinics across NB: Edmundston, Saint John, Fredericton, Woodstock, Moncton, Bathurst and Tracadie-Sheila. The highlights of the Super Clinics were the visits of the Department of National Revenue's Chief of Staff, Faizel Gulamhussein to the Saint John Clinic and the Honourable Diane Lebouthillier, Minister of National Revenue to the Shediac and Moncton Super Clinics. They met and chatted with clinic organizers and volunteers.

Community Volunteer Income Tax Program

2022

NEW BRUNSWICK



1 This data is as of January 7, 2023. As the CRA receives more information, the data may change.

2 Refund and benefit entitlement amounts are from federal and provincial benefits administered through the CRA. The amounts apply to current and prior-year income tax and benefit returns filed through the CVITP from January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022.

3 The listed province/territory is where the individual was a resident on December 31, 2022, as reported on their return. An individual can have multiple returns (current and previous years) filed under more than one province or territory. Provincial/territorial totals will not add up to national totals. This is because national totals include counts for those whose province/territory of residence could not be identified when the data was gathered.

4 All data have been rounded.

canada.ca/taxes-help · canada.ca/taxes-volunteer

Food Security

Food security is dependent on a healthy and sustainable food system that ensures healthy food is available now and for future generations. Production, distribution, access, consumption, disposal and education are needed to achieve food security. As of June 2020, [Food Depot Alimentaire](#) is the organization responsible for Food Bank management in the province. There are 65 member agencies registered with Food Depot Alimentaire.

Under the Inclusion and Healthy Communities pillar of OPT3, ESIC is addressing food security through partnerships and connections. The Corporation is working with school food programs and the various community food security stakeholders to focus on gathering details on regional programs, as well as implementing, monitoring, participating in provincial working groups. Support is also offered for seeking grant opportunities from parties other than ESIC, as many funding opportunities from different organizations became available in the wake of the pandemic.

As an active member of the New Brunswick Food Security Action Network Advisory Committee, the Corporation partners with stakeholders in government and among non-profit organizations to promote connectedness, alignment and engagement around food in the province.

Below, an account of food security activities in place

- Ongoing support for the CINs to assist in coordinating efforts;
- Sharing of information on available new sources of funding to the CINs and their partners;
- The CINs kept an up-to-date regional list of community food security resources which was shared back to ESIC and Social Development and offered support and advice to their partners.

Healthy Smiles, Clear Vision

Healthy Smiles, Clear Vision is New Brunswick's dental and vision plan for children of families with low income who do not have dental and vision coverage through any other government program or private insurance plan. Developed under the first *Overcoming Poverty Together* plan, this program continues to provide access to dental and vision care for vulnerable children in NB.

As of December 31, 2022, a total of 16,371 New Brunswick children had access to the program.

Inclusive Sports, Leisure and Recreation

Reimagining Access to Sport, Recreation and Leisure

ESIC has been leading the work with the Faculty of Kinesiology at the University of New Brunswick Kinesiology and the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage (THC) of New Brunswick to develop and implement the *Reimagining Access to Sport, Recreation and Leisure* project. The aim of the project is to break down barriers to participation in sport, recreation and leisure (RSL) for equity deserving New Brunswickers on low income.

During the fiscal year, extensive background research has been conducted, including:

- A literature review that focused on enabling and constraining factors influencing participation in SRL for people most likely experiencing poverty (ethnic and racial groups, single-parent households, older adults, individuals living with disabilities, and Indigenous peoples) and promising practices, programs and policies supporting poverty reduction and access to SRL
- A focus group with the ESIC Working Group Committee (made up of 25 multi-sectorial provincial members) provided insights into the challenges and opportunities within their sector that influence access to SRL for equity-deserving residents.
- A poverty reduction stakeholder map and SRL asset maps for Restigouche and Charlotte County regions were created.
- Introductory conversations and interviews with 43 poverty reduction stakeholders and SRL providers in Restigouche and Charlotte County were held. These conversations highlighted the opportunities available in their communities and the challenges many providers face when supporting equity-deserving residents.

- Twelve community connectors were identified; they assisted with coordinating and planning community engagement workshops (CEWs) in their communities.
- Eleven CEWs were facilitated in Restigouche and Charlotte County.
- Six citizen-led design workshops were facilitated from mid-February to late March 2023. The design committee identified key problems and brainstormed possible concepts to test and evaluate in communities across Restigouche and Charlotte County.

Lending objects through libraries

ESIC teamed up with The New Brunswick Public Library Service (NBPLS) to provide funding for the purchase of objects to loan from public libraries that support sport, recreation, and leisure (particularly among low-income families). The funds are divided equally between the five library regions of NBPLS, and objects are purchased for all age groups.

Lending objects through libraries has the following benefits:

- Gives patrons access to a wide range of tools, equipment, and activities that they might not be able to afford.
- Gives patrons access to tools and equipment that are only needed occasionally.
- Gives newcomers a chance to try culturally specific activities for free (ex. snowshoeing, skiing).
- Helps to promote physical wellness, mental health, sustainability, and more.
- Helps new patrons discover library services.

The main sports and leisure items that the 63 public libraries have acquired for their communities include:

- Board Games
- Snowshoes
- Ukuleles
- Washer Toss Games
- Sleds
- Pickleball Sets
- Skateboards
- Tennis Racquets
- Walking/Hiking Poles
- Scooters

In 2022-2023, items purchased through this program were borrowed 889 times.

Mental Health and Addiction

The Department of Health has announced a new [Inter-Departmental Addiction and Mental Health Action Plan](#) in 2021. This plan aims to improve population health and access to services, to intervene with the population earlier, and to reduce drug-related impact.

ESIC supports the provincial strategy by funding projects and initiatives at the local and regional levels.

National Advisory Council on Poverty

To ensure continued accountability to Canadians on poverty reduction, the Government of Canada created a [National Advisory Council on Poverty](#) (Advisory Council) in 2019. The mandate of the Advisory Council is to provide independent advice to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development on poverty reduction; to annually report on the progress achieved toward reducing the level of poverty by 20% by 2020 and by 50% by 2030 relative to the 2015 level; to continue a dialogue with Canadians on poverty; and to undertake any activity specified by the Minister.

ESIC is committed to continued collaboration with stakeholders through the Advisory Council on Poverty and work in alignment with the Government of Canada to enhance the economic and social inclusion of New Brunswick residents.

[The 2022 Report of the National Advisory Council on Poverty: Transforming our Systems.](#)

New Brunswick Drug Plan

Developed under the first *Overcoming Poverty Together* plan, the New Brunswick Drug Plan provides prescription drug coverage for New Brunswickers without drug insurance. The plan covers more than 5,000 prescription drugs, including many high-cost drugs. The premiums and maximum copayments are based on the annual family income, as indicated on the Canada Revenue Agency tax return for the year immediately preceding the current year. All adult plan members pay monthly premiums to be part of the plan. Children 18 and younger will not pay premiums but a parent must be enrolled in the plan.

The New Brunswick Drug Plan is available to all New Brunswick residents who:

- Have an active Medicare card;
- Do not have existing drug coverage (through a private plan or a government program); or
- Have existing drug coverage but it does not cover a specific drug that is included in the drug plan formulary or the resident has reached his or her yearly or lifetime maximum for drug coverage.

NB Drug Plan Enrolment			
<i>Note: On November 1, 2022, the number of premium levels – based on income – increased from 6 to 21, to ensure a balanced is maintained between affordability for members and cost for government. The additional premium levels provide a more gradual change when premiums increase, thus eliminating situations where plan members have a large increase in their premium due to a small growth to their income.</i>			
Fiscal Year	2021-2022		2022-2023
Total members enrolled	16,498		16,768
Total number (%) of members paying the three lowest premiums (\$200, \$400 and \$800/year premium)	9,498 (57%)	Total number (%) of members paying the three lowest premiums (\$66, \$133 and \$266/year premium)	5,611 (33%)
Number (%) of members paying \$200/year	3,855 (23%)	Number (%) of members paying \$66/year	4,754 (28%)
Number (%) of members paying \$400/year	1,894 (11%)	Number (%) of members paying \$133/year	467 (3%)
Number (%) of members paying \$800/year	3,749 (23%)	Number (%) of members paying \$266/year	390 (2.3%)

Source: Department of Health New Brunswick Drug Plan database and NB Drug Plan Dashboard.

Promotion and Awareness

During 2022-2023, ESIC's promotion focused primarily on supporting the Community Inclusion Networks with their integration with their respective Regional Service Commissions. ESIC also extensively promoted the New Brunswick *Get Your Benefits* clinics through provincial social media posts, radio, print and sharing of information through various communities' supportive programs. ESIC also participated in conferences and annual meetings of the following organizations:

- Association of Municipal Administrators of New Brunswick
- Association francophone des municipalités du Nouveau-Brunswick
- Cities of New Brunswick Association
- Union of Municipalities of New Brunswick
- New Brunswick Non-Profit Housing Association
- New Brunswick Association of Family Resource Centres

Review of Government Programs, Services and Tax Policies

The review of government programs, services and tax policies aims to simplify and ensure effectiveness of these programs and services to better support New Brunswick residents.

For the 2022 taxation year, the basic personal amount increased from \$10,817 to \$11,720, and the Low-Income Tax Reduction threshold from \$18,268 to \$19,177. As a result, as single tax filer with income up to \$19,177 will not pay provincial personal income tax for 2022. For families, the income threshold – where no provincial income tax is paid – is higher than a single individual.

The government of New Brunswick is expected to release a provincial housing strategy in early summer 2023.

Social Assistance Reform

As part of OPT3, ESIC has pledged to conduct a social assistance reform to remove barriers to employment and provide adequate income support for citizens who do not have the capacity to work.

On October 1st, 2021, the government of New Brunswick brought changes to social assistance programs increase financial to increase support to social assistance recipients:

- Social assistance recipients no longer have their benefits reduced if they are also receiving child support payments, the Canada-New Brunswick Housing Benefit or compensatory money related to personal injury.
- The wage exemption, which allows clients to keep a portion of their income assistance benefits while being employed, has been increased. Social assistance recipients can now keep up to \$500 of income earned each month, plus 50 cents of each additional dollar earned over \$500.
- Nurse practitioners are now authorized to sign medical forms for social assistance clients who are applying for disability designation.
- Social assistance benefits for clients living with parents or spending less than 25 per cent of their monthly assistance payment on housing, will no longer be reduced.
- The changes also include an updated definition of deaf in social assistance programs to facilitate better assessments for people who are hearing impaired.
- Indexation of all social assistance rates to inflation. This means that on April 1, each year, social assistance rates will be increased by the percentage change in the New Brunswick Consumer Price Index.

More investment for social assistant clients is expected in the Spring of 2023.

More details on the reform can be seen at [Social Assistance Reform 2021](#).

Social Enterprise

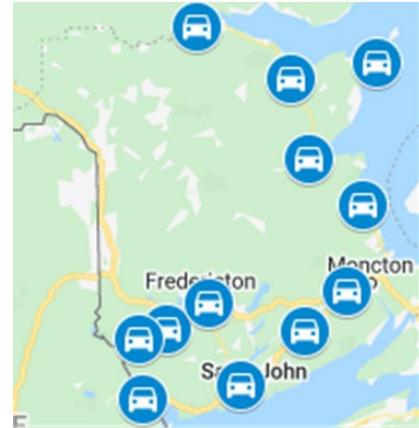
Engagement and planning activities with key Social Enterprise stakeholders in New Brunswick is ongoing. During this fiscal year, as part of a partnership with ESIC, the Pond-Deshpande Centre at UNB is facilitating the New Brunswick Social Enterprise Advisory Council, composed of key provincial SE advocates and decision makers. The committee provides ongoing key stakeholder advice, input, and networking support and members meet quarterly.

In fiscal year 2022-2023, ESIC has launched a new social finance fund to increase the capacity and sustainability of social enterprises within non-profit organizations in the province. The fund, including the application and granting process, is managed by CBDC Chaleur, in Bathurst.

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.

One of OPT3's Priority Actions is to develop and implement regional transportation plans to increase accessibility, affordability and availability of transportation services. Inclusion transportation has been included as a priority action since OPT1 and has continued to grow through OPT2. In 2017, ESIC's Rural and Urban Transportation Advisory Committee – made up of stakeholders from various sectors with an expertise related to transportation issues in New Brunswick – developed and submitted to government a sustainable transportation strategy for NB to improve access to community transportation: [FromSurfacesToServices.pdf \(gnb.ca\)](#). Since then, community transportation programs have come a long way. With OPT3 coming into play, the CINs worked persistently to increase the offering of transportation services as it became the main focus during the pandemic.



At the outbreak of COVID-19 in mid-March 2020, ESIC had promptly developed specific protocols – including help with the procurement of personal protection equipment for drivers and passengers to aid with the safe operation of transportation services in the province. An Ad Hoc Committee was created to work in collaboration with provincial police forces, the RCMP, the New Brunswick Emergency Measures Organization and the Department of Public Safety. A [directory of independent community transportation services](#) has also been developed.

ESIC provides the administrative and financial support necessary for the establishment and operation of transportation services by promoting links between the various services to improve the operating model. ESIC also offers support for implementing, monitoring, maintaining the Community/Regional transportation program while collaboratively expanding a community program to a regional focus, participating in the provincial transportation group(s) and actively seeking grant opportunities from parties other than ESIC. ESIC additionally acts as a link between community services and the main stakeholders and decision makers at the provincial level.

As part of the local governance reform that took effect on January 1st, 2023, in New Brunswick, the province's twelve Regional Service Commissions (RSCs) were given the mandate to provide regional leadership with respect to regional transportation and community transit. To optimize these efforts and the pooling of resources, RSCs are tasked with bringing stakeholders and local governments together, in collaboration with ESIC, to further develop and implement strategies and services to better serve residents.

Symposium on Transportation

On March 22-23, 2023, more than 200 persons with an interest, mandate, knowledge, or experience with respect to passenger transportation participated in a symposium on public and community transportation in New Brunswick hosted by ESIC. Guest speakers and exhibitors shared experiences and innovations to inspire participants, decision makers, elected officials, actors, and stakeholders in the development of public and community transportation services.

Participants were given the opportunity to be grouped together by region so they could take stock of how passenger transportation services are organized and identify actions for promoting the development of public and community transportation services within their respective jurisdictions. The symposium was therefore able to mobilize the province's dynamic forces and lay the foundation for the harmonious development of public and community transportation services adapted to the needs of New Brunswick's different communities.



Some of the work accomplished in the fiscal year with respect to transportation services:

- Coordination of weekly transportation working group meetings and provincial transportation meetings to ensure an efficient and safe transition toward new COVID-19 measures;
- Collaboration with the resilience teams on transportation;
- Collaboration with Vitalité Health Network for patient transportation;
- Creation of a working group in the Acadian Peninsula for the development of a transportation strategy;
- Creation of a web page dedicated to transportation services;
- Creation of promotional videos to spread awareness of transportation services throughout the province;
- Creation of a volunteer recruitment strategy.

From March 2020 to March 31, 2023:

Number of kilometers driven by volunteers

+2,297,718

Average number of drives per year

28,078

Number of volunteer hours

21,117

Transportation Services Success Story

"Your regional transportation service was integral in allowing my mother, who was living in Halifax, to move closer to home in New Brunswick. She is a senior on low income with a disability that requires her to use a motorized wheelchair to get everywhere. Luckily for us, your regional transportation service has an electric van that allows for wheelchair access. Without this valuable service my mother would have been unable to move closer to home. Thank you so much for your invaluable service to the community."

9 Priority Actions – Progress

Overcoming Poverty Together 3

Ongoing

The priority action is in continued progress and is not meant to have a final completion date.

In progress

The priority action has started and is in progress towards completion.

Completed

The priority action is done, and the objective been attained.

Action	Status of Action
Pillar 1: Income Security	
<p>1. Conduct a social assistance reform to remove barriers to employment for employable clients and provide adequate income support for multi-barriered clients who do not have the capacity to work.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Social assistance recipients are eligible to receive more income as a result of facing fewer deductions and having their assistance rates indexed annually to the change in NB-Consumer Price Index.</p> <p>Changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits no longer reduced if clients also receiving child support payments, the Can-NB Housing Benefit or compensatory money re personal injury. • Wage exemption increased, allowing clients to keep up to \$500 of income earned each month, plus 50 cents of each dollar earned over \$500. • Clients no longer have social assistance reduced if living with parents or spending less than 25% of monthly assistance on housing. • Updated definition of deaf in SA programs, as per stakeholders. • Nurse practitioners authorized to sign medical forms for SA clients applying for disability designation. • Indexing of all SA rates to annual inflation • Reforming the definition of Economic Unit / Household income policy to increase housing options for recipients. • The first \$200 of CPP (monthly, per case) is now exempt for clients on SA
<p>2. Consult on changes to the <i>Employment Standards Act</i> to better support low-income workers by addressing the overtime rate, improving sick leave provisions, repealing the exemption of domestic workers and benchmarking the minimum wage to the Atlantic average by 2021, which would continue to be indexed annually.</p>	<p>In Progress</p> <p>PETL senior leaders are reviewing a draft plan for consultation on the ESA.</p> <p>Current minimum wage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 1, 2022 – increased to \$12.75 per hour • October 1, 2022 – increased to \$13.75 per hour • April 1, 2023 – increased to \$14.75 per hour

	<p>The minimum overtime wage rate to increase from \$17.63 per hour to \$19.13 per hour as of April 1, 2022, and to \$20.63 per hour as of October 1, 2022.</p> <p>The minimum wage has been annually indexed to the NB CPI since March 2019, and is set automatically on April 1 of each year.</p>
<p>3. Make investments through a new social finance fund to increase the capacity and sustainability of social enterprises within non-profit organizations in New Brunswick.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Access to GNB supports for SE development in NB has been established.</p> <p>Partnerships: <u>Pond-Deshpande Centre (PDC):</u> Delivers training, assistance, website and provides support to Advisory Committee</p> <p><u>CBDC Chaleur:</u> Manages the Social Enterprise Investment and Development Fund provided by ESIC – Special project</p> <p>Launched an SE training platform for non-profit organizations.</p>
<p>Pillar 2: Coordination of Program and Services</p>	
<p>4. Conduct a review of government programs, services and tax policies targeted to low-income individuals and families to eliminate areas of duplication, simplify complex application requirements, and ensure program effectiveness to better support New Brunswick residents.</p>	<p>In Progress</p> <p>A complete review of GNB programs, services and tax policies targeted to low-income individuals and families can only be fully undertaken after the pandemic ends.</p> <p>For the 2022 taxation year, the basic personal amount increased from \$10,817 to \$11,720 and the Low-Income Tax Reduction threshold from \$18,268 to \$19,177.</p> <p>As a result, a single tax filer with income up to \$19,177 will not pay provincial personal income tax for 2022. For families, the income threshold where no provincial income tax is paid is higher than a single individual. The LITR is phased out, so it benefits other lower-income New Brunswickers as well.</p>
<p>5. Implement a One-Stop-Shop to help New Brunswickers access information and navigate government and community programs and services they need more easily.</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>211NB Implementation is completed. Service is operational 24/7 and 365 days per year.</p>

Pillar 3: Inclusion and Healthy Communities

<p>6. Improve access to mental and addictions services and reduce wait time.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Five-year Addiction and Mental Health Action Plan addressing the increasing demand for addiction and mental health services.</p> <p>ESIC supports the provincial strategy by funding projects and initiatives at the local and regional levels.</p>
<p>7. Develop and implement regional transportation plans to increase accessibility, affordability and availability to transportation services.</p>	<p>In Progress</p> <p>There are 12 community transportation services in operation across NB.</p> <p>The 12 CINs have been transferred to their respective RSCs, including the transportation services.</p>
<p>8. Work with partners to provide inclusive opportunities for sport, recreation and leisure activities for low-income New Brunswickers.</p>	<p>In Progress</p> <p>The research team has completed their community engagement in Charlotte County and in Restigouche through a prototype project.</p> <p>ESIC provided funding to an initiative sponsored by the NB Public Library Service (NBPLS). Public libraries will be able to loan sport, recreation, and leisure equipment to New Brunswickers and newcomers who may only need it occasionally or want to try something new.</p>
<p>9. Support children and youth by ensuring there are school food programs in all New Brunswick Schools.</p>	<p>In Progress</p> <p>Work is ongoing towards the development and implementation of school food programs across NB.</p>

Summary of staffing activity

Pursuant to section 20 (1 and 2) of the *Economic and Social Inclusion Act*, the Corporation may appoint employees on the basis of merit.

As of March 31, 2023, the corporation had five full-time employees.

Official Languages

The Corporation recognizes its Official Languages obligations and is committed to actively offering and providing quality services to the public in the official language of their choice in all modes of service delivery. The CINs and their partners are also subject to the *Official Languages Act*.

The Corporation strives to offer its services in both Official Languages, not only to comply with the Act, but particularly to promote the firmly entrenched value it places on inclusion, which is a crucial pillar of the Corporation and OPT.

The Corporation's Official Languages strategy reinforces the position of the Corporation vis-à-vis Official Languages. It is also designed to provide the CINs with the appropriate tools required to serve New Brunswickers in the Official Language of their choice.

During the year ending March 31, 2023, the Corporation continued to promote, monitor and support at the internal level, with the CINs and external partners, the use of Official Languages in accordance with its strategy.

Highlights of *Overcoming Poverty Together*

2008

October

Announcement of the public engagement initiative to adopt a poverty reduction plan for New Brunswick

2009

January to April

Public dialogues

June to September

Round table discussions

November

Final forum to adopt *Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan (OPT1)*

December

Extension of health card for up to three years for persons exiting social assistance

2010

January

Elimination of the interim social assistance rate program

January

Application of household income policy now only to social assistance recipients in spousal relationships

April

Adoption of the *Economic and Social Inclusion Act*

April

Provision of stable funding for homeless shelters within five years. Funds also provided in 2011 and 2012

April

Amendments to the *Residential Tenancies Act* to protect boarders

April

Minimum wage increases to \$8.50 per hour

May

Appointment of the Corporation's president and four co-chairs

June

Appointment of the Corporation's board members

June

First board of directors meeting

September

Minimum wage increases to \$9 per hour

October

Investment in early learning and childcare spaces

August to January 2011

Hiring of Corporation staff

2011

January

First meetings of three advisory committees

February to October

Creation of 12 Community Inclusion Networks (CINs)

April	Minimum wage increases to \$9.50 per hour
August	Linkage of benefits such as health, childcare and home heating to household income to the extent possible
November	Commencement of corporation funding for CIN projects in Community Transportation and Community Learning
2012	
April	Minimum wage increases to \$10 per hour
June	Hosting of Community Transportation Conference by the Corporation
June	Presentation of Advisory Committee for Health Benefits – Dental and Vision Report to government
June	Presentation of Advisory Committee for Social Enterprise and Community Investment Funds (SECIF) Report to government
September	Launch of <i>Healthy Smiles Clear Vision</i> program for children in low-income families
October	Presentation of Social Assistance Reform Advisory Committee Report to government
2013	
May	Development of GNB Interdepartmental Transportation Working Group
October	Restructure and increase of social assistance rates
October	Overhaul of the household income policy
October	Provision of more opportunities for people transitioning to work to keep earned income
October	Reform of wage exemptions to include a working income supplement
September to October	Public dialogues – OPT2
September to October	Regional and provincial stakeholder meetings
October to April 2014	Development of the <i>New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan: Overcoming Poverty Together 2014-2019</i> (OPT2)
October	First meeting of the Interdepartmental Working Group on Persons Living in Poverty
December	Announcement of New Brunswick Drug Plan
2014	
February	Announcement of Community Economic Development Initiative Funds and Small Business Tax Credit based on the SECIF report
May	Presentation of <i>Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan 2014-2019</i> (OPT2)

May	Launch of the New Brunswick Drug Plan
August	Trade education in schools to better prepare youth, and investment in renovations and development of trades classrooms
October	New wage exemption policy for persons with disabilities as part of social assistance reform
November	Conclusion of OPT1
December	Commencement of OPT2
December	Minimum wage increases to \$10.30 per hour
2015	
March	Youth Employment Fund launched to help create jobs for unemployed youth
April	First meeting of the Rural and Urban Transportation Advisory Committee
May	OPT receives a national award on poverty reduction from Tamarack Institute (Category: provinces and cities working together in partnership)
June	Public presentation of <i>The Impact of NB's 2009-2014 Economic and Social Inclusion Plan</i>
November-December	Corporation launches two-week awareness campaign <i>Small Acts, Big Impact</i> on volunteering
2016	
January	Opportunity Summit on Economic Inclusion
February	Community conversation on Health Equity
April	Minimum wage increases to \$10.65 per hour
April	Government of NB announces free tuition for post-secondary students from low-income and middle-class families
September	Creation of 10-year education plans
September	Investment \$56 million with the federal government in affordable housing to give the most vulnerable a place to live
September	Province invests \$1 million to help unemployed adults learn a second official language
November	NB expands the Home Energy Assistance Program
2017	
January	Expansion of the Integrated Service Delivery model
February	Family Plan Summit on reducing poverty
February	<i>Unleashing the power of literacy: New Brunswick's Comprehensive Literacy Strategy to improve literacy</i>

	<i>rates in the province</i>
May	Economic Opportunities Summit on economic inclusion
May	NB Family Plan report on reducing poverty
August	Expansion of tuition assistance to post-secondary students
November	Government announces expansion of <i>Healthy Smiles, Clear Vision</i> program for all four-year-olds who are not covered by a public or private health insurance program
November	<i>Small Act, Big Impact</i> Campaign
December	Release of report on inclusive transportation
2018	
January	Government announces free daycare for low-income families
February	Creation of Implementation Committee on Rural and Urban Transportation
March	OPT2 Progress report released
April	Small business income tax rate reduction
May	Partnership between government and Living SJ for pilot to end generational poverty in Saint John
June	ESIC holds provincial Leaders Tours in preparation for the renewal process of OPT
July	Government launches an online resource portal for families seeking information on early learning and childcare services and programs
November	Government provides funding to help establish temporary shelters for people who need safe housing in Moncton, Fredericton and Saint John during winter months
2019	
January	Release of report on Living Wage and Pay Equity
January	Release of report From Call to Service on One-Stop-Shop
February	Launch of Public Engagement Process for the renewal of OPT
March	Government announces that number of designated New Brunswick Early Learning Centres has surpassed goal
March to May	Public Engagement Process for OPT3: Online Survey, Community and Sectorial Dialogues, Focus Groups, Best Brains Exchange, Briefs
April	Minimum wage increases to \$11.50 per hour
April	Government announces renewed Tuition Bursary program and reintroduction of tuition tax credit
August	New Brunswicker named chair of National Advisory Council on Poverty – Scott MacAfee from ESIC

October	Government announces new initiative to help students explore learning opportunities
2020	
February	Statistics Canada proposes changes to the Market Basket Measure
March	Launch of <i>Overcoming Poverty Together 3 (2020-2025)</i>
August	Premier's Council on Disabilities announces involvement of ESIC in the 2020 Disability Action Plan
October	Implementation of One Stop Shop (211)
November	Government supports Social Enterprise development in NB
2021	
January	Report on Living Wages in NB
February	Release of the final report on Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation: <i>Overcoming Poverty Together 2014-2019 (OPT2)</i>
September	<u>GNB announces that social assistance recipients will be eligible to receive more income</u>
November	GNB announces <u>Local Governance Reform</u>
November	<u>211NB enhanced to help callers experiencing family, intimate partner and sexual violence</u>
2022	
March	<u>GNB introduces changes that allow social assistance recipients to share housing accommodations</u>
June	<u>Investment to assist low-income individuals, families and seniors</u>
September	<u>More access to healthy food in 110 schools</u>
October	<u>Policy launched to create child-care spaces</u>
	<u>ESIC presents Progress Report on OPT3</u>
	<u>2022 Report of the National Advisory Council on Poverty</u>
November	<u>Student loan interest eliminated</u>
	<u>Minimum wage protection reinforced for persons with a disability</u>
2023	
March	<u>Federal-N.B. investment to support early learning and child-care services</u>

Financial Statements

New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation

Financial Statements
March 31, 2023

New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation

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March 31, 2023

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Independent Auditor's Report

To: The board of directors of New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation, which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2023, and the statements of operations and changes in accumulated surplus and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the organization as at March 31, 2023, and its results of operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the organization in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the organization's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the organization or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the organization's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements. As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

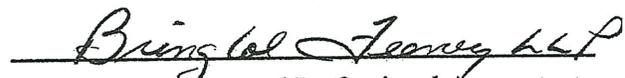
- ◆ Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

Independent Auditor's Report, continued

- ◆ Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the organization's internal control.
- ◆ Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- ◆ Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the organization's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the organization to cease to continue as a going concern.
- ◆ Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Fredericton, New Brunswick
June 23, 2023


Chartered Professional Accountants

New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation

Statement of Financial Position

As at March 31, 2023

	2023	2022
ASSETS		
Accounts receivable (note 3)	\$ -	\$ 21,679
Due from related party, Province of New Brunswick (note 4)	<u>3,430,801</u>	<u>3,734,085</u>
	<u>\$ 3,430,801</u>	<u>\$ 3,755,764</u>
LIABILITY		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (note 5)	\$ 42,624	\$ 55,092
FUND BALANCES		
Surplus	<u>3,388,177</u>	<u>3,700,672</u>
	<u>\$ 3,430,801</u>	<u>\$ 3,755,764</u>

Approved

Director



Director



New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation

Statement of Operations and Changes in Accumulated Surplus
Year ended March 31, 2023

	2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2022 Actual
Revenues			
Province of New Brunswick	\$ 2,825,000	\$ 2,841,318	\$ 2,842,515
Grant income - Tourism, Heritage and Culture	-	45,000	43,500
Grant Income- Canada Learning Bond	-	17,000	-
	<u>2,825,000</u>	<u>2,903,318</u>	<u>2,886,015</u>
Program spending			
Community Inclusion Networks	796,110	835,170	561,826
Community Transportation Grants	600,000	625,000	643,400
Community Action (Learning) Grants	600,000	317,917	312,161
211NB Funding	245,000	203,024	-
Social Enterprise	210,000	163,000	150,000
Financial Literacy	200,000	132,293	43,658
Special Projects	93,000	93,000	19,950
Marketing and Communication	60,000	41,174	54,046
Community Transportation Symposium	50,000	34,788	-
Community Inclusion Networks Support and Training	45,000	29,192	9,530
Sport, Recreation and Leisure	285,000	28,413	124,827
Board expenses	20,000	18,017	12,804
	<u>3,204,110</u>	<u>2,520,988</u>	<u>1,932,202</u>
Operating expenses			
Salaries and related benefits	585,000	557,020	543,697
Services	87,800	66,467	36,722
Travel	15,000	33,688	13,950
Bad debts	-	21,679	-
Computer expenses	31,000	7,476	23,734
Telephone	8,500	5,623	6,852
Supplies	2,500	2,072	2,109
Advisory committees	25,000	800	300
	<u>754,800</u>	<u>694,825</u>	<u>627,364</u>
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over operating expenses	(1,133,910)	(312,495)	326,449
Surplus, opening	<u>-</u>	<u>3,700,672</u>	<u>3,374,223</u>
Surplus, closing	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 3,388,177</u>	<u>\$ 3,700,672</u>

New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation

Statement of Cash Flows
Year ended March 31, 2023

	2023	2022
Operating activities		
Cash received - Province of New Brunswick	\$ 3,206,602	\$ 2,543,128
Cash paid to suppliers and employees	<u>(3,206,602)</u>	<u>(2,543,128)</u>
Change in cash position	-	-
Cash, opening	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Cash, closing	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

The corporation's source of cash is the Province of New Brunswick. The corporation does not maintain a separate bank account and all operating activities are processed through the Province of New Brunswick.

New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation

Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2023

1. Nature of operations

New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation is a Province of New Brunswick Crown Corporation created by special act on April 16, 2010. The corporation is exempt from income taxes under ITA 149(1)(d).

This corporation was created as part of the Provincial Plan for the continued partnership of the citizens of New Brunswick in the development, adoption, implementation and evaluation of the Economic and Social Inclusion Plan. The Plan's vision is that all citizens shall have the necessary resources to meet their basic needs and to live with dignity, security and good health.

The primary objectives and purposes of the corporation are as follows:

- (a) to lead the implementation and evaluation of the Provincial Plan and the development and adoption of other Economic and Social Inclusion Plans;
- (b) to coordinate and support community inclusion networks in the development of their local plans and in the implementation of the objectives of the Provincial Plan set out in their local plans;
- (c) to manage the Economic and Social Inclusion Fund established under the Economic and Social Inclusion Act;
- (d) to carry out the other activities or duties authorized or required by the Economic and Social Inclusion Act and regulations, as directed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

2. Significant accounting policies

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards. The significant accounting policies are detailed as follows:

(a) Revenue recognition

The corporation follows the deferral method of accounting for grants received for operations and specific projects. Grants to be used for restricted purposes are recognized as revenue in the period in which the related expenditures are incurred. When a portion of a grant relates to a future period, it is deferred and recognized in the subsequent period.

Unrestricted grants are recognized as revenue when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured. Grants approved but not received at the end of an accounting period are accrued.

The corporation currently receives all of its funding from the Province of New Brunswick.

New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation

Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2023

2. Significant accounting policies, continued

(b) Capital assets

The corporation records capital expenditures under \$10,000 as current period expenses as incurred.

(c) Contributed materials and services

The Province of New Brunswick provides various materials and services to the company without charge including fixed assets, information technology, human resource, occupancy, accounting and other administrative support. Because of the difficulty of determining their fair value, contributed materials and services are not recognized in the financial statements.

(d) Pension plans and other retirement benefit plans

Full-time employees of the corporation are members of the New Brunswick Public Service Shared Risk Plan. The plan is a multi-employer plan under which contributions are made by both the corporation and its employees. The employer's contributions to the plan are accounted for as a defined contribution plan, as the corporation's obligation is limited to the amount of these contributions.

(e) Financial instruments

The organization initially measures its financial assets and liabilities at fair value, except for certain non-arm's length transactions. The company subsequently measures its financial assets and financial liabilities at amortized cost, except for securities quoted in an active market, which are subsequently measured at fair value.

Financial assets measured at amortized cost include accounts receivable. Financial liabilities measured at amortized cost include accounts payable and accrued liabilities.

(f) Measurement uncertainty

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian public sector accounting standards requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosures of contingent liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reported period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation

Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2023

3. Accounts receivable

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Accounts receivable	\$ 21,679	\$ 21,679
Allowance for doubtful account	<u>(21,679)</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 21,679</u>

4. Related party transactions

The Province of New Brunswick pays all costs on behalf of the corporation throughout the fiscal year and is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements.

The amount due from the Province of New Brunswick represents the amount due to the corporation for the excess of approved funding over expenditures incurred.

During the year, the Province of New Brunswick authorized funding totalling \$2,841,318 (2022 - \$2,842,515).

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Province of New Brunswick	<u>\$ 3,430,801</u>	<u>\$ 3,734,085</u>

5. Accounts payable and accrued liabilities

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Vacation accrual	\$ 35,124	\$ 27,592
Audit accrual	7,500	7,500
Pond-Deshpande Centre	<u>-</u>	<u>20,000</u>
	<u>\$ 42,624</u>	<u>\$ 55,092</u>

6. Financial instruments

It is the opinion of management that the organization is not exposed to any significant risks with regard to its financial instruments.