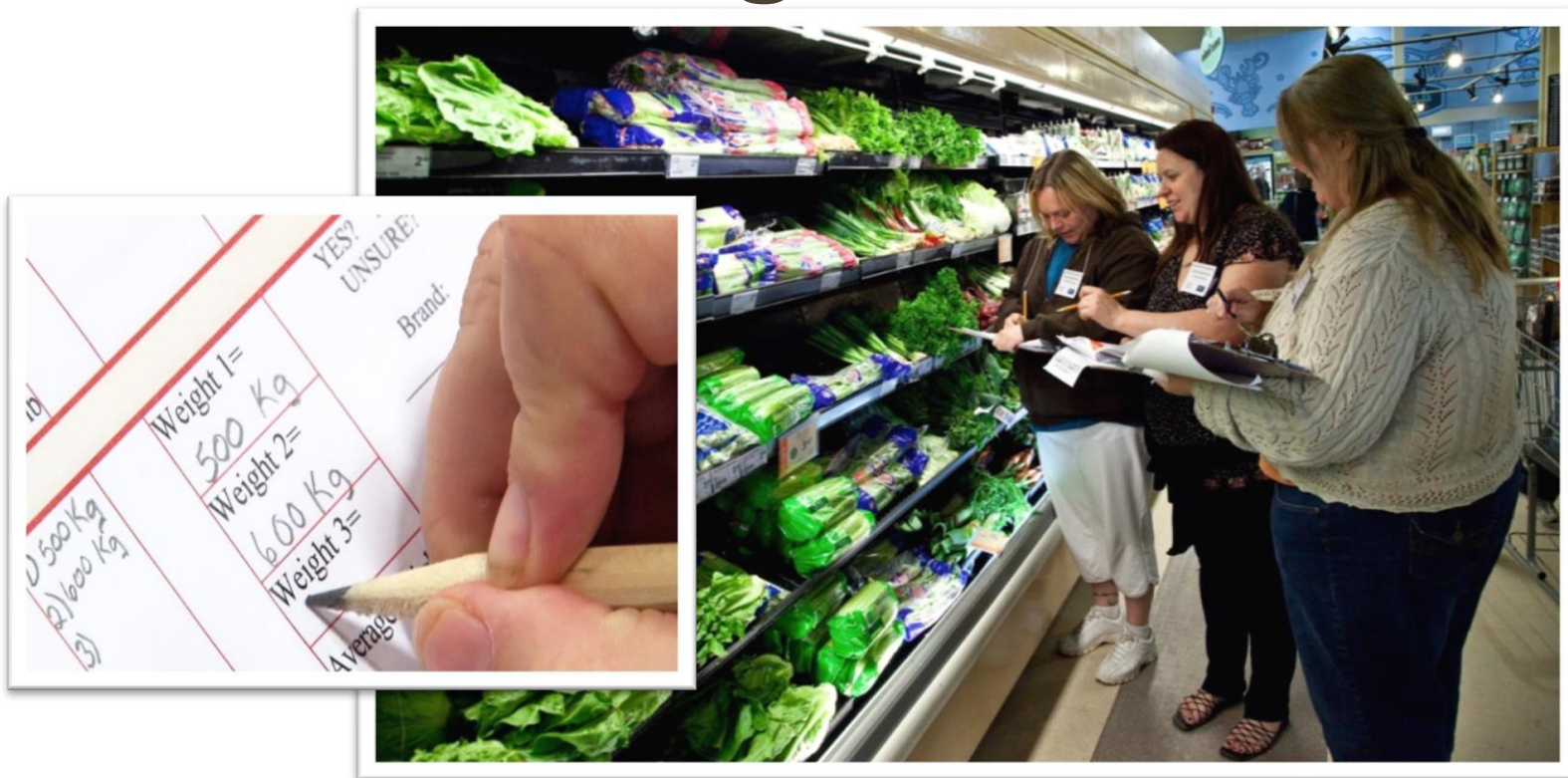


What does Participatory Food Costing in NS tell us?



Lynn Langille
Coordinator, Health Disparities
Public Health, NS Dept. of Health and Wellness

What is food insecurity?

.... members of a household have difficulty accessing food, or worry about not having enough food for an active, healthy life.

Impacts of food insecurity:

- Obesity and chronic disease
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Maternal health and birth outcomes
- Child development



Food insecurity & obesity

- Food insecure adults are 32% more likely to be obese
- Children are partially protected from food insecurity by their mothers
- Food insecurity increases binge eating and cyclical eating
- Food insecure individuals are more likely to consume high-energy, nutrient-poor food

PROOF

Research to identify policy options
to reduce food insecurity



Food insecure households (2012):

- nearly 13% of Canadian households
- 62.2% relying on wages or salaries
- 70% of households relying on social assistance rates
- For NS, the highest ever (17.5%)
- Halifax had highest rate (nearly 20%)

PROOF

Research to identify policy options
to reduce food insecurity

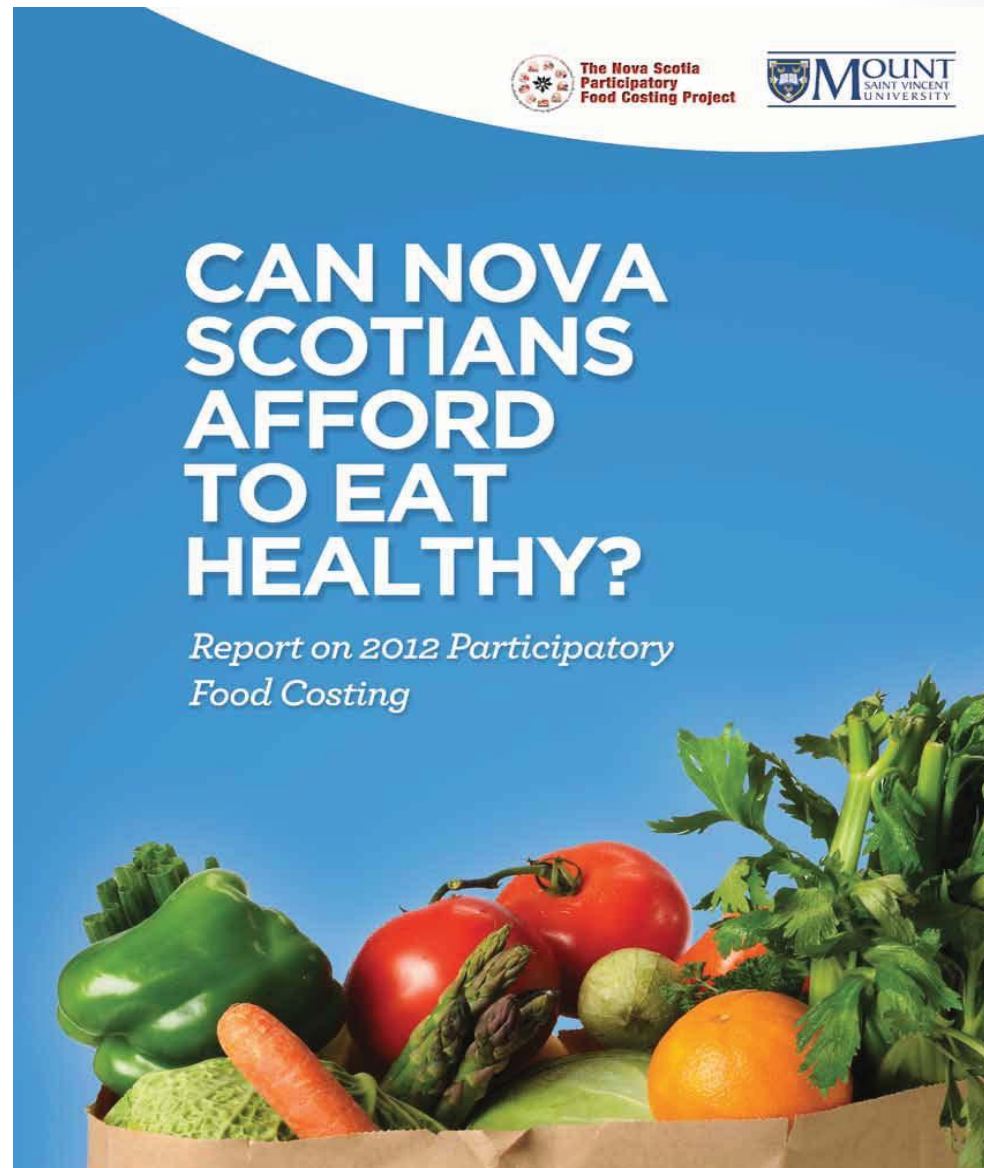


Vulnerability to food insecurity

- 15.6% of children of children were food insecure (21.2% of children in NS)
- 27.8% of African Canadian households
- 28.2% of FN and Aboriginal households
- 34.3% of female lone parent households



Poverty is
the biggest
determinant
of food
insecurity...



What is participatory research?

.... working collaboratively with the people most involved or impacted by an issue.



It's about valuing different kinds of knowledge and empowering people and communities.

National Nutritious Food Basket (NNFB) 2008

- 67 foods that provide a nutritious, balanced diet
- Used to calculate the cost of a basic nutritious diet for different age and sex groups
- Minimally processed foods
- Widely available
- Commonly eaten by Canadians



Participatory Food Costing, 2012

- 43 people from 15 community based organizations across NS
- Training, planning, collecting data
- Worked in pairs in their regions
- Recorded the lowest available price

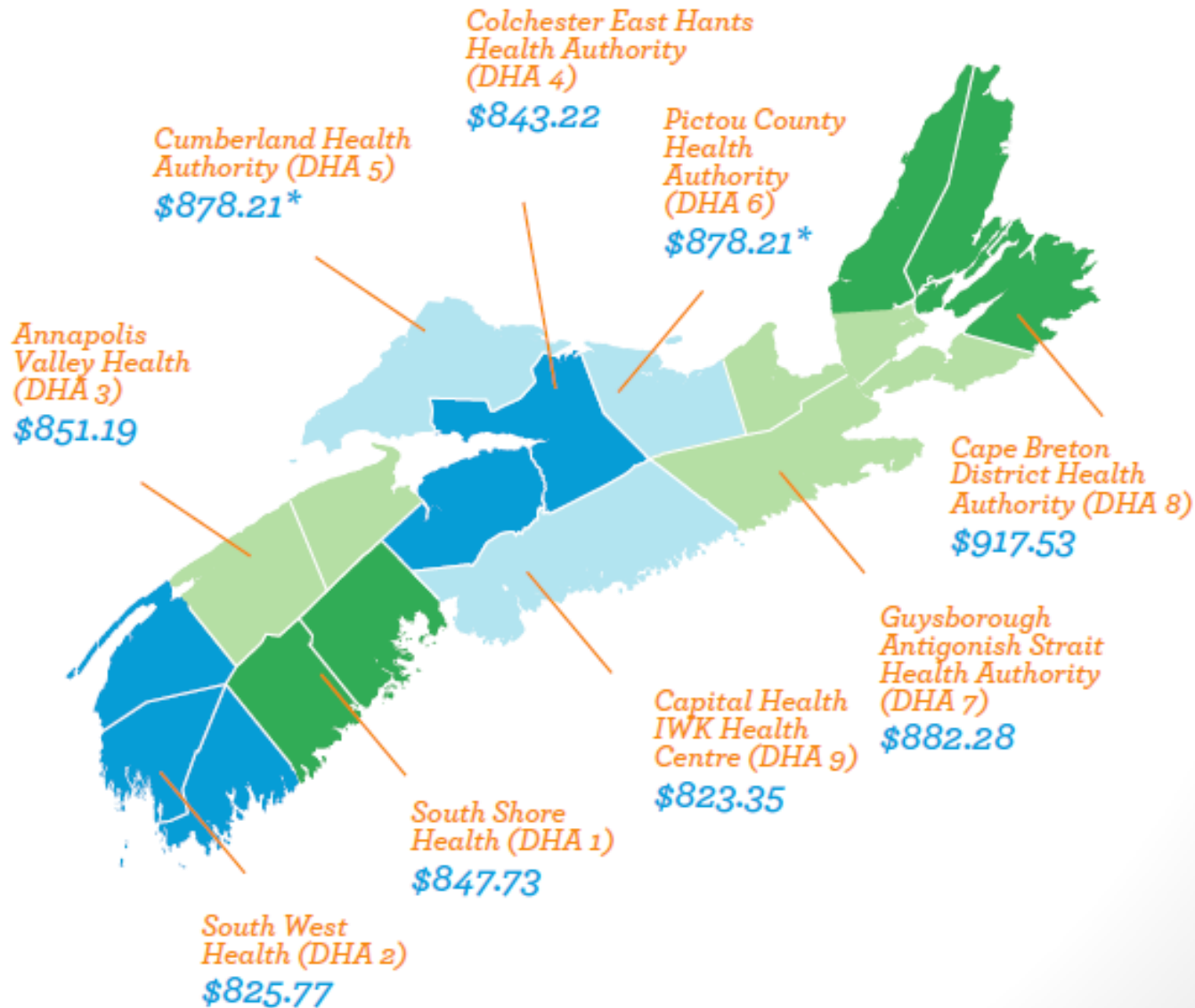
“Community participants feel they have a voice in making things better for themselves and others.”



HAS THE COST OF A HEALTHY DIET CHANGED IN NOVA SCOTIA SINCE 2002?



DOES THE COST OF A BASIC NUTRITIOUS DIET DIFFER ACROSS NOVA SCOTIA?



DOES IT MATTER IF YOU LIVE IN AN URBAN OR RURAL COMMUNITY?



Affordability Scenarios

- Reference household of 4 (2 parents, 2 children)
- Household of 4 (1 woman, 3 children)
- Lone pregnant woman
- Lone man
- Lone senior woman



Table 3: AFFORDABILITY OF A BASIC NUTRITIOUS DIET IN NOVA SCOTIA IN 2012 FOR A REFERENCE HOUSEHOLD OF FOUR.

FAMILY COMPOSITION









MALE AND FEMALE (31-50YR), BOY 13YR, GIRL 7 YR

SOURCE OF INCOME	Median Income (\$72,350/yr) ^a	Average Wage (1FT, 1PT) (\$20.92/hr, \$14.51/hr) ^b	Minimum Wage (1FT, 1PT) (\$10.15/hr) ^c	Income Assistance (attending an educational program)
MONTHLY GROSS INCOME				
Disposable Income	\$4,723.82	\$4,006.29	\$2,798.71	\$2,300.77
BASIC MONTHLY EXPENSES				
Total Expenses	\$2,336.24	\$2,336.24	\$2,251.81	\$2,208.51
Funds remaining for food	\$2,387.58	\$1,670.05	\$546.90	\$92.26
Cost of the NNFB	\$850.59	\$850.59	\$850.59	\$850.59
Funds remaining for other expenses	\$1,536.99	\$819.46	-\$303.69	-\$758.33

Figure 4: REFERENCE HOUSEHOLD OF FOUR WITH TWO ADULTS ON INCOME ASSISTANCE AND TWO CHILDREN

Figure 4 reflects the affordability of a basic nutritious diet in Nova Scotia in June 2012 for the reference household of four.

MONTHLY INCOME

 \$458.00 Personal Allowance	 \$25.00 Special Needs
 \$620.00 Shelter Allowance	 \$671.22 Canada Child Tax Benefit
 \$300.00 Transportation Allowance	 \$64.33 GST/HST Credit
 \$132.07 Childcare Allowance	 \$30.15 NS Affordable Living Tax Credit

TOTAL
\$2,300.77

MONTHLY EXPENSES

 \$1,104.00 Shelter	 \$132.07 Childcare
 \$177.39 Power	 \$191.00 Clothing and Footwear
 \$29.91 Telephone	 \$73.03 Personal Care Expenses
 \$478.34 Transportation	 \$22.77 Household Cleaning Supplies

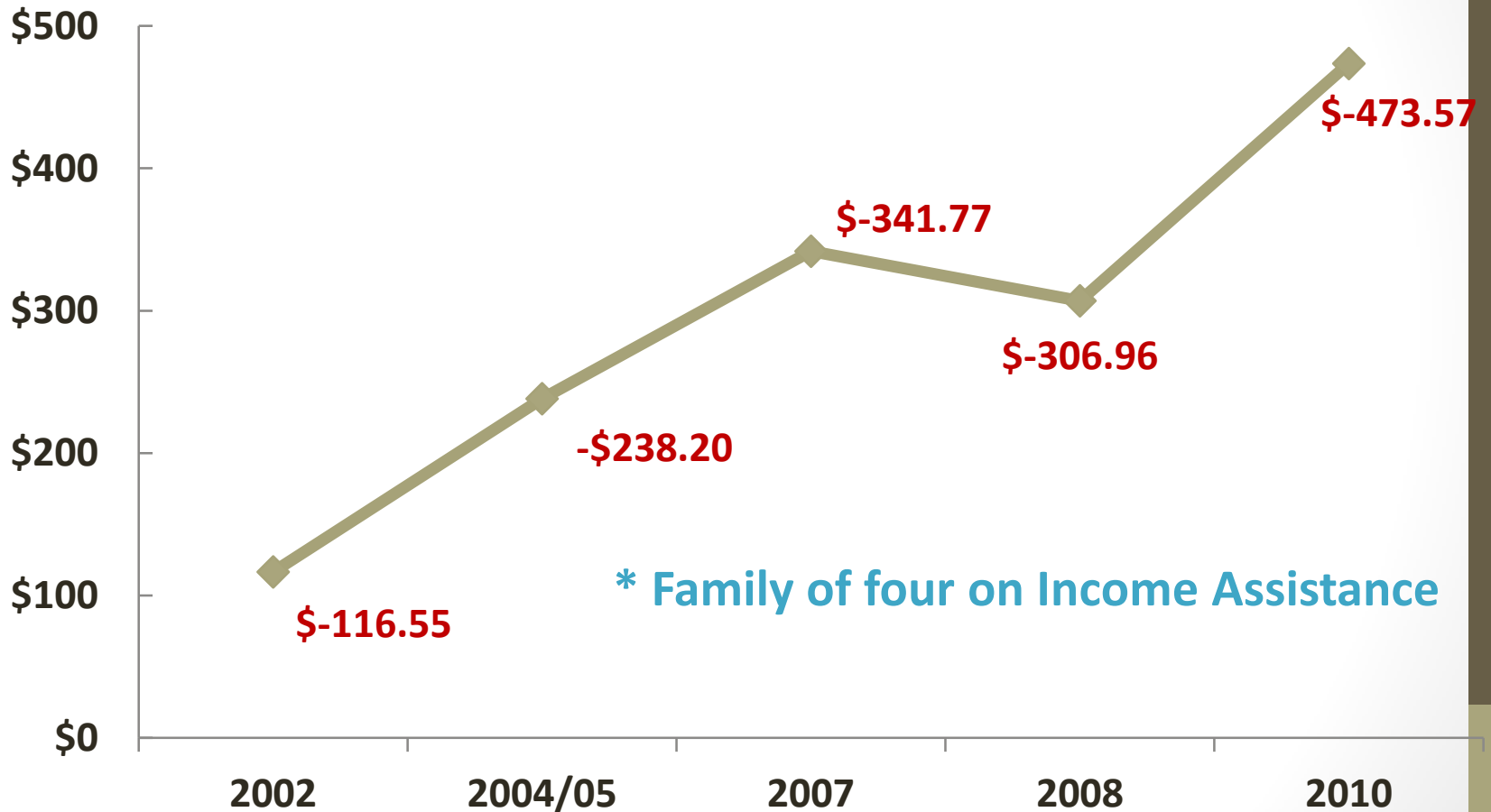
TOTAL
\$3,059.10



\$850.59 FOOD BASKET

WHAT'S LEFT?
-\$758.33

Income Assistance Scenario





Lone Mother With Three Children Earning Minimum Wage

MONTHLY INCOME



\$1,471.01

Wages minus payroll deductions



\$75.42

GST/HST Credit



\$900.81

Canada Child Tax Benefit



\$35.00

NS Affordable Living Tax Credit



\$73.42

Working Income Tax Benefit

MONTHLY EXPENSES



\$1,104.00

Shelter



\$526.10

Childcare



\$177.39

Power



\$191.00

Clothing and Footwear



\$29.91

Telephone



\$73.03

Personal Care Expenses



\$478.34

Transportation



\$22.77

Household Cleaning Supplies



\$776.15 FOOD BASKET

TOTAL
\$2,555.66

TOTAL
\$3,378.69

WHAT'S LEFT?
-\$823.03

Figure 6: LONE PREGNANT WOMAN IN THE 3RD TRIMESTER ON INCOME ASSISTANCE

Figure 6 reflects the affordability of a basic nutritious diet in Nova Scotia in June 2012 for a lone pregnant woman (19-30yrs) receiving Income Assistance. The results indicate that would not be able to afford a basic nutritious diet and would face a \$515.75 deficit after covering basic expenses. If she was earning minimum wage (full-time) in her second trimester, she could afford a basic nutritious diet with \$261.62 left at the end of the month, but there would be little money left for other expenses associated with expecting a baby. If she was relying on Income Assistance in her second trimester, she would face a \$612.91 deficit after covering basic expenses.⁹

MONTHLY INCOME

 \$229.00 Personal Allowance	 \$12.50 Special Needs
 \$570.00 Shelter Allowance	 \$16.67 Poverty Reduction Tax Credit
 \$20.40 Transportation Allowance	 \$21.08 GST/HST Credit
 \$29.00 Maternal Nutritional Allowance	 \$20.44 NS Affordable Living Tax Credit

TOTAL
\$919.09

MONTHLY EXPENSES

 \$884.00 Shelter	 \$56.13 Clothing and Footwear
 \$135.99 Power	 \$21.33 Personal Care Expenses
 \$29.91 Telephone	 \$6.69 Household Cleaning Supplies
 \$20.40 Transportation	

TOTAL
\$1,434.84



\$280.39 FOOD BASKET

WHAT'S LEFT?
-\$515.75

Supporting Change at an Individual Level

“So what has my involvement meant for me? This gives me the ability to do something for myself, my family, and my province. Just by doing that, it's built up my self esteem.”



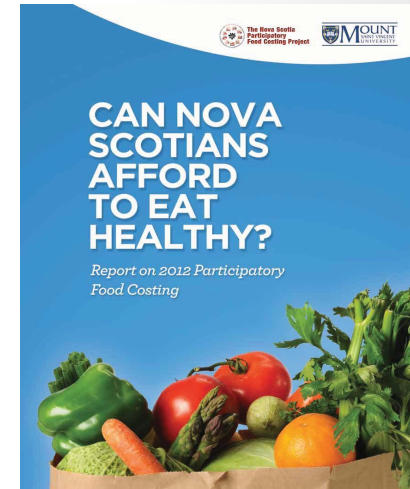
= Food Coster, 2004

Supporting Change at a Systems Level

- Nova Scotia Food Security Network
- Increases to Income Assistance rates
- Provincial Strategies, e.g. Health Eating Nova Scotia, Food and Nutrition Policy for NS Public Schools, Thrive!
- Entry point and tools for broad-based civic engagement in policy change processes



Recommendations: Healthy Public Policy



- *Increase Income Assistance rates to match the rising cost of living*
- *Increase the number of adequate, affordable and safe housing units*
- *Review the childcare subsidy program in NS*
- *Invest in affordable, accessible community transit/transportation*

What can each of us do to help build a more food secure Nova Scotia?

- Challenge assumptions about food insecurity
 - Negative stereotypes
 - Assumptions
- Get engaged in creating change
 - Learn about what's happening in your community
 - Join public conversations about causes, consequences and solutions
 - Talk to politicians about support for public policy that supports ALL citizens

