

Poverty

Issue in brief

- Poverty is often thought to be a lack of income, education or opportunity, but it is so much more. Poverty is a lack of choice, voice, connection and resources, and includes many factors beyond an individual's control. United Way believes everyone deserves dignity, respect and the opportunity to live a good life.

Why does solving this issue matter?

- When people live in poverty, they have fewer choices and a reduced ability to contribute to society. Poverty robs individuals of the opportunity to live a life of dignity and robs our community of the ability to reach its full potential. In order for HRM to be the best it can be and a safe home to everyone who lives here, we need to invest in initiatives and solutions that will yield a healthier, more engaged and more productive population.
- Poverty costs everyone. It's linked to higher rates of crime, policing costs and incarcerations, increased health care costs and higher drop-out rates from school. Supporting people to move out of poverty can save taxpayers money and create a strong economic and social legacy for future generations.

Facts & Stats

- Over 58,000 people in Halifax live in poverty. Many more are just one stroke of bad luck away from not being able to meet their basic needs.
- Most people living in poverty are employed; they are the working poor. The assumption that people who are experiencing poverty do not want to work is wrong, unfair and stigmatizing.
- Access to quality employment that provides a living wage is difficult to find in Nova Scotia. 28% of the workforce in our province makes less than \$15/hour.
- In Nova Scotia, 1 in 5 children under the age of 18 are living in poverty. In some communities in HRM, 1 in 2 children are living in poverty.
- The harmful effects of poverty often ripple from parent to child, from generation to generation.
- 15.1% of Halifax residents are considered food insecure, meaning they can't access affordable healthy food.
- 31% of families in HRM led by lone-parents cannot afford the basic necessities of life.
- 49.3% of those aged 15 to 29 who live alone in HRM cannot afford the basic necessities of life.
- Reports by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives estimate that poverty costs Nova Scotia roughly \$2.4 billion per year.