

Syria- Antigonish Families Embrace (SAFE) Society: Responses from Candidates

August 2021

1. English as an Additional Language (EAL) supports

Refugee/newcomer settlement has the potential to provide rural communities with the opportunity to stabilize population, grow the workforce, and diversify the social and cultural fabric of the community. For refugee families to stay and prosper, all members of the family need access to intensive, effective English Language Learning opportunities.

When elected, what will your government put in place to ensure that refugee families are equipped to learn in a timely way the English language skills necessary for high school and post-secondary education, skills training, and meaningful employment?

<p>NDP Moraig Macgillivray</p>	<p>Liberal Party Randy Delorey</p>	<p>Progressive Conservative Party Michelle Thompson</p>	<p>Green Party Will Fraser</p>
<p>As a former teacher of English as an additional language - both professionally and in volunteer capacity with refugees - and as someone who has lived in countries where I did not have a strong command of the language, I appreciate both the barrier this poses to successful integration in the community and the value of adequate supports. If elected, I would work with other levels of government and local advocacy groups, such as SAFE and CARE in Antigonish, to</p>	<p>A Rankin Government will commit \$10.3 million over the next four years to ensure that skilled immigrants and international graduates stay in Nova Scotia once they've entered the workforce. By increasing settlement supports, we can ensure that our businesses are able to retain the skilled workers they need to build and grow. We will be expanding language supports for new immigrant children to keep up with our growing newcomer population. Language services are imperative to ensure continued learning, family integration into the school community and to ensure a healthy transition. The Study and Stay Program has been extremely successful with retention rates of over 90%. In an effort to</p>	<p>Recruiting and welcoming newcomers to our province is key to growing our economy and filling the void for a number of in-demand jobs. The PC Party has set a goal of doubling our population to 2,000,000 by 2060. To achieve this goal, there will need to be more resources in place to provide support to those individuals and families who move to Nova Scotia in an effort to ease the transition. Those supports will include access to learning English.</p> <p>The PC Party has put forward in our platform a mentorship program for foreign-trained physicians to help</p>	<p>No response</p>

<p>ensure access to instruction and resources in English as an additional language for new members of our community.</p>	<p>keep more of our valued international students right here in Nova Scotia, the program offers guidance through career education foundations, mentoring, hands-on experience and matching students to labour market needs.</p> <p>This initiative includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$5.49 million to increase existing settlement programming for Immigrant Settlement Service Provider Organizations (SPO). • \$1.0 million to create navigator positions to support inter-provincial migration as part of NSIPG’s expanded mandate. • \$2.64 million to support increased delivery of English as an additional language (EAL) and French as an additional language (FAL) to immigrant children enrolled in NS schools. • \$1.2 million to expand EduNova’s “Study and Stay” program to retain more international students after graduation. <p>Increasing settlement services to enhance newcomers’ transition means they are</p>	<p>them earn their accreditation to practice in Nova Scotia. We are also putting a focus in education on encouraging people to consider a career in the skilled trades, including a focus on recruiting from diverse communities who are under-represented in the field.</p>	
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	<p>more likely to stay. We need to promote language training, employment and entrepreneur supports. Navigators and welcoming</p> <p>community programs are imperative to ensure immigrants come and stay in our province.</p>		
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2. Affordable Housing for Refugee Newcomer Families

Affordable housing is an issue of concern for many families in Antigonish. SAFE is responsible for providing for the needs of a refugee newcomer family for the first year after they arrive. This includes securing and providing suitable housing. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) sets a Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) rate for housing, food and other essentials. Generally the RAP rate is based upon provincial social assistance rates. This makes housing in Antigonish generally unaffordable for refugee/newcomer families. As newcomers, families are not eligible for affordable housing units during their first year. Although some are able to secure a housing subsidy, the rents remain out of reach and there are no suitable sized family rental units.

When elected, what will your government do in both the immediate and the longer-term to ensure that refugee newcomer families in Antigonish can access, suitable, affordable housing?

NDP Moraig Macgillivray	Liberal Party Randy Delorey	Progressive Conservative Party Michelle Thompson	Green Party Will Fraser
This is a good example of how neglecting one area of governance causes issues in other areas. We have a housing crisis due in part to policies that favour big investors over regular people living and/or working here in	National Housing Strategy Partnering with the Federal Government, our Government committed to the National Housing Strategy that will invest \$105 million over the next three years to increase access to affordable housing and preserve and maintain existing housing stock. This commitment also includes \$70 million over that same three-year period for renewal of	The PC Party recognizes that there is a shortage of affordable and attainable housing across Nova Scotia. Unless we can build more housing stock, prices will continue to rise at the drastic rates that we are seeing. A PC government will build more affordable housing units and analyse	No response.

<p>Nova Scotia. This in turn makes it difficult to grow our population and economy because new arrivals, including refugees, face a lack of affordable housing. The NS NDP's policies to ensure affordable and accessible housing - such as permanent rent control, better regulations on short-term rentals, new tenant's rights, the definancialization of housing, and new supports and funding for public, non-profit and cooperative housing - should go a long way to addressing this issue. We also plan to increase income assistance to a level that eliminates poverty, which will improve other supports that are based on income assistance levels. However, if additional action is needed to fill the gap on finding housing for refugees, I would be happy to work with local advocacy and housing groups and other levels of government to find a solution.</p>	<p>existing housing and supports for low-income homeowners. We have also funded \$12 million in initiatives to support those experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness and \$6.4 million for social housing needs in communities across Nova Scotia during the COVID-19 pandemic. \$25 Million in Quick Start Initiatives The Affordable Housing Commission tabled its report on May 31st, 2021. The Rankin government accepted its recommendation to allocate \$25 million on 5 quick start initiatives to immediately increase supply and access to affordable housing. This investment included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$20 million New Affordable Housing Supply Fund • \$2.5 million Community Housing Growth Fund • \$2 million for the renewal and repair of existing public housing • \$500,000 to assist municipalities with housing needs assessments <p>We know that more needs to be done. We are currently analyzing the 17 longer term recommendations made by the commission. A re-elected Rankin Government is prepared to take immediate steps to alleviate supply constraints and increase access to affordable housing in Nova Scotia Affordable Housing – Planning for a Long Term Solution While short term action is necessary, we must consider the</p>	<p>government owned properties to find more opportunities to build housing.</p> <p>Along with the lack of affordable housing, there is also a lack of attainable housing. For many families, even though they have good wages they still struggle to afford to buy a home. The PCs have put forward an innovative solution to raise wages called the Better Pay Check Guarantee, which will allow corporations to ask for 50% of what they paid in corporate taxes back, provided that they use this money to give raises to their employees. The top 20% of the company's payroll will not be eligible, as this is a policy to raise wages of the lunchroom, not the boardroom.</p>	
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	<p>dynamics of our rental market today and plan for anticipated growth into the future. A Liberal Government will develop a longterm provincial housing strategy that will map out a 10-year plan, including milestones and review periods, to ensure accountability and that we are meeting our goals and housing targets every step of the way over the life of this plan.</p> <p>Building Sustainable, Mixed-Income Multi-Family Residential Developments A re-elected Rankin government will bring together provincial, municipal, non-profit organizations and private sector developers to create mixed-use projects that leverage a wide range of expertise and ideas. By prioritizing mixed-income developments we ensure affordable units are the same quality as market rate units and reduce the stigma associated with affordable housing.</p> <p>Non-Traditional Forms of Housing Encouraging innovation in the affordable housing space is critical to achieving our goal of increasing housing supply, by leveraging new and non-traditional models of construction and living spaces. Thinking beyond traditional forms of housing can help provide affordable rental units targeted to single persons and our seniors. A re-elected Rankin government is committed to expanding the housing options available to include secondary suites and garage lofts, tiny homes and</p>		
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	<p>other non-traditional forms of housing. We will explore innovative forms of funding, like forgivable and repayable loans for homeowners that want to add affordable, non-traditional rental and housing options to their existing properties. A re-elected Rankin government will also provide support for single room occupancies such as boarding houses in areas of need. Renter Protections Housing insecurity has become an increasing challenge for tenants, especially low-income renters, in our current housing environment. An increasing number of tenants have been displaced from their homes so buildings can be renovated. Additional protections for renters are needed. A re-elected Rankin Government will require compensation for renters who are displaced from their homes due to “renoviction”. Tenants will be eligible for compensation from the landlord equal to one month’s rent for each year they have lived in their current dwelling place, up to 6 months, when a landlord gives notice to quit to allow for renovations.</p>		
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3. Employment and Skills Recognition

Rural Nova Scotia needs a diverse, skilled workforce. Refugee newcomers come to Canada with various transferrable skills that can benefit and help to grow our community. However, many of the skills are not accredited in Nova Scotia and many of the newcomers do not have the English language skills they need to secure the level of employment they want and need to support their families. Securing employment is an immediate and pressing goal for all the families; securing employment requires support from potential

employers, support for accreditation programs, and a broader vision for integrating refugee/newcomers into the economy and workforce.

Given our difficulty in finding employment for refugees with low to moderate English language skills, how would you support an integrated municipal, provincial, and federal approach to employment of refugee newcomers to Nova Scotia?

<p>NDP Moraig Macgillivray</p>	<p>Liberal Party Randy Delorey</p>	<p>Progressive Conservative Party Michelle Thompson</p>	<p>Green Party Will Fraser</p>
<p>As you rightly note, new refugees are often bringing valuable skills, but need supports to get them recognized and integrate into the workforce. Of course English skills are one piece of the puzzle, but these other barriers need addressing as well. If elected, I would be happy to work with all stakeholders to look at strengthening and expanding access to employment programs such as those currently offered by ISANS, and at options for streamlining recognition of outside accreditations.</p>	<p>A re-elected Liberal government will invest \$77.8 million over four years to support a major expansion of the NSCC, building the foundation of Nova Scotia’s economic recovery by preparing our workforce for the transition towards a cleaner, more inclusive economic future.</p> <p>Nova Scotians are seeking opportunities to upgrade their skills and develop professionally, as life-long learning becomes increasingly valuable for workers in an economy in transition. Every Nova Scotian deserves the chance to pursue additional training. A Rankin government will add 6,000 new seats at the NSCC in short courses, micro-credentials, boot camps, badges, licenses, and certifications. This significant increase from the current 4,000 will give more Nova Scotians access to life-long learning opportunities each year. We also know that many Nova Scotians face systemic barriers to education and</p>	<p>The PC Party believes in taking a common sense approach to looking at the skills and trades that are brought into the province and working with individuals, organizations and other levels of government to assist individuals to find work. For those under 30 and working in skilled trades, the PC Party has committed to removing the provincial portion of their income tax on the first \$50,000 of income.</p> <p>As mentioned above, the PC Party is proposing a mentoring program to help foreign-trained physicians earn their accreditations in Nova Scotia and to include a targeted approach to diverse communities on our promotion of the trades as a career choice. Our Party also has committed</p>	<p>No response.</p>

	<p>employment. A Liberal government will double the number of seats in sector-specific preparatory programming and English language training, increasing the number of students able to access further education to 1,000 each year.</p> <p>Workforce diversity in business drives performance and companies that welcome diverse talents and inclusive perspectives will be better poised to emerge from the pandemic stronger and thrive in the new economy. Our Government will enhance NSCC's supportive role to the business community with a \$1.33 million investment over three years to fund up to 35 projects to help businesses maximize their potential by advising on best practices in equity and inclusion and by providing training solutions and research support to create a welcoming workplace with a strong sense of belonging for all.</p>	<p>to providing more practical education in our curriculum, including financial literacy, teaching diversity and inclusion, and to implementing the 2018 inclusion report, which calls for more resources for classrooms.</p>	
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4. Public Transit

Research recently completed by a faculty member of StFX University found that access to transportation is a factor in increasing the sense of independence and well-being for refugee newcomer families. To access grocery stores, language classes and worksites, many families feel they must acquire personal vehicles because public transit in the Antigonish area does not meet their needs.

When elected, what would be your commitment to expanding Antigonish public transportation such that greater flexibility would be created to accommodate attendance of daily English Language training, NSCC attendance, and access to worksites?

<p>NDP Moraig Macgillivray</p>	<p>Liberal Party Randy Delorey</p>	<p>Progressive Conservative Party Michelle Thompson</p>	<p>Green Party Will Fraser</p>
<p>I believe electric, free or highly affordable province-wide public transport is vital not only to tackle the climate crisis, but also to tackle a host of other inequalities, such as income inequality, equality of access to services, etc. I would support strong investments to ensure that everyone can move about our community and the province with ease and affordability.</p>	<p>The province is investing \$4.7 million to improve access to public transportation across Nova Scotia.</p> <p>Reliable community transportation allows people to access services, including going to work, shopping, attending medical appointments and getting their COVID-19 vaccines. Twenty-six projects will receive funding through the Community Transportation Assistance Program and the Public Transit Assistance Program this fiscal year.</p> <p>The Community Transportation Assistance Program is providing more than \$1.8 million in operating funding to 19 door-to-door community transportation services.</p> <p>The Public Transit Assistance Program is providing \$2,925,000 to municipalities and community organizations providing fixed route transit services. The funding is used towards capital purchases such as new buses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • this funding is part of the work of Nova’s Scotia’s Strengthening Communities through Transportation action plan; more information available at: https://cch.novascotia.ca/investingin-our-future/community-transportation-action-plan-strengthening-communities-throughtransportation 	<p>The commitment of the PC Party is to work with municipalities and enable them to take on the local infrastructure that is important for their communities. In Antigonish, this could include access to transportation. We recognize that municipalities’ budgets are being pressed to the limits, making it difficult to invest in critical infrastructure. To help municipalities with these rising costs, a PC government will double the equalization payment for the first year, until a new Memorandum of Understanding with the municipalities can be reached.</p> <p>Another barrier for rural Nova Scotians to access government services is having reliable internet. While the government has made progress, internet is still out of reach for too many Nova Scotians. For any household Develop Nova Scotia leaves behind, a PC government will</p>	<p>No response</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• improving access to community transportation is a cornerstone of government's Poverty Reduction Blueprint, Community Transportation Action Plan and is identified as a priority in SHIFT Nova Scotia's Action Plan for an Aging Population; more information available at: https://novascotia.ca/shift/	subsidize the installation costs of satellite to ensure that they can access government services and participate in the global economy.	
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