

Gender Impact Statement 2021



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Gender and Diversity Based Analysis +

Gender-Based Analysis + (GBA+) is an intersectional policy lens that considers how programs, policies, and initiatives may impact all genders alongside other identity factors, including: age, race, language, mental or physical ability, sexual orientation, religion, income, geography, ethnicity, and education.

The Government of New Brunswick (GNB) committed to using GBA+ beginning in 2016. To date, approximately 350 GNB employees have taken part in GBA+ training, including: deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers, policy and operational directors, process improvement specialists, managers and analysts. In addition to providing GBA+ training to government, we have created an accessible GBA+ tool that is available online for public use to further promote gender equality, diversity and inclusion in the private sector.

Ensuring proposed initiatives have intended and equitable results for all New Brunswickers will help lead to an overall more equal society. GBA+ makes good policy sense and must continue being an integral part of the way we think and work as public servants.

This Gender Impact Statement provides information about the GBA+ impacts of specific measures in Budget 2021–2022.

Diversity in New Brunswick

According to the 2016 Census data, of the 747,105 New Brunswick residents, 51.1% of the population is female, and 48.9% is male. Females are almost four times more likely to be lone parents in New Brunswick. In 2018, the median total income for males was \$39,390 and for females it was \$28,570. New Brunswick females complete secondary education and post-secondary degrees more often than males, and New Brunswick males are more than twice as likely to complete trades certificates and apprenticeship programs. As of 2020, the employment rate for New Brunswick males was 56.9%, compared to 51.9% for females. As a result of the pandemic, these rates were both down from 2019, 58.6% and 53.9% respectively. While, in general, females have a lower unemployment rate than males, they are less likely to be participating in the labour force than their male counterparts (56.6% versus 64.4% for males in 2020). Recent monthly statistics (December 2020 and January 2021) point to both the male and female participation rates having recovered to near-pre-pandemic levels, however, unemployment remains high relative to historical levels, especially among females. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are further explored in in the *Current Challenges* section below.

In 2017, 161,590 New Brunswickers aged 15 and over reported having a disability or multiple disabilities. This represented 26.7% of the province's population aged 15 and over and is the second highest percentage in the country. In the province, as well as around the country, disabilities are more prevalent among women than men.

In 2015, there were 7,465 First Nations, Métis and Inuit living in private households on reserve in New Brunswick with a median age of 29 years old. Lone-parent families make up 43% of this population's family structures. Limitations exist pertaining to data collected on all diversity groups.

Statistics Canada is in the process of creating more available data about Indigenous populations across the country to fill this gap.

A critical limitation of the 2016 census data is that it offered no way of accounting for transgender and gender diverse individuals in the province at the time. This reality likely forced transgender and gender diverse people to misidentify and report as their sex assigned at birth. In 2018, the New Brunswick Women's Council published its Resonate survey, which heard from 1400 transgender and gender diverse individuals in the province. 71% of participants indicated that they experienced transphobia/homophobia during the past 12 months. Of non-student participants who had a full-time job or multiple jobs totaling over 35 hours, 53% indicated having a personal income of \$30,000 or less.

Current Challenges

Across the globe, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated existing inequalities faced by vulnerable members of society. During the initial lockdown in New Brunswick, females were exiting the labour force at a higher rate than males. Of those who remained, many worked fewer hours than they were before the pandemic. Over half of the job losses that occurred in April 2020, in New Brunswick, were in industries with below average wages.

New Brunswick women are overrepresented in the health and social sectors and are on the frontlines in the fight against COVID-19. Some of these positions offer relatively low wages, which adds recruitment and retention challenges in these sectors. During the pandemic, women are more likely to be taking on caregiver roles and performing unpaid caregiving duties, such as childcare, household responsibilities, home schooling, and the provision of care for vulnerable family members outside the home. Subsequently, women as both formal and informal caregivers are more likely to be exposed to the virus.

Recent labour force data suggests that the economic picture is improving for New Brunswick women since the first wave. Employment levels for males and females, among the core-working age population (ages 25-54), appear to be relatively on par with pre-pandemic levels. However, some groups of women are not returning to the labour force at rates similar to pre-pandemic conditions, or at the same rates as men. These groups are women over the age of 55, Indigenous women, women in lower economic brackets, and female entrepreneurs. Data from Statistics Canada reveals that women are especially vulnerable to declining mental health, which may be influencing workforce participation.

GBA+ Process for Budget 2021-22

Gender-based analysis was used to inform Budget 2021-2022. A gender responsive budget acknowledges inequalities between genders and seeks to reduce these inequalities by implementing measures that directly aim to improve lives. We acknowledge that this analysis can be subjective and is often limited by the availability of data, especially for certain diversity factors such as race, sexual orientation and disability. Since 2020, Government has incorporated GBA+ into the budget process. As each department prepares its budgetary requests, it must consider how decisions will positively, negatively, and differentially impact genders and marginalized groups.

Highlights of Gendered Impacts

Budget 2021-2022 impacts all New Brunswickers to varying degrees and this initial gender impact statement attempts to highlight how key initiatives have gender and diversity considerations. By introducing gender-based analysis into the budget process, we help make New Brunswick a more vibrant and sustainable community for everyone.

This budget continues to build on key priority areas identified in the 2020 Speech from the Throne. The following outlines a sample of initiatives and investments highlighted in Budget 2021-2022 that promote gender equality, diversity and inclusion.

Dependable public health care

- Women make up a significant portion of frontline health care workers in the battle against COVID-19. Investments to increase wages for home support workers, community residence workers and agencies that operate the Employment and Support Services Program will have a direct impact on the lives of New Brunswick women who disproportionately work in these professions.
- The pandemic has highlighted the importance of investing meaningfully in the long-term care sector to protect New Brunswick's most vulnerable. Continuing to invest in seniors, long-term care, and funding for the operation of three new nursing home facilities will differentially impact women who represent 53.7% of people over the age of 65 in New Brunswick and make up two thirds of nursing home clients.
- Investments for the recruitment of physicians will positively impact individuals and families currently seeking a family physician. Additional support for nurse practitioner positions in remote locations will have similar impacts on individuals and families seeking access to care.
- An estimated 51% of New Brunswickers identified as being at risk of developing negative mental health impacts as a result of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Continued funding for the Inter-Departmental Addiction and Mental Health Action Plan: Priority Areas for 2021-2025 will address the increasing demand for addiction and mental health services.
- Funding to address the increase in complex mental health cases among high-needs children and youth and the need to establish professional care homes to address the needs of children under the age of 12.
- Development of a new five-year provincial health plan is underway that consists of local community engagement sessions with separate sessions being held for First Nations communities, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, front-line health-care workers, women, marginalized groups, and professional associations to better understand the specific health care needs of diverse groups of New Brunswickers in order to address gaps in the health care system responsibly and efficiently.

World-class education

- Women make up 95.6% of early childhood workers. A continued commitment to raising the salaries of trained early childhood educators will benefit this sector.

- COVID-19 has heightened and exacerbated many mental health concerns for educators, children, students and families. Funding has been allocated to address the shortage of psychologists in schools.
- Funding for tools and support needed to deliver curriculum in a modern and innovative way and the continued support of the Laptop Subsidy Program, will benefit youth and low-income families.
- Investments to offset the costs related to COVID-19 for Early Learning and Childcare Centres and Schools will continue until the current health and safety guidelines can be lifted and facilities can return to pre-pandemic operations.

Energized private sector

- Funding to address gaps in our broadband network and mobility coverage throughout the province will create economic and social benefits for rural residents and employers.
- In New Brunswick, women account for 74.6% of the supervisory roles in accommodation, travel, tourism, and related services. Continued support through the Explore NB Travel Incentive program will help mitigate the damaging impacts of COVID-19 to this sector.
- Many marginalized New Brunswickers face food insecurity. Investing in the Local Food and Beverages Strategy will increase food self-sufficiency and benefit the agriculture, agri-food and seafood sectors across the province.

Vibrant and sustainable communities

- Affordable housing continues to negatively impact low income New Brunswickers. In conjunction with the new National Housing Strategy and the Canada Housing Benefit, investments to increase the availability of affordable housing units in all corners of the province will benefit vulnerable populations and have a significant impact on lone parents who are disproportionately female.
- Increased funding for the Second Stage Housing Program will provide safe, secure and affordable housing, as well as wrap-around services to women, with or without children, who need both support and affordable housing after leaving an abusive relationship.

Moving Forward

This Gender Impact Statement is government's first focused effort at reviewing and reporting on how budgetary decisions affect groups of New Brunswickers differently. This represents a significant step forward in comprehensiveness and transparency. We are committed to ensuring that gender equality, diversity and inclusion remain central components of decision-making. This requires partnerships across government and across jurisdictions, and with experts and stakeholders in the community. We welcome feedback on what New Brunswickers find valuable in this analysis and how it could be improved in future budgets.