

1. What specific plans does your party have to support and strengthen the community sector in PEI?

The community sector is a critical part of the provision of essential services to Islanders. It not only fills the gaps that the government cannot or should not, but does so with limited or insufficient resources, staff who are not paid market rates, and a heavy reliance on volunteers. It is therefore important that the community sector is considered with the same weight and consideration as other key stakeholders and economic sectors in plans and platforms for provincial success.

The Green Party would strengthen existing funding arrangements with community partners, ensure the sector is consulted regarding its gaps, barriers, and needs for funding. We would also recognize and value the community sector as a partner and would work accordingly to develop and strengthen relationships with the sector in the delivery of services to Islanders now and in the future—sector members should not be competing with each other for crumbs from the government table. Finally, we would provide operational funding for the Community Sector Network to be the point of contact for the sector in its relationship with government and other stakeholders.

2. How will your party ensure that the community sector has a voice in policymaking, and that their perspectives and expertise are taken into account when decisions are made?

It is a core value of the Green Party that all policy is evidence-based and community-informed. This means that we see the community, its stakeholders and organizations as essential partners in the policymaking process. This also means that the process is not performative, but that perspectives and expertise from all in the room drive the outcomes and decisions.

3. What will your party do to ensure that the community sector is adequately funded and resourced to provide essential services to Islanders?

The Green Party has consistently been a strong supporter of the community sector, reflected in our advocacy and success in securing multi-year operational funding for a number of social service organizations across PEI. We will continue to ensure that adequate, multi-year funding for the community sector is a foundational pillar of our social platform and action. We know that without these essential organizations, many Islanders would not be able to access the services they absolutely need. This support would include funding for operational activities including human resources and facilities, as well as planning and development investment, which are rarely funded via project-based approaches. We further recognize that funding for coordinating bodies like the Community Sector Network is also essential.

4. What concrete steps will your political party take to provide support and investments for organizations serving marginalized communities and equity-seeking groups, to guarantee equitable access to resources and opportunities for all Islanders?

We would ensure organizations are appropriately equipped and funded to provide their very important services to marginalized communities. For example, our platform includes a commitment to provide funding for equity-seeking groups to provide appropriate housing to meet the specific needs of their communities. It is most important that marginalized communities are at the table for the development of programs and services - “nothing for us without us”. The knowledge and expertise on the community gaps and needs are with the community, and it is those needs that should inform opportunities which may be quite different (or very similar) to those already offered.

5. What specific measures does your party intend to implement to support and sustain the contributions of volunteers and the organizations that depend on them, and how will your party encourage and facilitate a robust culture of volunteerism throughout the province?

Without volunteers, our province would stop functioning. We rely on unpaid volunteers to do so many essential tasks and services, and we cannot and should not take them for granted. COVID has interrupted ‘business as usual’ for everyone, and that impact has also been felt in the community sector as volunteers do not return to previous roles or in previous numbers.

It is essential that people learn to volunteer and do so early in life, so engaging with young people and with newcomers and providing them with interesting and valuable volunteer experiences is critical. Coordination, training, registration and recognition of community volunteers is fragmented; if elected, the Green Party would provide funding and support to an appropriate group like the Community Sector Network to provide a province-wide volunteer registry and coordinator(s) position. This would also include funding for training (for example, first aid, work place safety) that would benefit both volunteers and the organizations they are working with.

6. Will your party create a dedicated office or ministry for the community sector within the government of PEI to better support and collaborate with the community sector in the province?

There must be clear responsibility and accountability within the government. This sector is one of the largest in the province, employing thousands of Islanders, but it does not have a dedicated point of contact. As a result, government communication, engagement and support are fragmented and inconsistent. A dedicated office with a senior role would be an essential step to better support and collaborate with the community sector in the province. This could also mean long term there is a single point of contact for the sector for funding, reporting and administration leading to simplification of currently onerous processes.