

ELECTION PLATFORMS: Newfoundland & Labrador

CARP has collected the platform promises targeted at older citizens of Newfoundland & Labrador by each of the three main parties. The platform proposals are taken directly from the official party documents. The platform items are organized by party to show how each is targeting older citizens.

The platforms are the 'official' vision for Newfoundland & Labrador of each party, as such, we omitted promises made in the media or the debates and focused instead on concrete proposals. The respective parties may have stated or elaborated promises not included in the information below and other items of interest not listed below can be found in the full party platforms.

CARP does not support any one party, and the information below is meant only as a neutral collection of policies that have been targeted by each party toward older Newfoundlanders & Labradorians. Our intent is to give our readers the information they need to make informed decisions on October 11, 2011.

To read each of the party platforms, follow these links:

Conservative Party: http://newenergy.nl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/PC-Blue-Book_Web.pdf

Liberal Party: <http://nlliberals.ca/policy/red-book/>

NDP: <http://ontariondp.com/en/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/NDP-Platform-2011-OUTLINE-small.pdf>

The Issues: Between the three parties, the major issues relevant to older voters have been addressed, from home care to affordable housing. Of course, each party prioritized some issues over others.

On Healthcare: Each of the parties proposed improvements to homecare and long-term care practices and drug access and costs. The PCs focus on wait times reduction, while the Liberals are promising a health system navigator, and the NDP are proposing more doctors for under serviced areas.

Pensions & Incomes: The PCs will allow social assistance recipients to wait until age 65 to apply for their Canada Pension Plan benefits so they do not have to take a lifelong lower rate by applying at 60. The Liberals will work with the federal government to improve the CPP and provide a one-time 2.5% increase to Public Sector Pensioners and subsequently, annual increases equivalent to CPI, to a maximum of 2%. The NDP will provide a one-time 2.5% increase to Public Sector Pensioners and subsequently, annual increases equivalent to CPI, to a maximum of 2%.

Other Seniors Issues: The PCs have proposals for seniors' transit, housing, and tougher laws for elder abuse. The Liberals have a proposals to lower energy costs, while the NDP are promising affordable housing for seniors.

Progressive Conservative

Issue	Proposal
Healthcare	<p>Will establish a Healthy Living Division of the government's new Population Health Branch to provide cohesive and focused oversight of the government's policies and programs promoting wellness, healthy living, healthy aging, physical education, fitness, recreation and sport</p> <p>Will explore hiring more nutritionists and dieticians and using telehealth and e-health technologies</p> <p>Will reduce wait times to meet reasonable benchmarks will remain one of our highest priorities</p> <p>Within the first 120 days in office, will produce a provincial strategy on reducing wait times in emergency rooms</p> <p>Within the first 120 days in office, will produce a provincial strategy on reducing wait times for orthopedic surgeries for joint replacement</p> <p>Will work with community care providers to enhance the availability of at home care</p> <p>Will work with other governments to explore options to reduce the costs of medications</p> <p>We will continue to enhance dialysis services in the province by ensuring we have state-of-the-art equipment and highly trained professionals</p> <p>Will develop a new model of home care that realigns patient care funding so that it is based on the patient's assessed needs</p> <p>Will amend the home care needs assessment test to allow recipients to keep more of their savings</p> <p>Will continue to work to enhance cancer care throughout the province to improve the lives of cancer patients and their families</p>
Pensions & Income	<p>Will allow social assistance recipients to wait until age 65 to apply for their Canada Pension Plan benefits so they do not have to take a lifelong lower rate by applying at 60</p>
Transit	<p>Will establish a transportation fund of \$1 million to partner with community organizations to improve transportation options for seniors</p>
Housing	<p>Will commission research on housing requirements and supportive care needs of persons as they age</p>
Elder Abuse	<p>Will continue to focus attention on elder abuse, raising awareness and offering help</p>
Other	<p>In collaboration with Memorial University's department of Folklore, we will commission an informal Collective Memory Project in which we will invite seniors to record and archive the stories of their youth. We will seek to engage young Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in recording these sessions in an effort to cultivate a climate of mutual understanding and respect connecting the generations while preserving our oral history</p> <p>We will provide seniors with a 35% discount on licences to hunt, fish and engage in various other activities for which permits are required and people are assessed a fee</p>

Liberal

Issue	Proposal
Healthcare	<p>Will introduce a Health Care Charter to improve accountability and patient health services to the people of this province</p> <p>Will establish a Health Care Advocacy Council to make recommendations on how to cost-effectively provide timely access to high quality care in Newfoundland and Labrador</p> <p>Will assess the status of primary health care in the province, develop a primary health care strategy and invest in multi-disciplinary sites with locations to be identified</p> <p>Will develop and implement a chronic disease management and prevention strategy. Priority will be given to diabetes</p> <p>Will find efficiencies within the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program (NLPDP) that will effect savings in the program, reduce unnecessary duplication for pharmacies</p> <p>Will guarantee that Newfoundland and Labrador gains maximum benefit through the use of generic pharmaceuticals by streamlining the process for submission and acceptance of those generic drugs that have achieved approval by Health Canada</p> <p>Will ensure that pharmacists are available for rural areas of Newfoundland and Labrador by providing incentives to both students of pharmacy intending to practice in these communities</p> <p>Will accept the recommendations of the Common Drug Review and Oncology Drug Review in a more timely manner and add these prescription drugs to the formulary within 3 months of the recommendations</p> <p>Will increase the number of medications which are eligible under the NLPDP</p> <p>Will invest in patient navigators for each of the provincial health authorities to help patients navigate through the health care system and help prevent them from falling through the cracks</p> <p>Will fund a Provincial Palliative Care Program</p> <p>Will complete a funding review and an operational review of ambulance services in the first year of our mandate</p> <p>Will implement a geriatric focus to our health care system that is now solely focused on acute care</p> <p>Will implement a home care strategy that will allow seniors to live in their homes longer. We will introduce legislation to recognize and support caregivers and their contributions, and allow family members to be paid caregivers when there is difficulty in recruitment and retention of a homecare worker</p> <p>Will strengthen our community-based personal care homes through investments that will provide an increase in the resident allowance from \$150.00 to \$300.00 per month.</p> <p>Will implement a provincial home oxygen program, including standards and quality assurance</p>
Pensions & Income	<p>Will work with the federal government to ensure that rules governing CPP and private sector pensions are adjusted to reflect demographic change in a manner that is fair to pensioners, business, unions and current workers</p> <p>Will provide a one-time 2.5% increase to Public Sector Pensioners and subsequently, annual increases equivalent to CPI, to a maximum of 2%.</p>
Energy	<p>Will direct Nalcor to work with Newfoundland Power to ensure that any electricity rate increases are no higher than the Consumer Price Index (CPI) during the term of a New Liberal Government</p> <p>Will direct Nalcor to open an office of a Consumer Advocate to vet any project brought forward so as to ensure it is affordable to all residents of the province</p>

NDP

Issue	Proposal
Healthcare	<p>Set steps in motion for a comprehensive, independent review of the health care system</p> <p>Plan a universal, publicly-funded and administered homecare and long-term care program</p> <p>Provide home support workers with higher wage increases and a training grant</p> <p>Expand the NL Prescription Drug Program by 10% to increase eligibility and reduce co-pays</p> <p>Provide funding to reduce the ambulance fee for residents from \$115 to \$50</p> <p>Increase home care budgets to immediately hire 100 more workers to meet the most urgent needs</p> <p>Reduce ER wait times through on-site clinics, increased staffing, community health centres and long-term care/home care</p> <p>Continue to expand the NL Prescription Drug Program and work with the other provinces to put a national pharmacare program in place</p> <p>Expand primary health care programs across the province</p> <p>Address shortages of specialists in the province</p> <p>Increase incentives for doctors to work in under-serviced areas</p>
Pensions & Income	<p>Increase the basic income tax exemption from \$7,989 to \$9,000</p>
Housing	<p>Give seniors living in their own homes \$250 per household annually to help with snow clearing</p> <p>Designate a percentage of affordable and social housing units for seniors, people with disabilities or complex needs, and those experiencing discrimination</p>
Other	<p>Provide one free college or university course annually to residents 60 years and older</p> <p>Restore funds to the NL Seniors' Resource Centre by \$100,000 for programs</p>