



# Addressing Poverty in your Community

## A QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

POVERTY REDUCTION MUST BE A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT, WITH EACH PARTNER DOING WHAT IT DOES BEST. CHECK OUT THE ROAD MAP ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE WHICH PROVIDES STEPS THAT CAN BE TAKEN BY A COMMUNITY TO DEVELOP A LOCAL RESPONSE TO POVERTY.

POVERTY IS A MULTI-FACETED, COMPLEX, SYSTEMIC SOCIAL ISSUE THAT NEEDS A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH FOR POSITIVE, LONG-TERM CHANGE TO HAPPEN.

COMMUNITIES UNDERSTAND FIRST-HAND THE EFFECTS OF POVERTY AND THE IMPACT IT CAN HAVE ON INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES. POVERTY HAS MANY FACES INCLUDING PEOPLE STRUGGLING TO EARN A LIVING WAGE; FINDING AND KEEPING SUITABLE HOUSING; VISITING FOOD BANKS OR CHILDREN WHO GO TO SCHOOL HUNGRY. GIVING INDIVIDUALS THE TOOLS THEY NEED TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL MEANS STRONGER COMMUNITIES FOR EVERYONE.

REDUCING POVERTY CONTRIBUTES TO AN INCLUSIVE AND VIBRANT SOCIETY. IT BUILDS OUR ECONOMY, STRENGTHENS INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES, HELPS OUR SCHOOLS AND BUSINESSES, AND GIVES MORE PEOPLE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR SOCIETY. IN SHORT, POVERTY REDUCTION IMPROVES THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL BRITISH COLUMBIANS, THUS STRENGTHENING B.C.'S OVERALL PROSPERITY.

POVERTY IS AN ISSUE THAT CANNOT BE ADDRESSED BY ANY ONE AGENCY OR SECTOR. TACKLING THE COMPLEX ISSUE OF POVERTY CAN ONLY BE ADDRESSED WHEN A WIDE RANGE OF COMMUNITY PARTNERS COLLABORATE TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE A COMMON GOAL AND TO CONTRIBUTE THEIR UNIQUE SKILLS TO BENEFIT LOCAL LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES. BY BRINGING TOGETHER MUNICIPAL LEADERS, KEY LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT, LOCAL SOLUTIONS CAN BE CREATED THAT WILL HAVE A DIRECT AND LONG-LASTING IMPACT IN THE LIVES OF STRUGGLING BRITISH COLUMBIANS.

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## STEPS TO DEVELOPING A LOCAL RESPONSE

### 1. EXPLORE LOCAL INTEREST

Do a scan of local organizations working to reduce poverty. Who are the local leaders? What organizations and groups are already doing this work and are strong advocates for change? Reach out to other potential partners such as local government, service providers, businesses, faith communities and most importantly, people living in poverty.

### 4. UNDERSTAND CONTEXT

Gather the information you need to better understand the face of poverty in your community. As you think about how to strengthen your community commitment to poverty reduction you need to understand the extent and depth of poverty at the local level.

### 3. CREATE A VISION

Create a shared vision of what a successful multi-sector effort might accomplish and some key principles and values that might guide the effort. Build on the strengths of the community and link current and emerging initiatives to your vision.

### 2. FORM A COMMITTEE

Convene a group of diverse and committed leaders from across the sectors to discuss launching and stewarding a broad-based, comprehensive and multi-sectorial collaborative approach. Build conditions for success by creating a strong foundation.

### 5. ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

Ask the right questions. What are the drivers of poverty in your community? What is the vision for the kind of community you want? What are you doing that helps address poverty and what else could be done? Compile all the information.

### 6. ASSESS READINESS

Do you have the knowledge, resources, skills, leadership, and partnerships to tackle a more strategic role in poverty work? Examine whether you have everything you need to be successful. Assess strengths and identify gaps in your resources.

### 7. IDENTIFY PRIORITIES

People have different perspectives on how to define, measure and address poverty. Understanding these different approaches will spark ideas and help you to decide what strategy is best suited to your community.

### 10. EVALUATE THE IMPACT

Measuring your success is important to make sure you are reaching your goals of poverty reduction. To help ensure success, you must evaluate, measure, assess the outcomes and adjust your efforts accordingly to ensure the best possible results for individuals, families, and the community.

### 9. ANTICIPATE THE IMPACT

A poverty reduction focus is likely to have an impact along several dimensions. Consider how actions may create change on several levels – on individuals or family, in the community, between stakeholders, or on the importance of poverty reduction in your community and on a larger scale.

### 8. DEVELOP A STRATEGY

Develop a community-wide plan by using the information compiled through research and community engagement, exploring best practices from other communities, and identifying areas where you can generate positive results.

# WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING

## RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

### VIBRANT VICTORIA COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN ON POVERTY

The Community Action Plan on Poverty was created by organizations in B.C.'s Capital Region convened by the Community Social Planning Council.

This multi-sector coalition has developed a Community Action Plan on Poverty (CAPP) to guide commitments with a concrete annual program of activities to create positive outcomes.

To learn more, visit:  
[www.caponpoverty.ca/](http://www.caponpoverty.ca/)

### TAMARACK INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Tamarack is an organization that develops and supports learning communities to help people to collaborate and share knowledge to achieve a collective goal on complex community change. To find out more about Tamarack visit:  
[www.tamarackcommunity.ca](http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca).

One of Tamarack's three learning communities is Vibrant Communities Canada – Cities Reducing Poverty which is a community driven effort to support cities/communities to build, align and improve poverty reduction strategies led by multi-sector roundtables. A number of B.C. communities are members of Vibrant Cities. To find out more visit:  
[www.vibrantcommunities.ca](http://www.vibrantcommunities.ca)

### SURREY POVERTY REDUCTION COALITION

The Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition, which has representation from multiple sectors, was established to oversee the implementation of the city's Poverty Reduction Plan and its 75 recommendations.

For more information on the plan and the work of the Coalition, visit:  
[www.surreyprc.ca](http://www.surreyprc.ca)

### VIBRANT ABBOTSFORD

Vibrant Abbotsford began in 2006 when local citizens dedicated themselves to realizing a vision of Abbotsford that offers a high quality of life for every resident and family.

Now, Vibrant Abbotsford is continuing its actions to make that vision a reality.

For more information, visit:  
[www.vibrantabbotsford.ca](http://www.vibrantabbotsford.ca)

### CITY OF REVELSTOKE

Revelstoke has a Social Development Committee which works as an Advisory Committee to the Revelstoke City Council. To mitigate the effects of poverty on local families, Revelstoke released its Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2011 and since September 2013, a local Poverty Reduction Working Group has also been created.

To find out more, visit:  
[www.revelstokesocialdevelopment.org](http://www.revelstokesocialdevelopment.org)

### SPAN NELSON (SOCIAL PLANNING ACTION NETWORK)

SPAN Nelson promotes community collaboration to identify and respond to Nelson's specific social needs. Nelson is working towards the creation of a long-term poverty reduction plan for the city through its "Nelson at its Best" initiative.

For more details, visit:  
[www.spannelson.ca](http://www.spannelson.ca)

This publication was developed through the work of the Community Poverty Reduction Strategies Initiative. If you are interested in finding out more information about this initiative or if your community is interested in being involved, contact:



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