



Transcript: Community Meeting on Poverty Reduction

Surrey, BC
February 1, 2018

Introduction and Event Summary

On February 1, 2018, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction hosted a community meeting in Surrey, BC to discuss poverty and poverty reduction with local residents. The event brought together 60 to 80 participants including people with lived experience of poverty; poverty reduction front line workers and advocates; people from the non-profit and business sectors; and other community members from all walks of life.

The event began with a welcome from Elder Tom Oleman from Seton Lake First Nation, followed by opening remarks from Shane Simpson (Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction).

Participants then engaged in round table discussions in groups of 8 to 10 people per table. Each table had a dedicated facilitator from a local community group or from SPARC BC who helped to guide the conversations. Each table also had a dedicated note taker who helped to record the discussion.

There were two rounds of discussion which focused on the following questions:

1. What are the issues facing you and people living in poverty right now?
2. What would address these issues and help you and others out of poverty?

Following the discussions, participants were invited to put a sticky dot beside the strategies or solutions that were most important to them. Each participant received four (4) sticky dots. Following the individual priority setting exercise, participants were asked to determine as a table the top three (3) priorities from the evening and to report these priorities back to the room.

The Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction shared some closing remarks.

Document Organization

This document contains the transcripts from the flip chart notes from those in attendance. The flip chart notes have been transcribed verbatim, correcting only for spelling and grammar as needed. The notes are organized according to the feedback received to the two questions beginning with:

1. What are the issues facing you and people living in poverty right now?
2. What would address these issues and help you and others out of poverty?

Question 1: What are the issues facing you and people in poverty right now?

- Low income
 - o Low income families struggle to prioritize how to spend \$
 - o Living wage is \$21
 - o Government does not control cost of living
 - o Pay more to employees
 - o Wages haven't grown in 10 years
- Child care and children
 - o Child tax benefit – people treat it as pay day. Unfair to tell people how to spend it.
 - o Expand cut off for youth in care
 - o Access to affordable child care
- Food insecurity
 - o Need for more nutritional food
 - o Lack of access to healthy food
- Health care
 - o Lack of extended health benefits for recipients of public and private pensions. Lack of access increases poverty especially in seniors/ fixed income.
 - o Seniors can't get prescriptions – why do we pay for MSP premium
 - o Not effective to have monopoly. Alberta does not have \$ fee
 - o Access to GP's, walk in clinics
 - o There have been cut backs to extended health -addiction counselling
 - o Only one hospital in Surrey
 - o Mental health
 - o Need better access to mental health services
 - o Addiction and mental health – stigma around it, shunned because of it
 - o Not treated like a health issue
 - o Need for more addiction counselling
- Transportation
 - o Need affordable transportation
- Government access
 - o People often not accessing resources
 - o IA application online
 - o Access to navigator for people on income assistances (1 vote) to help clients and families navigate various ministries
 - o Need easier websites/ user friendly/ literacy issues
 - o Too many systems/ ministries to navigate
 - o Lack of coordinated case management
- Community issues
 - o Address issues at community level
 - o Surrey does not have resources like Vancouver

- Balance needs to be put in life
- Affordable housing
 - Size of rentals does not fit family
 - BC government should use the property it owns to address poverty and housing issues
 - More out further in suburbs, housing in suburbs is not safe
 - Housing affordability – long wait lists for affordable housing (3 votes)
 - High rents pushing tenants out of city centres
 - Lack of subsidized housing/rental (3 votes)
 - Not enough portable housing subsidies
 - Housing prices increasing in Fraser Valley as more young families moving out this way
 - Lots of houses sitting empty, no longer a place to live but an investment
 - Welfare/disability rates not enough, needs to be livable
 - Income assistance rates are too low
 - PWD rates are too low
 - Earnings too low. No incentive to work due to claw backs.
- Education
 - Premium on university degrees; need a degree now for everything
 - Education has become a business
 - Why is higher education so expensive?
 - No one to help access affordable schooling
 - Limited # of scholarships
 - Doesn't matter what you bring to the table – need a degree or you are looked over
 - Literacy challenges, education systems lets people down
 - Complex application process
 - Long wait for ESL classes, can't connect with people in community
- Employment
 - Employment insurance – 55% not sufficient, so many requirements
 - Medical eligibility? – only 15 weeks, what if no other coverage
 - Technology replacing humans
 - Vicious cycle: Don't have a job, can't find a place to stay--no place to stay, no job, or can't sustain job
 - Booming economy in BC doesn't reach low income people
 - Basic needs not being met – not getting jobs because of this
 - Need more access to job training – wait lists for jobs in BC
- Seniors
 - Lots of seniors in poverty
 - Seniors can't get prescriptions
 - Pensions not enough
 - Can't afford to retire
- Social isolation
 - Poverty can lead to having no strong community connections
 - Isolation – Surrey is large

- Bigger population increases density so less likely to know neighbours which decreases health
 - Isolation and depression so people self-medicate
 - Cities can be isolating because they are so large
- Cost of living
 - Keeping up with "the Jones"
 - Always wanting more
 - Access to Wi-Fi – expensive
 - Paying for phone bills (data)
 - Gas, insurance prices
 - Hydro rates only increasing
 - Access to internet – can't afford/ access online services
 - Does having kids equal poverty? (Having kids can be a poverty trap for some)
 - Canada needs a cap on poverty level
- Life skills
 - People don't know how to live within means
 - Life skills are missing
 - Need better financial literacy
- Inequality
 - Rich getting richer, poor getting poorer
 - Inter-generational poverty
- Crime
 - Drugs, gang, violence, keeping people in poverty
 - Areas of high poverty can be crime riddled environments. Constant safety concerns (1 vote)
- Stigma
 - Society attitude towards poverty fosters exclusion/ discrimination
 - Stigma of IA/PWD
 - Low self-worth (exhausting AEE)
 - Low income people face stigma
 - Victim blaming
- Transportation
 - Everyone should be given a free bus pass (2 votes)
 - Expected to look for work – no transportation supports (bus pass)
- Legal system
 - Access to legal aid is too limited (2 Votes)
- Education
 - Lack of access to education
- Addictions
 - More alcohol and drug treatment centres (supported housing)
 - Need continuum of services
- Supports for children

- Lack of funding for children's sports
 - Lack of positive environments / activities for kids – they can get into trouble
- Health care
 - Medications not covered
 - Dentists not covered
 - Free contraception pills
 - Medications not being covered for all
 - Access of medical care – how can we see a doctor
 - No doctors available
 - No preventable health care
 - Mental health wait lists, no help =people left to fend for themselves, self-medicated
 - Lower income leads to more illnesses
 - Retirees – pay out of pocket – medical/dental etc
 - Better access to health care
 - Extended therapies/ specialists not covered. (Audiologists/ speech therapists)
- Income Assistance
 - Couples don't disclose relationships because their money is reduced (1 vote)
 - Income assistance/ disability rates not high enough
- Housing
 - Expand co-op housing sector
 - Government legislation to restrict foreign property ownership
 - Rent controls needed
 - Older affordable homes being torn down
 - New development/ gentrification
 - Newer high rises have a lack of affordability
 - Secondary suites – illegal units
 - No safe housing for youth under 18
 - Empty lots no development
 - Landlords vs tenant rights
 - Not enough affordable housing
- Accessing government services
 - Need one-on-one conversations (navigators) to assist people in poverty (jobs, homeless, children)
 - Social assistance workers need to help people apply for assistance
 - Often a language barrier for people to access social services
 - More information about the range of programs, ads and public announcements of programs available (Government program is an example)
- Education
 - Educate kids to help them out of poverty
 - More funding for adult education and young adult courses (baby sitting and food safe courses)
- Stigma and discrimination

- Stigma on being in poverty – what does poverty mean?
- Homelessness is considered a crime
- People on PWD with no severe issues (medical) will not be eligible for day care – why?
- Stigma of getting a job on disability
- Youth discrimination
- Not all disabilities are visible – stigmatization
- Have a degree in PYSC, used to be a counsel law
- Discrimination due to disability faced by self and husband
- Treat poverty issues as human rights issues
- Income
 - 40% of the Board of Trade felt we should be on a living wage
 - Increase in the minimum wage
- Food security
 - Food bank to change its policies
 - Starfish Pack program should be expanded to all communities in BC
- Community
 - Affordability of services in the community
 - Better access to books at libraries
 - Xmas is a financial burden so would rather raise money to help families pay rent—a sort of community rent program where people can donate/help
 - More funding for community groups to do more collaborative work with other community groups
- Mental health and addictions
 - Undiagnosed mental health issues
 - Drug users start off with prescription meds then turn to stronger drugs
 - Per diem increased for supportive recovery houses
- Employment
 - One's education (tickets/ skills) not recognised in BC (just another province)
 - Lack of job stability (forestry, fisheries, etc.)
- Children issues
 - 21% of children in Surrey live in poverty
 - Day care – phased in over 18 years – why so long?
 - More years for kids in care
- Life skills
 - Personal financial management
 - Don't know how to budget – deficit of basic life skills
 - Education system is totally disconnected – does not teach you life skills
 - Teach it, live it
 - Often kids in poverty have no money skills – once of age they take out loans, cant pay back and get in financial trouble and poverty cycle continues
 - What we may think people know, what we take for granted, people often don't know
- Transportation

- Need affordable transportation
- Homelessness
 - Education in society about homelessness
 - Homeless people being victimized all over again
 - Lack of shelters
- Food security
 - Easier to access food bank
 - Reintroduce soup kitchens
 - Need more community gardens
 - Food security – food bank is difficult to access
 - Waste policy from grocery stores province – done in Europe (2 votes)
 - Make community gardens from empty lots (2 votes)
- Housing
 - Put affordable housing on empty lots with rental (2 votes)
 - Use inclusionary zoning (1 vote)
 - Long waiting lists for social housing
 - Costs/affordability (no more than 30% of income)
 - Residential Tenancy Act should work for tenants
 - Not a lot of safe, clean and affordable housing
 - Long waitlists
 - \$1107 cap 2 bedroom
 - Developers have far more money and often bully people out of their home
 - Gentrification – where do people go after being evicted?
 - Too many people living in affordable housing – like 12 people
 - Renting is ridiculous – landlords are requesting information they have no business to ask for (i.e. tax information)
 - People are evicted unfairly
 - Rental caps (1 vote)
 - When people are forced to move they lose their communities
 - Use LRT to prevent the demolition of affordable housing
 - Stronger wording in leases to compensate people if evicted
 - Increased development is squeezing out housing
 - Don't want more services without housing
 - Choice between housing or groceries (you can't afford both)
- Income
 - \$15 minimum wage want to discuss
- Transportation
 - It's ridiculous to fine people that can't afford transit
 - Transit passes are discriminating – people age out, parents can't get them for their kids
 - \$6 deposit on a compass card can be too much
 - Transportation is not accessible - \$6 for compass card
- Access to government services

- Navigator to help direct and fill out forms
- Systems are not user friendly
- Ministries and communities need to be working together
- People have fear surrounding government, social workers, etc.
- Even community organizations can't navigate the system
- There are always needs to be a point person – what happens when that person leaves
- People in poverty often don't know what support is available to them
- Existing services for special needs families
- Connect families to services
- Staff must know the programs and services
- Education
 - Public education plays a role = \$ financial education
 - Cost of education
 - Big financial increase for post-secondary education
- Government
 - Lack of communication between government agencies and ministries
 - SDPR can't access MCFD can't access mental health
 - Disconnect between levels of Government
 - Resources in community and ministry
 - No help getting CPP from disability
 - Reinstate CUS program
 - No consistency anywhere (1 vote)
 - Community organizations top up ministry shelter and it's still not enough
 - Shelter benefits is not enough (not even close)
- Stigma
 - Stigma that people in poverty are stupid
 - Stigma of poverty
 - Label of poverty or living in poverty
- Rights and dignity
 - Self-determination – have we robbed people?
 - Lack of identity if and when not working
 - Not all people in poverty want to go on IA
 - We've become programmed via policy
- Health care
 - Refugees cannot access MSP and wind up developing horrific health issues
 - Medication costs – gap in filing taxes to being eligible for MSP
- Community issues
 - Province needs to step in and force of municipalities to step up
 - Recreation passes – affordability
 - Families can't afford sports
 - Make entertainment affordable
 - Relationships are important

- Lack of community groups
 - LRT coming to Surrey – could create slum-like living conditions
- Housing
 - Harry Bains is recommending stronger language surrounding modular housing and providing a relocation fee – how do you relocate when there’s nowhere to go?
 - HB proposes offering market value (not assessment value) plus \$30,000 relocation fee (3 votes)
 - Lack of affordable housing
 - Inclusionary zoning – for everyone displaced. There should be places for people to live.
 - Modular housing restrictions – if recycling public funding, there should be rent control
 - Developers should be responsible for adding low income units in their buildings (3 votes)
- Transportation
 - People cannot afford transit but they are being displaced to build it
- Education
 - Lack of affordable post-secondary
 - Loans and bursaries for education
 - Youth need affordable education
 - Lack of training
 - Education system is actually set up to keep poor people out
- Employment
 - Lack of decent jobs
- Food security
 - Expense of food
 - More resources for food banks
 - More free meals, nutritional basics,
 - Quality control of food at food banks
 - Easier access to food needed
 - More community food banks
- Crime
 - Prostitution due to lack of life choices
 - Pan handing and binning
 - Crime rate is a concern for those in low income
- Mental health and addictions
- Childcare
 - In BC over 500 kids stay at home by themselves so parents can work because they can’t afford day care
 - Lack of subsidies (housing, childcare)
- Income
 - Minimum wage
- Homeless
 - Provide food to homeless
- Access government services

- Need for advocates to assist in access to services, ID, housing, basic needs, computer and \$
 - Access to computers to apply for IA, look for housing, look for jobs and resume and printing
- Health care
 - Healthcare funding – increase to dental/prescriptions
 - Preventative dental for seniors
 - Seniors lack of access to medication coverage
 - High cost of medicine
 - Health care – stigma within the health care system and providers
 - Lack of free dental care causes health issues (seniors)
 - Make healthcare more accessible – more doctors, cover payments, more staff, longer clinic hours
- Access to ocean/land
 - fishing, hunting
- Addictions
 - More government funded treatment and recovery
- Legal Services
 - Need more
 - Lawyers/legal services
- Services for poor
 - Free barter systems
 - Need free Wi-Fi province wide
 - Recycle clothes –free Value Village/ 2nd hand store
 - Program – lack of programs for youth/elders/seniors
 - Laundry services – clothing
 - Knowledge of resources – furniture, clothing allowances (not enough), dentures, eye glasses
- Education
 - Training certificates
 - Provide access to give people skills required for living wage jobs
 - Education costs prevent access to training
- Employment services
 - Work BC should assist more
- Access to government services
 - More transparency from government
 - Give people advice on rebates or resources
 - Inform public and community about the services available
- Mental health and addictions
 - Better treatment for addictions
 - Nowhere to go after treatment and end up back in same circumstances
 - Recovery homes unregulated

- Per diem amounts are too low to support licenced recovery homes
- Treatment centres not always at capacity in other places in the Province
- Places are full and have people waiting
- Cycle of drug use due to inadequate supports
- Pattern of housing cycle for those with mental health issues
- Preventative approach to addictions and health/mental health
- Not enough mental health workers
- More diversity in locations for treatment
- Provide people with the chance to escape the neighbourhood where they encounter addictions
- Raise per diems for approved recovery homes
- \$6/client/day in some recovery centres.
- Counselling not available or as fast as needed
- Waited 8 days to see a counsellor
- Language – recreational/ drug user vs addict
- Homelessness
 - Tied to the cost of housing
 - Stigma on homelessness
- Income
 - Low wages not meeting cost of living
 - Even an increase of wages to \$15 is not enough to cover the cost of basic essentials
- Seniors
 - Unable to afford to retire
 - Re-mortgaging to afford to retire
- Stigma
 - Ministry workers judge people with addictions
 - More education needed for workers
 - Deserving vs ‘undeserving’ clients
 - Stigma attached after being kicked out of various recovery places
 - Stigma on homelessness
 - Health care
 - Stigma within the health care system and providers
 - Dignity/self-worth. Stigma of being a drug user but it is often the result of being homeless
 - Kids don’t want to eat at breakfast program because of shame
 - Difficulty getting hired when recovering addicts face prejudice from employers
 - Taboo if you have mental health issues
 - Need education to reduce stigma
 - Respect and dignity through language
 - Discretionary practices by discriminatory employers and landlords
- Housing
 - Cannot afford to move due to housing costs

- Housing costs are high
- New commuters come to Surrey and housing even harder to find
- Need housing for everyone
- Families applying for social housing because housing is expensive
- Rooms will be rented and then people soon evicted
- Landlords get rent from a number of people
- Shelter kickback from landlords
- Get people out of cities to more remote areas with more affordable housing
- Social housing? None has been built since the 90's
- No consultation with neighbourhoods concerning housing
- BC housing – 1 year wait
- No affordable housing
- Low vacancy rates and therefore not possible to move
- Limited number of co-ops and they are run down
- Seniors' housing is needed
- Housing application 1 + month wait
- Need to fund rent banks
- Response time is very slow
- Takes a long time to get in to social housing
- Government IA policies
 - Faster access to treatment and services. Ministry support for this
 - Length of time to get on income assistances too long
 - Not enough income assistance funds \$375 for shelter is not enough
 - No information of what services are available
 - Income assistance- rent \$375 doesn't cover it
 - Shelter rates from Ministry are too low
- Government access
 - Have to wait on the phone and cannot afford it
 - Cycle of application--you never speak to same person
 - Outreach workers not easily reached when crisis occurs
 - No longer have disability offices dedicated to disability clients and should bring back
- Cost of living and realities of poverty
 - Wage inequality
 - Cost of housing
 - Cost of child care
 - Food
 - Lack of education/access to education
 - No stability in life
 - Can't afford clothing
 - Unaffordable recreation costs
 - Choices are to eat or buy medication or transportation –hard choices
 - No money/little money – not enough to get by

- 1 paycheque away from becoming homeless – blue collar workers
 - Housing/health/education/hunger/stigma/daycare
- Seniors
 - Seniors lack of access to medication coverage
 - Preventative dental for seniors
 - Lack of free dental care causes health issues (seniors)
 - Seniors lack resources when in crisis
 - All about issues for seniors—issue of isolation
 - Seniors need extended health care because health begins to fail
- Services
 - Funding
 - Coordination of services
 - Length of time funding is provided
- Child care
 - Daycare for kids
 - Average costs too expensive (wages go to day care)
 - Takes parents away from caring for their kids
- Transportation
 - Transportation options are unaffordable
 - Commuting cost is high
 - Cost of bus or car insurance too high
- Immigrants
 - Refugees face many challenges
 - Immigration – skilled worker
 - Issues for immigrants
 - Immigrant language issues
 - Takes a long time to learn English
 - In 90 days, only able to order food
 - Immigrant issues, loss of hope when unable to find work, issues increase
- Homelessness
 - Tent city – 100 + tents
 - Lack of peer support for transition to shelter/ home
 - Shelter are below living standard 40 + people, 4 washrooms
- ID
 - Mail issues
 - Mail boxes
 - Addresses
 - Having proper ID presents many barriers
 - Food bank, no access without addresses
- Crime
 - Gangs and crime are a problem
- Children

- Children – Survey out of 10, 4 or more have health/mental addictions/ issues
- Break cycle of intergenerational poverty
- Advocate for and support parents
- Lack of support for youth transitioning out of care
- Lack of support for children living in poverty at schools
- Counsellors are not working with children’s challenges, more focused on career
- 2 year independence test for adult children living with parents - can’t get help
- Working parents – kids get into trouble because parents are not home
- Parents lack support
- Being kicked out of foster care
- Need youth workers to support but only supported for a limited time
- Education
 - Post-secondary education costs too high to get out of poverty cycle
- Addictions
 - Recovery houses
 - Cycle of clients getting kicked out
 - Drinking issues, not enough resources
 - Unregulated recovery houses
 - Lack of harm reduction housing (government funded)
 - Not enough: detox centres, treatment centres, mental health and addiction centres
- Housing
 - Affordability – housing and utilities, transportation and transit and childcare(1 vote)
 - Lack of awareness around tenants’ rights
 - Not enough transition houses for women and youth
 - Limited subsidized housing
 - Wages vs housing affordability
 - Don’t want to rent
 - Housing prices so high
 - Housing for persons with disabilities
 - Landlords can be uneducated/mean
- Food security
 - Food costs increase
 - Every other week food bank
 - Too many hoops to jump through to gain access
 - Proper food banks (government funded/sponsored)
- Life skills
 - Lack of education around budgeting
- Income
 - Minimum wage is too low
- Government access
 - Phone and internet needed to access services
 - Barrier to access IA

- Ministry – face to face contact was the old way – new way is online
 - Have more choice when service is face to face at the Ministry
 - Took 1.5 hours to complete IA application
 - Lack tools, especially when no one is available to help
 - Old school (face to face) service is better
 - Single door access and adequate resources
- Stigma
 - Barriers to ability to become part of the community
 - Lack of acceptance from others
 - Cultural stigma
 - Too much segregation of kids from low income families
 - Low income kids impacted – unable to fit in clothing wise
 - No willingness to help those in deepest need
- IA and government policies
 - IA min wage for single moms is not enough
 - PWD - limited supports above MSP, dental
 - Financial cap on saving for IA and PWD
 - 211 – advertise radio, tv, sharing info
 - Only supports out there are time limited
 - IA and minimum wages for single moms are not enough
 - Lack of employment support
 - Disability rates not enough
- Mental health and addictions
 - Mental health – not enough resources
 - Clients who are hard to house face discrimination with how they present
 - Surrey mental health over booked
- Education
 - Better education needed
- Housing
 - High rents but low incomes
 - Housing prices so high
 - Wait lists for housing, for everything
 - 5 year wait for BC housing, need more housing
 - More housing needed
- Transportation
 - Limited bus ticket expensive
- Children and Youth
 - Child protection should be more proactive
 - Need more single parent housing and resources
 - Students in poverty do not have the option to peruse training opportunities
 - 16 year old student – needs support sustain/keep job
 - Students need 1:1 support at work in order to progress

- Youth need mentorship opportunities
- Parents unable to provide basic necessities to teenagers seeking employment
- Kids in low income families lack opportunities especially during school breaks
- Kids would benefit from individualized education planning and emotional supports
- Childcare – availability for single parents
- Teenage kids – lacking skills in independence. i.e. cooking
- Kids in low income families lack support at home
- E.g. parent working 3 jobs, sleeping only 2 hours to try and make ends meet.
- At risk youth – could benefit from programming that is tailored to individual kids' interests
- Need programs that promote self-esteem.
- Single parent, mums and dads all need childcare
- Lack of resources drives kids to negative choices due to lack of opportunities

Question 2: What would address these issues and help you and people out of poverty?

- Supports
 - More community facilities (hygiene, showers, laundry, personal needs for address, computers)
 - More non-profit organizations to offer supports
 - Recycling exchanges (clothing, furniture, food, info for resources)
 - Organization of business, donations, pick up and distribution
 - Parenting programs
 - Therapy, must be subsidized if not covered by MSP
 - Respite care for care workers who work with care resistant individuals
 - Programs, services, available support to families
- Food insecurity
 - Incentivize good choices. i.e. welfare, structure support, funds better – perhaps some allocated to groceries
- Transportation
 - Bus passes desperately needed to aid in job search
- Life skills
 - Budgeting programs (2 votes) – provide education in schools about credit cards, debt, poverty
 - Community connections – builds trust, online resource app, free on exchange (2 votes)
 - Networking (contacts, social media)
 - Education for computer usage
 - Life skills classes – budgeting, empowerment, self-esteem, equal rights (6 votes)
 - Programming for kids aging out of care – training for meal planning, budgeting
- Service Delivery

- Need improvements to welfare system
- Double dipping by recipients on welfare who also benefit from other programs
- System is being used by some to avoid self sufficiency
- Help people to find a purpose to avoid continually relying on free money
- Require people put in volunteer hours
- Directly address issues vs on-going medication
- Train the trainer programs (3 votes)
- Require people to do community service
- Less dependence on government
- Lower government wages and pensions and bonuses (3 votes)
- Stricter/ less government spending
- Mental health
 - Moderation programs
 - Mental health programs that look towards building positivity instead of people staying 'stuck' (1 vote)
- Health care
 - Build preventative health care model versus anti care model
 - Free vitamins (2 votes)
- Housing
 - Housing insecurity – 30% affordability rule should apply regardless of income and government should subsidize
 - More affordable/supportive safe housing in all areas (5 votes)
 - Offer portable rental subsidies (3 votes)
 - Non-profits need grants to create safe, affordable housing (1 vote)
 - Local governments should forgive development charges for non-profit housing to develop more low income housing (2 votes)
 - Incentivize developers
 - Rental suites – revise zoning policies to allow for more secondary suites
- Homelessness
 - Study how other countries deal with homelessness and apply this learning
- Education
 - Need to provide re-educational opportunities for mid-career individuals (i.e. age 45-50) to provide wages to increase their ability to work longer (i.e. get out of physical labour)
 - School credits
- Social isolation
 - Encourage solid connection/ sense of community
 - Spiritual connection to address social disconnection and isolation
 - Increase perception of value by welfare recipients and improve isolation
- Community supports
 - Community centres should have multi-purpose places and services available
 - Provide a place for non-traditional households to access supports (i.e. Community kitchens and 'go-to' places)

- Accessibility of community centres to all
- Recreation programs for kids should be free of cost
- Sports facilities are often locked up and inaccessible – you must pay to rent sports fields
- People shouldn't be locked out of public facilities
- School should be a centre outside of school hours
- Provide free after school care in schools (3 votes)
- Stigma
 - Funding for grass roots initiatives to reduce stigma towards poverty/ disabilities
 - Increase perception of value of welfare recipients and improve isolation
- Income
 - Raise minimum wage (2 votes)
 - Offer a basic income to help people out of poverty (similar to Ontario model)
 - Put more money directly in peoples` hands (4 votes)
 - Either higher wages or a single parent subsidy (1 vote)
 - Increase minimum wage to \$15
 - Negative income tax return credits
- Government Programs and Supports
 - Leave supports and services in place even after finding a job and leaving income assistance
 - Subsidy caps need to be increased
 - Change the eligibility for rental subsidy if earnings over certain amount
 - Require matched funding for programs – this would reduce 'for profit' companies creating programs
 - People affected need to be included
 - Increase AEE – earnings exemption
- Food security
 - More community gardens provides greater food security
 - Free hunting and fishing licences
 - Training how to hunt and fish for self sufficiency
- Housing
 - Inclusive housing/ communities
 - Build more social and affordable housing (3 votes)
- Employment
 - Easier unitization (1 vote)
 - Job training programs (3 votes)
 - Employers establish more attractive benefits to keep employers
- Childcare
 - Funding for social isolation (1 vote)
 - Free access for everyone
 - Day care for low/income assistance families (1 vote)
- Taxes
 - Lower or no taxes on low income (2 votes)
 - Better than tax benefits (2 votes) – low income/ seniors

- Community supports
 - o Programs for seniors/community – support, medical, food, community connection, staff for hygiene, volunteers (7 votes)
 - o Community organizations
 - o More community collaboration (2 votes)
 - o More resources in community (2 votes)
 - o Longer hours for community organizations
 - o More need for volunteers (2 votes)
 - o Pilot programs – wages, transit passes, accessing community services
- Childcare
 - o \$10 a day childcare
 - o Employers establish in house childcare so employees don't have to miss work if child is sick
- Education
 - o More affordable post-secondary education
 - o Reduce student loans (tuition)
 - o Free education for social workers
- Addictions
 - o Per diem recovery houses rate increase to \$36 per day (5 votes)
 - o Addictions – better array of treatment options (4 votes)
 - o More resources for prevention
 - o Invest in mental health
 - o Abstinence based programs (1 vote)
 - o Free stop smoking programs
- Stigma
 - o More treatment for addicted will help to reduce stigma
 - o Poverty awareness starting in elementary school (2 votes)
- Housing
 - o Reduce development cost charges to all social housing developments
 - o Build more affordable housing (3 votes)
 - o Pathway for shelter users to obtain permanent housing (4 votes)
 - o More funding (long term) for shelters (5 votes)
 - o Too many taxes on landlords (1 vote)
 - o Provide rental subsidy for all in need regardless of income assistance or not
 - o Make a commitment to build more social housing – faster (1 vote)
 - o Reduce wait lists for BC housing – look at property lists
 - o Revamp RTB – should not have to pay to file a complaint
 - o Hold slumlords accountable (1 vote)
 - o More seniors only housing
 - o Address the growing gap in the housing and income relationship
 - o Establish a landlord registry
- Life skills
 - o Life skills taught in elementary schools

- Better life skills/ values/ education (11 votes)
- Mentorship/ positive influence networks (2 votes)
- Income
 - Index minimum wage to inflation (1 vote)
 - \$15 dollar minimum wage
 - Increase minimum wage (1 vote)
 - Introduce living wage – province needs to do this (1 vote)
 - Need to raise income to lift people out of poverty
- Transportation
 - Reduce cost of transportation
 - Better transit options (too expensive, not enough service, too slow) (3 votes)
- Health care
 - Expand healthcare, dental care, pharma care, vision care
 - More funding for health care (1 vote)
- Access to Government Services
 - Provide or subsidize affordable internet
 - To apply for any government body you need internet
 - More advertising of services available – pharmacare, faircare
 - Improve education to encourage access to seek help when needed (Possible ad: “it’s ok to ask for help”)
 - Ministry have services available for people who can’t navigate the application process (6 votes)
 - Simplify application process for IA and PWD
 - Move from online to paper applications
 - BCID and DL not tied to MSP
 - Make person with disability application process easier (6 votes)
 - More advocates to help clients – “they don’t listen to us” – (1 vote)
 - Integration between ministries and community services--work together to meet clients` needs (4 votes)
 - Ministry services around outreach is fantastic – please expand
 - Access to telephones – secure payphones
 - Persons with disability application process made easier/faster
 - Ministry services available for people who need help to navigate the application process (marginalized) and benefits
 - Coordination across ministry services
 - Integration of ministry of social development and community services
 - More funding for prevention
 - We need to better inform people in poverty of what they have access to
 - Leisure pass good but not everyone knows it exists
 - Important to have someone to inform and direct people
- Government Programs
 - Raise disability rates (1 vote)

- Stop penalizing couples financially on income assistance as it breaks up families
- Encourage people to live together and support each other
- More outreach workers
- Each individual should get same income assistance rate
- More funding and programming for poverty
- Citizens
 - Reach the middle class in order to change policy – that demographic has the voting power (1 vote)
 - Make BC a Poverty Reduction society
 - Exercise voting power
- Schools
 - Education plays a role – educators and social workers
 - Hot lunch for students, backpacks with food
 - Need to have more supports within schools
 - Schools community – services, food, programs, dental
- Childcare
 - \$10 a day daycare
 - More affordable childcare
 - Need daycare subsidies to create daycare
 - Subsidized day care (4 votes) so people can get back to work
 - Subsidized childcare
 - Legislate \$10 a day daycare
 - Raise childcare support/subsidize childcare (1 vote)
 - Some daycares are requiring security deposits to ensure they get paid
 - More support for day cares, programs that support day care
 - Neighbourhood programs, after school programs
 - Affordable childcare
 - Use schools for childcare
 - Childcare subsidy – they have to look at income but this does not provide a holistic picture of income versus expenses
 - Offer 24 hour childcare (needs to be accessible)
 - Childcare that provides support for kids who need support at school
 - Not income tested – free for working parents who need it
 - Childcare not affordable
- Health care
 - Expanding health care – optical dental, pharma care need to be covered under MSP
 - Preventative health care – our system is reactive and needs to be proactive
 - Dental care – affordable or free
 - Eliminate MSP payments
 - Provide dental and optical in MSP
 - Free immunization and vitamins
 - Affordable medical MRI

- Vitamins/ proper nutrition
- Preventative approaches in health– medical/ health donations (2 votes)
- Legislate that hospital releases have a home or place to go to (3 votes)
- Community supports
 - More after house support
 - Shower opportunities within communities, perhaps at rec centres?
 - Realistic, manageable payment solutions for fines (1 vote)
 - Build communities around schools (2 votes)
 - More communication to the public about challenges facing those living in poverty
 - Increased awareness of issues, empower people
 - Public washrooms cleanliness
 - Workers resources and support services
 - Family based centres
 - Secure storage spaces for homeless people – e.g bike share program, locker sharing program
 - Lunch and breakfast program for all students that don't stigmatize
 - Have community buildings – services one stop shop
 - Clothing exchange – limit wasting resources
 - Trade money for an asset - e.g. trade \$100 cash from assistance for a \$150 grocery voucher or some amount of transportation, some amount of rent
 - Surrey needs better resources – i.e. Vancouver is far better served than the one in Surrey because it receives more government support
- Cost of living
 - Utility costs
 - Hygiene products are too costly
- Income
 - Pilot basic guaranteed income project (like Ontario)
 - Basic living allowance, standard of living
 - Income grant – more incentives for good choices.
 - Living wage
 - Tend to latch key kids (1 vote)
 - Extended benefits
- Transit
 - Bus passes for all IA clients
 - Once people in poverty have access to transit, they tend to access more community services
 - Reduce the cost of transportation (gas/insurance)
 - Affordable transportation (2 votes)
 - Bus tickets handed out
 - Improve transport for seniors/immigrants/low income
 - Getting to work is expensive so offer a tax break on fuel
 - Better bus system, decrease prices
 - Bus passes for everyone (can't look for work without transportation)

- Make transportation free for all IA recipients, those with limited and low income
- Better transit services hours (weekends)
- Housing
 - Build modular homes (e.g. Habitat for Humanity)
 - More affordable, appropriate housing (2 votes)
 - Increased subsidized housing
 - Housing rent programs – ensure rent is paid at minimum
 - Put dollars into rent banks (2 votes)
 - More social and affordable housing, co-ops (4 votes)
 - Need a buyers’ market for a change
 - Increase subsidized housing supply
 - Rent control (2 votes)
 - Housing coalition between government and private sector
 - Coop housing (1 vote)
 - More coop/subsidized housing
 - Tax incentives for home owners that provide affordable housing, i.e. affordable secondary suites
 - More seniors’ housing
 - More housing subsidies and more equality in the distribution of them
- Services and Supports
 - The most pressing issue: education (1 vote), income (2 votes), childcare (1 vote), housing (2 votes)
 - Developers need to build and move accessible housing (persons with disabilities)
 - Not just Housing First - be proactive
 - Put into place development costs charges
 - Include units in new development for low income housing
 - Why wait until people are homeless to help – why are they not helping before a crisis?
- Immigrant issues
 - More resources for immigrants needed
- Food security
 - Food bank does not provide for specific dietary needs
 - Make the food bank a government funded structure (1 vote)
 - No waste policy from grocery stores provincially
 - Food bank food is not nutritious and you put on weight but healthy food is expensive
 - Lack of farming – subsidize farming, better wages for farming
- Justice
 - Community involvement for judicial system
 - Supports for transition from correctional facilities and institutions
 - Help people to find work before leaving facility
 - Regulate soft drugs
 - Support and education for bylaw officers and the police
 - Reinstate funding for juvenile corrections programs to prevent re-offending

- Taxes and inequality
 - o Tax exemptions for all people below a certain level of income
 - o More tax on the wealthy 1% (5 votes)
 - o Tax return doesn't always work for families
 - o Current reality is to use previous year tax return but it might not reflect someone's current circumstance
- Mental health
 - o Counselling dollar's for mental health
 - o Streamline process to access services for mental health
 - o Adequate funding for addictions, mental health and housing
 - o Mental health supports and rehabilitation
 - o Curriculum about addictions, mental health issues
 - o Funding for addictions and mental health housing
 - o More preventative services for addictions
 - o Funding for prevention services, homelessness, drug use (1 vote)
 - o Streamline application process for income assistance clients who have mental health or other disabilities
 - o More crisis workers for people who are homeless and struggling with addictions
 - o More mental health services
 - o Registered recovery houses (1 vote)
- Government services and policies
 - o Government training subsidies
 - o Provide realistic training for real jobs (1 vote)
 - o Plan to keep educated people in Canada
 - o Income cut offs for social programs do not reflect reality while cost of living is increasing
 - o Need better integration of services between ministries
 - o Wrap around approach to provide skills for people to become working members of society
 - o Income assistance applications completed before release dates (1 vote)
- Education
 - o Make local college education accessible`
 - o Free affordable education
 - o Reduce student loan interest
 - o Free or affordable education (4 votes)
 - o More education in schools about poverty and addictions
 - o Raised awareness of poverty issues
 - o Engage teachers in helping to give food vouchers or what is needed to help kids in school
- Community Supports and Awareness
 - o Parenting courses at local colleges
 - o Elderly awareness for seniors
 - o More funding for crucial social services
 - o Address the ageing out of foster kids
 - o More peer support from homeless people (1 vote)

- More funding for seniors and for youths
- Provide free programs to help youth break out of the cycle of poverty
- Recycling exchange
- Building relationships – create a hub of info, connecting people to programs and services
- Programs for support, medical, food, community, volunteers, staff
- In school support, outreach counselors, free after school programs
- Reduce impact of poor choices, especially kids in families (5 votes)
- Have school uniforms so poor don't have to compete
- Feminine products and diapers
- Offer more economic opportunities for families who are struggling
- More access to hands on support – setting up hydro, buying food, doctors appointments
- More help for the hard to house
- Housing
 - Larger rental assistance program from BC Housing
 - Rent control
 - More co-op housing
 - Housing – developers incorporating affordable units in to new projects
 - More funding for rental housing
 - Access to youth housing
 - Incentivize developers to build non –profit housing
 - Forgive development costs
 - Portable rental subsidies
 - Increase supply of social housing
 - More affordable houses, i.e. more social housing and more co-op housing
 - Increase age limits in BC Housing to 19 and above
 - Children who have grown up in BC Housing should be given help to succeed—provide them with better supports and programs
- Employment
 - Issue of 45-50 year olds in physical jobs and unable to keep working
 - Offer trades training, apprentices, for grade 8 +
 - Trades – motivate them to get involved with support workers to find a job
 - Mentorships, older people helping younger
- Life skills
 - Life skills classes
 - Budgeting
 - Empowering people
 - Increasing self-esteem
 - Equal rights
- Education apprenticeships
- Education on poverty
- Homelessness
 - Pathway for shelter users to obtain permanent housing

- Per diem for supportive recovery houses raised to \$36 per day
 - More long term funding for shelters and community organizations
- Education
 - Keeps those educated within Canada