



Transcript: Community Meeting on Poverty Reduction

**Nanaimo, BC
January 22, 2018**

Introduction and Event Summary

On January 22, 2018, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction hosted a community meeting in Nanaimo, BC to discuss poverty and poverty reduction with residents. The event brought together between 80 and 90 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 Lolly Good of the Snuneymuxw First Nation, followed by opening remarks from Mable Elmore (Parliamentary Secretary on 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.

Mable Elmore, the Parliamentary Secretary for Poverty Reduction then 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 living in poverty right now?

- Poverty realities
 - o Cost of living continues to go up
 - o income assistance and benefits not going up as fast as cost of living puts people in a cycle of poverty and desperation
 - o When Income Assistance/PWD rates go up, landlords increase rents – still same cycle
 - o Elderly are using foodbanks and shelters
 - o Disability issues
 - o Many people don't have info/knowledge to manage on limited budgets
 - o Always waiting for end of month to get benefit cheques
 - o If one thing goes wrong and life takes a turn, it's scary that we're all potentially exposed and vulnerable
- Dignity and stigma
 - o Agencies and hospitals first response need to treat all with dignity
 - o Responsibility to people in our community
 - o Community doesn't work collaboratively to help people
 - o Need community places to go for coffee so people can have discussions and meet up with others.
- Housing
 - o Rents went up \$25 last August, CPP and OAP went up \$9 per month
 - o August 1 landlord can raise another \$29
 - o People live with fear they will be evicted
 - o Pet helps seniors but they can't get into housing with pets
 - o Friend went on Long Term Disability and forced to live in substandard housing through no fault of her own
 - o Affordable housing is always an issue here
 - o Housing (affordable, safe, healthy)
 - o No affordable housing, illegal rental suites
- Health
 - o costs of health go up
 - o Dental - \$500 gone right away and have to wait for more treatment
 - o "I'm supposed to be dying with dignity"
- Food security
 - o Food- can't afford to buy local or good quality foods
 - o Food prices have gone up
 - o Healthy food can be expensive when working physically demanding job
 - o Food security/loss of healthier diet
 - o Cost of groceries
 - o Junk food, fast food, cheaper than good food
- Inequality and Federal tax law
 - o people not taxed properly, someone buying Ferrari they should be taxed, need consumption taxes to restore balance, super rich should pay

- Theft--my keys were stolen from my gym locker and car was stolen; people are getting more desperate
- Homelessness and mental health
 - o Mental health, homelessness – there is suffering
 - o “I live close to Terminal Park. I picked up some woman from the middle of road twice-- ambulance picked her up and hospital let her go
 - o People downtown sleeping on patios – The number of homeless people has been growing in the last couple of years
 - o This is an issue that needs to be addressed with every stakeholder
 - o Last night young homeless person changed on porch and went upstairs
 - o They were there for an hour
 - o First responders overwhelmed
 - o Mental health/homelessness issue spreading north
 - o Isolation of homeless is horrible for them
 - o Homeless can't afford to live
 - o There are more seniors who are homeless. 82 year old homeless people are being turned away women every night from women's shelter
 - o There are a growing number of homeless in downtown core
 - o Homelessness+ addictions
- Social isolation
 - o Young people and older people face isolation
- Very concerned that first responders are getting burned out because they picked up the same people all the time. It is not that they're not caring people. They're overwhelmed
- Health care
 - o Need free doctor, free hospital, but expenses not covered for physio or Rx
 - o Hospitals won't treat dental for people on welfare
- Education
 - o Cost of education high
- Transportation
 - o Bus schedule doesn't accommodate early shift starts or late shifts
 - o Need reliable transport/ public transport
- Poverty realities
 - o Income tax not affordable when added to my budget. Others have the same issue
 - o MSP is non affordable
 - o Crime in the area
- Housing
 - o Access to housing for low income families
 - o Pressure on affordable housing due to migration from mainland
 - o 50% + cost of rents have increased in Nanaimo
 - o Affordable housing is part of the solution
 - o Rent increases should be capped
- Mental health (systemic issues)
 - o Addictions /treatment waitlist/supports available and accessible/ early on in life
 - o Look at mental health and physical health services

- Lack of education
- Childcare
 - o Daycare costs
 - o Affordable childcare is a challenge
- Seniors
 - o Seniors housing/"care"
- Aboriginal
 - o Impact of colonization on Indigenous people
- Cost of living
 - o Utilities increased
- Income support
 - o Pension/ Income Assistance/ PWD rates increased
 - o Intensive holistic family supports
 - o Clawbacks on PWD –CPP
- Government role
 - o Stop downloading government services
 - o Restore cuts in funding to non-profits
 - o Wait times making it impossible to access services
- Social Isolation and economic divide have created "haves" and "have nots"
- Transportation
 - o Nanaimo is 17 miles long
 - o Public transit don't cover entire area and houses of worship
- Education
 - o University for the rich not accessible to those in poverty
 - o cost of student loans + training
- Food security
 - o Some people are cold and hungry all year
 - o Food banks are not a "government" resource
 - o Access to good nutrition i.e. people raised in poverty without access to it
- Medical
 - o There is a need for more dental and eye care services
 - o Shortage of doctors available/ accessible
 - o Medical treatments not always covered
 - o Mercury poisoning, electromagnetic poisoning (science clear since ww2)
 - o If you do not get PWD you have no dental or medical coverage
 - o Lake Cowichan has microwave poisoning
 - o Poverty means poor health outcomes
- Stigma
 - o Need to feel safe when accessing supports i.e. mental health and substance abuse
 - o There is a stigma of Poverty
 - o Screening eligibility so the poor do not qualify for the programs
- Community
 - o Social gathering space for people needing specific supports
 - o Need social connection

- Environmental radio wave, microwave, Wi-Fi
- People are self-medicating
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- Accessibility
 - o Transportation
 - o Recreation
 - o Affordable housing
- People need affordable and safe housing
- Increase in public violence related to drug issues
- Federal/ Provincial clawbacks
 - o CPP spousal
- Environmental Justice
- Emergency shelter where no one is turned away
- Childcare
 - o Child care high cost poor quality
 - o Need low cost day care as in Quebec
- Cover basic needs – we are not doing this
- Government role
 - o Too many rich people – too much wealth
 - o There is no acknowledgement that Income Assistance is not enough
 - o Not investing in people will cost us more
- Stigma
 - o Society criticizes the poor for spending any money. Too much judgement and blame.
- Housing
 - o Housing prices are too high
 - o Rental accommodation not enough
 - o Homelessness
 - o Co-op housing (70's/80's) allowed people to have a house. Should allow more coops
 - o Government owned land available for co-ops to lease land
 - o Need for rent supplements
- Want to see action now ; no more studies; not five years from today but NOW
- Homelessness is increasing
 - o Women
 - o Seniors
 - o 25% increase in homelessness in 2 years
 - o Turning away 10-15 women per night from women's shelter
 - o Youth homelessness is on the rise
 - o Assistance for utilities or unexpected costs could help prevent homelessness
- Employment
 - o How to create more employment?
- Disability issues
 - o Head injuries/ spinal cord injuries
 - o Accessible housing is needed
 - o Services and supports for those with disabilities when released from rehab; hospital

- Support needed for social enterprises
- Lack of services or information
 - o Elderly don't know what resources are available or where they are located
 - o BC 211 funding--people are not aware of this service
 - o No phone/ limited minutes/ plan
 - o Access to MSDPR worker – not face to face or assigned worker.
 - o Need to call and be on hold for 45 minutes to talk to someone
 - o Services continue to be cut
 - o The few services available are overwhelmed
 - o Libraries, rec centres and schools are not trained to be social workers
 - o No youth centres for kids to use.
- Non profit trap
 - o Lack of sustainable funding for non-profits
 - o Non-profits focused on grant applications to keep doors open rather than program delivery
 - o Lack of money means non profits unable to do long term planning
- Medical
 - o High cost of prescriptions
 - o People forced to choose between food versus medication.
- Education
 - o Low education and low self esteem
 - o Barriers to education – people living in poverty cannot afford education
 - o Higher education leads to healthier community
 - o More \$\$ for education, books aren't covered (need education allowance)
- Food security
 - o Schools are feeding children
 - o Kids are coming to school hungry and they can't learn
 - o More \$\$ for food and medicine, not everything covered
- Pay day loans
- Bank's fees – Bank's selling health insurance to PWD customers
- Transportation
 - o Need transportation for medical appointments
 - o Out of town travel is expensive and not frequent in Nanaimo and rural communities
- NIMBY and community role
 - o Stigma of mental health
 - o Community pushback on opening locations for shelters
 - o Need to educate general public and increase consultation on services
 - o Community agencies to gain support in neighborhoods
- Employment
 - o Part time employment only
 - o Lack of benefits at federal / provincial level for part time workers
- Housing
 - o Vacancy rate very low
 - o cost of housing and amount landlords are charging

- Climbing rents
- People can't afford to pay \$1200-\$1300 a month
- Housing is unaffordable
- \$950 a month is a typical cost – but this housing often has bed bugs, other issues
- Childcare costs are outrageous – more expensive than rent
- Homelessness
 - people on the streets
 - Face addictions + mental health issues
 - People have no housing choices and are forced into homelessness
 - People sleeping on steps
 - Needles left discarded
- Income
 - Fundamental issues with money
 - Wrong to expect a family or individual to live on minimum wage
 - Some people don't have awareness of the impacts of low minimum wage
 - Up to public to support people living in poverty
 - Issues have been growing over the last 30 years
 - Low wages
 - Inadequate welfare benefits
- Inequality
 - Inequality in income distribution
 - Taxation system contributes to inequality
- Food security
 - Since food banks introduced we are slowly being led to believe that charity is the solution but it isn't
 - "Feeding America" USA approach to anti-hunger being brought into Canada
 - Big corporations run food bank system
 - Food banks are undermining the social safety net
 - Can't eat healthy on low income
 - Processed foods are cheaper but not healthy
 - Food security or insecurity is an issue
 - Government needs to see access to housing and food as a human rights issue
 - Food banks ask people to prove they need food (Show income + hydro as proof)
 - Loss of dignity to prove that you need food from the foodbank
 - We need to reorganize food banks
 - Food banks reinforce the idea that charity is the answer
 - While the system is flawed, foodbanks do make a difference and we need them
 - Years ago there were no food banks – it was the government's responsibility
 - It is important to feed a person but also to find out why they are hungry
 - Cause of food insecurity is lack of money
 - Food, clean water, air, - these are basic human needs
- Housing
 - Rent is high
 - price is too high

- Safety concerns in affordable housing complex
- Disability issues
 - Not enough wheelchair accessible housing
 - Hard to renovate housing if you have a disability/costs associated
 - More help for people living independently
 - People could live alone if they had more supports available
 - There is very little being built for people with disabilities
 - Housing affordability – need more housing for people with disabilities
 - Only 2% of houses are wheelchair accessible in Nanaimo
 - Minimum number of accessible units is too low
- Medical
 - Medication costs are high + some people have to pay out of pocket
 - No universal coverage
 - The general public would believe we have universal access to health care but that is not true
 - We don't have pharma care + dentistry
 - Medical/Dental only get \$1000 every 2 years, too low
 - Can't fill prescriptions that are not 100% covered
 - Medical supplies not enough funding to cover
- NDP forgotten social justice roots
- Taxes
 - Keep promising lower taxes if you want to keep having poverty
 - We need fair taxation to address poverty
 - Instead of rolling back taxes we need more universal programs like UK drug program
 - Selective programs cost more to operate
 - Each item is questioned – need a lot of staff to run a selective program
- Seniors
 - Lack of availability of housing and the high cost
 - Increasing changes in demographics – more seniors facing more issues like dementia
 - Many seniors are socially isolated
 - Social housing will help to address this problem
- Childcare
 - Price of childcare too high (at least \$800 a month)
- Incomes
 - Higher wages for everyone working including childcare
 - Higher minimum wage
 - Need funding to see counsellors
- Poor pet owners & renters ruin things for everyone --Pets are family members
- Transportation
 - Bus system in Nanoose is bad, but housing is more affordable –people have to make these types of choices and trade-offs
- Housing
 - More condos being built , should be more affordable housing
 - Landlords deny housing because you have kids or pets – landlord issues

- People are not protected by the Residential Tenancy Act
- Rent costs \$1500/ month for decent 2 bedroom in Nanaimo
- Having to worry about where you will live is bad for mental health
- What happened to subsidized housing?
- Programs and services stretched
 - Crisis lines doesn't provide the right support – you get a call back in two weeks
 - Programs are what keep me alive- like self-advocacy
 - Move out grant was scrapped, crisis funding taken away
 - More individualized grants & funding
- Shelters and homelessness
 - More temporary housing and shelters needed
 - Second – stage housing for people with kids to have assistance is needed
- There is the need for more social centres & affordable social and recreational activities for kids and families
- Ministry and government
 - Can't get through on Ministry phone lines, you can be on hold for hours.
 - You often cannot speak with actual person
 - MCFD discriminated against previous history of mental health issues
 - Your name can get stuck in system (Nanaimo specific)
 - Sometimes feel bullied, abuse of by MCFD
 - The complaint system doesn't work
 - People with disabilities. The Ministry policy of roommates means \$150 taken off cheque (This is wrong)
 - Extra support allowance for clothing \$375 is too low
 - Coverage back for glasses (\$95/apt) –can't afford new glasses
 - Disability clawbacks – stop them, perpetuates poverty. It is hard enough on CPP
 - Jurisdictional problems
- Lack of follow up
 - What has come out of the White Paper? Its disappeared--where has it gone?
 - CLBC housing meeting: what comes of it? Tons of ideas but need follow up
 - Stop re-inventing the wheel
- Poverty realities
 - No \$ left for entertainment
 - Transportation, can't afford ferry, train
 - Impossible to stretch the dollars
- Legal aid
 - Legal representation, having trouble getting legal aid
 - As grandparent, I have no legal say because I'm not mother or father
 - Grandparents should have rights for legal aid (Alberta has this, recognizes grandparents as having rights)
 - Legal aid doesn't represent grandparents
- Disability discrimination
 - Parents with disabilities are discriminated against
 - There is the perception that you are not capable of raising children

- MCFD standards are not consistent
 - Assessments different based on where you live
 - You have to prove that you're not unfit rather than given support
 - Made to feel like you have done something wrong because you have a disability
- Food bank volunteers in Nanaimo can be rude and discriminatory
- Treat people you poorly & keep donations for themselves
- Food security
 - Poor quality food in Nanaimo foodbanks
 - Many items are past their expiry dates
 - Need more support for foodbank
- Disability – mental illness
- Employment
 - Lots of precarious employment
 - Uncertain shifts/hours
 - Not able to plan
 - Minimum wage and living wage or fair wage
- Medical
 - Dental coverage not adequate
 - Glasses coverage inadequate
 - If not on Income Assistance there is no coverage for adults
- Exemptions are not equitable
 - Clawbacks for single parents
- Childcare
 - Day cares spaces are full
 - Parents can't attend ESL classes (immigrants) and non English speaking parent must quit to care for her kids, seems always to be the mom
 - \$600 a month is too much for daycare
- Isolation
 - People who have mental health issues have few supports.
 - They need family/ friends/ advocates to walk them through the processes
 - Can't access services because of isolation and social poverty
 - Cost of going out and lack of transportation creates isolation
 - Lack of inclusivity – not comfortable with self or others
 - Need to reposition our priorities – idea of family + community
 - Support one another
- Literacy concerns – access to computer/ knowledge for use of computer
- Seniors
 - More retirees coming to Nanaimo
 - Caregiver supports are lacking
 - Too busy to look for them
 - Working poor can't care for senior family members
 - Don't know if there are adequate supports
- Business hours impact your options
 - Can't access services after working all day

- Transportation
 - o bus routes/ service is uneven
- Housing
 - o Fix homelessness within 8 years – this is not good enough
 - o Need National Occupancy standards
 - o Large families cannot get subsidized housing
 - o Not enough four bedrooms units available
 - o \$500 is usual rent for shared accommodation for 1 room in a house
 - o Use empty lots to put up housing
 - o Hydro – cannot afford reconnection fee
 - o Affordable housing is part of the solution
 - o Illegal rental suites
 - o Landlords making false promises
 - o When you rent a room, you are not protected by the Residential Tenancy Act
- Homelessness
 - o Hard to house people – really have trouble finding housing
 - o Wet housing is successful but not enough
 - o Need integrated services
 - o Homelessness has gone up by 70%
 - o People should have the right to shelter
 - o Federal government – army tents
 - o The City should step forward to help
 - o Mental health and addictions are a big problem throughout
 - o Government should provide basic rooms
 - o Crisis situation, shelters full
- Poverty cycle
 - o you can never catch up
 - o People get locked into income assistance until kids leave school
- Child care
 - o Single parents, day care is expensive
 - o School hours only so parent cannot work
 - o Need \$10 day care
- Mental illness
 - o Cost of drugs is too high and not covered
- Health care
 - o Cost of medications is a barrier to single moms
 - o Need help to pay for medication
 - o Cost of Rx above + beyond what people can pay – people end up in the hospital as a result
 - o Without dental care, it leads to other health issues
 - o MSP--Hard to pay MSP premiums
 - o Too big a push on medications
- Employment
 - o Create jobs

- Work programs are needed to help employ people
- Municipal services
- Food security
 - Cost of healthy foods
 - Growing local food (2 votes)
 - Communal food production
 - Bigger gardens
- Transportation
 - Buses don't run all the time
 - Need a car but cannot afford
- Recreation
 - Recreation not affordable
 - Access to parks and recreation programs is limited
 - Income threshold too low to access recreation
 - Need day programs/ drop in programs (Living room project)
 - No places to have drop in
- Reality of poverty
 - Living on streets – stuff always getting stolen
 - People are more desperate – more crime
 - Poverty linked to substance use
 - Generational poverty --Biggest determinant is whether parents were poor
- Discrimination and bullying in the work place
- Library use by homeless who bring food/ drink to where people gather
- Access to safe bathrooms is an issue
- Housing
 - Use army tents, use vacant land (1 vote)
 - Use vacant buildings
 - Funding needed from cities, provincial government
- Income and income support
 - Need a living wage - \$19/ hour (Nanaimo)
 - More funding to basic housing, PWD, basic intake
 - Increase social assistance funding will help to decrease medical/ health pressures
 - Rents increase as soon as Income Assistance and PWD rates increase.
- Transparency and information in system
 - How much?
 - Who is eligible?
 - Where to find info?
- Housing
 - Vacancy rate near zero
 - Have been looking for a reasonable rental unit for 7 months
 - Need to make snap decisions in order to have a home
 - Poor quality of housing (“it doesn't matter the quality of the housing, he can't see anyways”)
 - Rent increases always to the maximum allowed.

- Renovations needed for poor quality housing
- Some landlords are changing to short term i.e. air b&b
- Foreign buyers taking more of the stock
- Need shelter and housing
- Waitlist for emergency housing i.e. cold weather shelter, women's shelter – people are being turned away
- Student housing – the housing that is available is often very poor quality
- Food security and food quality
 - Hospital food
 - need foodbank
 - Allergies & choice at food bank
 - People with Disabilities face challenges getting to food banks. It is hard to get meals
- Disability
 - If you're not disabled enough, you can't get on PWD but you have more access to medical EI
 - Can't get EI
 - Need to fight to get on PWD
 - Need to pay for Doctor to make a referral
 - System requires a doctor's note/recommendation for everything
- Ministry and government
 - Assistance is lower for couples compared to singles
 - No marriage equality – PWD cannot bring things to the table, claw back
 - Alberta provides more money and people can get out of poverty <
 - Marriage common law equality for disabled people sucks
 - EI doesn't work with Disability
 - Illness based EI is not long enough and leaves people in the ugly middle between EI and disability
- Education
 - High student debt (cost of education)
 - Interest rates for tuition are high
 - Debt prevents people getting into housing or buying a car
 - Nowadays forced into education system that requires degree to get even a retail job
 - People who drop out of high school for legitimate reasons are haunted by the decision
 - Face discrimination without education
 - Can't support themselves through school on part time wages
 - Can't attend school on full time unless they live at their parents
 - Often not able to finish program/ school
 - International students face stereotype that they have a lot of money
- Mental health services
 - Waiting time to see counselor on campus – 3 weeks
 - 6 months to see a psychiatrist
 - Forced to use key words such as "suicide" to get in faster
 - Should not have to be mentally disabled enough to warrant help
 - People with mental health do not always have the supports they need

- Health care
 - o Fibromyalgia “isn’t disabled enough”
 - o Doctors notes cost too much
 - o Many Doctors require a doctor’s note
- Disability and discrimination
 - o Disabled people don’t get jobs
 - o 6 year study shows that blind can’t get job and are considered a liability
- Legal aid
 - o Lawyer fees are \$\$\$
 - o Improve legal aid
- Lack of programs
 - o Waitlists are unacceptable for seniors who are incapable of self-care
 - o Not able to get in program even with funding
 - o Waiting lists and wait times too long
- Income
 - o Living wage
- Access to recreational + cultural life in community
 - o Park theatre, skiing, participating
- Access to healthcare
 - o At the right time when needed
 - o Family doctor
 - o Eye care
 - o Dental
- Mental Health + addictions
 - o Provide treatment earlier
 - o Poverty can lead to addictions and vice versa
 - o Need supportive recovery beds
- Poverty realities
 - o Generational poverty
 - o A culture of poverty
- Education/ training/ re-training opportunities
- Information lacking
 - o Advertise what is available
 - o People don’t know what’s there
 - o Seniors don’t know where to go/ what is available
 - o People in poverty have trouble navigating government systems
 - o Intimidated by the system so people don’t access it less turnover with ministry staff
- Food security
 - o Access to education around nutrition and healthy foods
 - o Healthy food options more expensive
- Isolation
 - o Emotional/ social/ language deficits
 - o lack of readiness
 - o poor communication in poor families

- Stressed parents in poor families will spend less time reading/teaching children (possibly no books)
- Better supports for early childcare development
- How do poor children get to university? Cost and upbringing.
- Inequality
 - People are segregated
 - Lack of services for the poor (no doctors, lawyers, etc.)
 - Not believing they can achieve “that level” will affect aspiration
 - Affordable education is a barrier
- Community outreach
 - Make outreach available to young families, teenagers
 - Not enough outreach services in community
 - Need outreach in communities, high schools
- Crisis reality of poverty
 - People living in poverty live in chaos (1 vote)
 - Hydro/phone get cut off etc
 - Always in crisis – no energy left over
 - No room for anything else
 - Sole focus is on how to manage the crisis
 - Need stability so can plan for the future
 - In a crisis like when spouse passes away, lost without them and risk losing housing etc.
 - Sudden homelessness can occur in crisis
- Addictions
 - As people try to cope, they are vulnerable to drugs
 - Drugs are becoming easier to access, increased variety, more dangerous
- People lack foresight, planning, saving for retirement, education
- Depression - how to get out of it
- Breakdown in traditional nuclear families
- Accessing government services
 - What happens when you walk into government offices?
 - Nobody is sitting there to walk you through process
 - It is too hard to access services
 - People waiting 6 months for services / help
 - Citizens struggle to know where to access services
 - The provincial and federal government are disconnected from the community
- Non-profits
 - There has been a lot of downloading to local level
 - Changes in eligibility
 - Struggle for contracts, administering programs etc.
 - Inadequate funding for programs in communities
 - Inconsistent funding
 - Needs to be based on what works, not politics
 - If staff don't have secure employment they look for something else

- Eg. Rural HPS is federal money, must apply each year with no guarantee. It makes no sense
 - Cutting government funding affects services being provided
- Silo systems in government – two different systems and a lack of coordination
- Housing
 - Housing housing housing
 - Huge crisis for housing
 - 80% of PWD goes to rent for substandard housing
 - \$600 for rent plus utilities and not safe
- Homelessness
 - Seniors are homeless, couch surfing
 - There are more drug related deaths
 - People are sick from sleeping outside
 - People must be out of shelter during the day – nowhere to go
 - People give impression of not caring – one person was told “eww you are dirty”
 - It is hard for people who are homeless to shower
 - People receive “dignity” from being clean
 - Cannot afford rent so living in tents
- Accommodation, food, safe environment is needed
- Need more community meetings
- Medical
 - Enhanced medical and dental needed for lower income households
 - Physiotherapy denied for person in a wheelchair as they did not have the \$20 (user fee)
 - Some dentists will do dentures but charge a \$250 fee
 - People on dialysis need high protein, do not have enough money to eat properly
- Income
 - Provincial government to work with federal government for guaranteed annual income
 - Stop clawing back CPP from people on PWD
- Single parent has concerns to lose home
 - City should allow deduction for disabled people for utilities – water, sewer and they allow it for people over 65
- Supports for poor
 - Alberta PWD rate is much higher than BC
 - Hydro rates need to be decreased for people living in poverty
 - People are having hydro disconnected
 - Hydro needs something to address poverty, not turning hydro off!
 - Single parent with a disabled child should be paid the same as if child was in care
- Homelessness
 - Taxes for city go up, property taxes, utilities
 - Housing shelter open 24 Hours is needed
 - There is the concern that if you provide services you will attract homeless people
- Housing
 - At BC Housing, a person in a wheelchair was told that it is an 8 year wait for housing
 - Three schools in Nanaimo closed – this could be used for housing

- Single parent Trap
 - o Mother is on Income Assistance with a disabled child, child in hospital often, very ill
 - o Child cannot go to daycare due to disability so mom cannot look for work
 - o The mother only receives regular assistance because she is not disabled
 - o The mother is struggling to keep child because of poverty

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

- Housing
 - o Provincial government should give funding to municipalities to build social housing (1 vote)
 - o Change National Occupancy standards so not penalizing large families (1 vote)
 - o Large families required to have 4 bedroom home - not supportive housing with 4+ bedrooms available
- Progressive Taxation
 - o Consumption tax (or luxury tax) –tax people who buy expensive items (cars, trucks, etc.) (4 votes)
 - o Tax reform
 - o Eliminate taxes on essential items (food toiletries) Note: not all agree on this (1 vote)
 - o Fairer tax structure- i.e. should not have the top 1% receiving tax breaks
- Community
 - o Remove stigma and connect everyone to shared experiences
 - o Community places
 - o Public library downtown doing their best and really trying
 - o Bring community together more to solve problems
 - o Governments (local, prov, fed), work with community groups “ together
 - o Left hand needs to know what right hand is doing
 - o Schools to do more in community, i.e. kids with therapy dog visit seniors
 - o Bring back co-op housing, community connection (1 vote)
- Stigma
 - o Poverty stigma keeps people from doing their best
 - o Teach respect and teach people skills
- Transportation
 - o People can’t take bus so they’re stuck
- Parksville bought houses and rented them (but now trying to get out of it)
- Disability
 - o Design parks to encourage people in wheelchairs and seniors
 - o Make accessible
- Housing and supports
 - o Supportive housing that helps people with mental health supports that are close to services (2 votes)

- Mental health
 - o Increase access to mental health and addictions services – reduce waitlists (1 vote)
 - o Riverview/Glendale not great models
- Uplands – people living there have social anxiety as location is poor
- Increase money and benefits to keep people healthy (2 votes)
- Housing
 - o Increase SAFER
 - o Lower what landlords can raise on rents (1 vote)
 - o Targeted housing investment
- Give parents full benefits for the first year of a baby’s life (France model)
- Medical
 - o More doctors--look at Cuba’s doctor to patient ratio
 - o Assistance with health care to reduce costs (1 vote)
 - o Physio
 - o Pharmacy
 - o Need 100% coverage
- Stigma
 - o Need to shift thinking
 - o We put a lot of money into infrastructure and technology instead of social system
 - o Attitudes about poverty and stigma
 - o There is an “us” an and “them” mentality that has to change – legislate change
 - o Get to know people in need
 - o Programs, campaigns, funding aimed at breaking stigma/stereotypes and barriers to employment
- Harris House provides clean needles, food, shower, kids field trip, but can’t do it on our own
- Food security
 - o Grow and eat local – this addresses so many issues
 - o Community gardens (2 votes)
 - o Explain impact of buying local
 - o Programs train people to grow food
- Women’s shelter shouldn’t keep the donations for themselves, help out a lot more, treat the women fairly
- Income
 - o Basic income
 - o Basic living wage
 - o Living wage \$19/hour in Nanaimo
 - o Increase minimum wage (4 votes)
 - o Practical living wage, basic income top-up Guaranteed income (3 votes)
- Housing
 - o Housing for students and seniors
 - o No more illegal suites
- Education, childcare
- Transportation
 - o 24 hour bus service for workers who work 24 hour shift

- Government actions
 - o Eliminate disability income clawbacks
 - o Less restricted funding
 - o More transparency on where tax money goes
 - o Increase the tax on people who make non healthy choices, increase the tax on smokes and alcohol or eliminate them completely, as well as non-healthy foods like pop
 - o Stop bullshit between Provincial/federal
 - o Insufficient income assistance rates (1 vote)
- Food security
 - o Centres for healthier food development
 - o "I think more community gardening and education of gardening"
 - o "tax non healthy food and reduce the cost of healthy food"
- Community role
 - o Community grant from gaming funds
 - o Parks and Recreation pass for those on income assistance
 - o LEAP passes for adults and families
 - o Living room project? Donated space?
 - o Parks and rec should give free access for skating, swimming, activities
- Housing
 - o Massive housing program with provincial, federal and city. Long term. (4 votes)
 - o In short term address shortfall with temporary housing
 - o Tiny house villages
 - o Investment in Affordable housing across all levels of government (4 votes)
- Addictions
 - o More rehab facilities for drug addicted
- Deeper issues need to be addressed
- Need to take care for first responses
- Need to teach children to be happy and healthy
- Stigma
 - o Bullying happens to kids in poverty
 - o The way they dress
 - o No socks
 - o No lunch
 - o Cannot participate in afterschool activities
- Disability
 - o Need more programs for disabled children
 - o Disabled child only gets one week per year for a program that is suitable
 - o Increased supports (financial +services) for people with disabled children and for people with disability
 - o Need mandate for disabled people to find a job that accommodates their physical and mental disabilities
 - o City hall should reduce utilities for low income disabled or disabled children
 - o Disability child at home should receive same services and a child in care

- Consciousness raising
 - o Education about poverty
 - o The “stories” are so important
 - o Raise awareness
- Re-use existing facilities i.e. empty schools, travellers lodge in Nanaimo
- Food security
 - o Need increase in money for special diets. Many use their funds to pay rent
- Medical
 - o Need enhanced medical and dental for low income i.e. dentures, physio, prescriptions (4 votes)
 - o Affordable dental and medical (2 votes)
- Government action
 - o STOP clawing back CPP for people on income assistance
 - o Reduced hydro rates for low income
 - o Increase income assistance rates (4 votes)
 - o Increased benefits allowance for people who volunteer
- People who receive the Federal disability tax credit can receive \$6000 BUT you must have earnings
- More need for feeding i.e. Dining
- Social isolation
 - o Loneliness is BIG
 - o Need more supports
- Homeless
 - o Shelters need to be open 24/7
- Non profit sector
 - o Core funding for essential non-profit services (1 votes)
- Mental health
 - o Mental Health services,
- Children and Youth
 - o early years intervention(prevention/supports right through to seniors (2 votes)
- Childcare
 - o Subsidized childcare, access + government process timely (2 votes)
- Transportation
 - o Transit infrastructure – make accessible (2 Votes)
 - o Provide all people on Income Assistance and PWD with bus pass/ income tested
- Employment
 - o Reducing the barriers to access employment programs/ health (1 votes)
- Volunteer hours tax break
- Consistency in workers/hours of support available i.e. Caseloads (4 Votes)
 - o Local office, case beds, person to person, NOT COMPUTERS/TELEPHONE
 - o Peoples resilience and ability to cope are squashed by having such huge obstacles constantly in their way of access to much needed supports
- Stigma
 - o Ongoing discussion about racism + education needed. Make racism unacceptable

- Need training
- Community facilities
 - Somewhere for homeless people/ mental health people to go for peer/social support + Be (1 Vote)
 - Use school space as shelters
 - For use of community
- Government role
 - Stop the claw backs (1 vote)
 - Stop foreign ownership of property – must be landed immigrant and live on property (1 vote)
- Homeless
 - More shelter spaces and ways to move them out of shelters into permanent housing
- Health care
 - Health care should cover physio, chiropractor, massage
- Education
 - Free university (2 votes) that is merit based
 - Inclusive/ diverse student population
 - Kids should be taught basic farming in school
 - Financial literacy needs to be taught in schools (2 votes)
- Shared Costco memberships – community or other bulk store
- Housing
 - Bring back subsidized housing (5 votes)
 - Rents no more than 30% of income (as income fluctuates)
 - Affordable housing – pay rent to own
- Child care
 - Day care program like Quebec (3 votes)
- Food security
 - Every school has a breakfast / meal program- food from community(i.e. local farmers)
 - Every house built has 10x10 of food growing space, community gardens for apartment and condos (1 votes)
 - Food that is accessible
 - Healthy food – better outcomes
 - Affordable food in your community (3 votes)
 - Gardens, urban farming, farmers markets, farm skills taught, development includes garden space
- Transportation
 - Fund transit to fit need even if it doesn't pay for itself
 - Better transit options (1 vote)
 - Transit doesn't keep up
- Information gaps in accessing government services
 - Lack of knowledge of the services that are available
 - More help for PWD application/ easier to use online application (1 vote)
 - PWD application process is too difficult
 - Online application is not accessible

- Not able to print
 - Requirement of DR signature is a barrier
- Pay Day Lenders
 - Pay day /predator lenders needs legislative change (1 vote)
- Housing
 - Re-introduce co-op housing (2 votes)
 - Tap into government owned land to lease for co-op housing development
 - Build/ invest in affordable housing/ rental housing/ social housing, supportive housing (4 votes)
- Income
 - Guaranteed annual income (1 vote)
- Medical
 - Increase to health benefits
 - Dental for low income
- Non-profits
 - Sustained funding for non-profits; increased funding / block funding
 - Reduce need for applying for annual grants;
 - Longer funding window
- Child care
 - Affordable day care; quality day care accessible; more spaces (infant, small children)
 - Increase wages for ECE workers
- Housing
 - Short term rent subsidies (Helps with market rents)
 - Housing first
 - Funding for rent subsidies
 - Incentives for municipality to use/locate land , change in bylaws, encourage rentals (2 Votes)
 - Change in bylaws
 - Build modular home (1 vote)
 - Smaller homes/ shared services
 - Support services
- Medical and housing
 - Work with hospitals on frontline of crisis; eg. when discharging patients, link them to housing (1 vote)
 - Patients are staying in hospital bed because they don't have housing
- Seniors
- Seniors and women are afraid to stay in shelters – feel unsafe
- Increase housing for seniors, supportive, affordable housing
- Improve promotion of services/ supports available in community through seniors centres (More funding for them to be a hub)
- Address is needed to get employment
- Services and information
 - Increase outreach
 - Community website that lists social services available, i.e. doctors taking clients)

- “How to Survive in the City of Nanaimo” – resource for homeless individuals
 - Develop resource for seniors low income, youth citizens
- Education
 - Free tuition
 - Solution to Student Poverty
- Increase information on what MLA does for the community
- Medical
 - More doctors needed
 - Increase peoples understanding of mental health – public education (1 vote)
 - Increase dental funding for adults (funding for CODE dental clinic)
 - Provide better preventative care
 - Increase knowledge of existing dental program for children
- Mental health
 - Reduce isolation
 - Increase crisis services/ MH
 - Remove/ reduce waitlist for MH services (1 vote)
 - Public education on what MH issues look/feel like
- Welfare system
 - System is punitive and inflexible
 - to survive you need to cheat/ risk getting cut off
- Legal aid
 - Increase funding to legal aid clinics (2 votes)
 - to help people trying to get children returned; know their rights obtain legal help
- Decriminalize drugs/ drug use
- Political change and inequality
 - Banish capitalism
 - Develop democratic socialist economy (2 votes)
 - Flambe the rich – meaning there are few/ sector of humanity concerned only with pamper + property + money (1 Vote)
 - Super rich people have wealth equivalent of two wealth of planet some people have nothing
 - Governments that are prepared to uphold UNC (Human rights)
 - Reform economic system – why do we keep feeding inflation? Spiral
- Guaranteed income (3 votes)
 - Ensure notion of annual salary – guaranteed annual income
 - \$15 Minimum wage
 - Implement \$15 minimum wage over time so not such a big fast impact on businesses— do immediate implementation of this (2 votes)
 - Minimum wage puts pressure on other wage groups
 - Business model needs to adjust to new minimum wage climate
 - Minimum wage to be higher than server wage
 - We need to scrap server wage
 - Kids should get less than adults – youth under 15 get \$10 an hour

- Affordable Childcare (2 votes)
 - o \$10 day childcare
- Transit in Nanaimo
 - o Can't get to work early in the Am or Late at night
 - o Fix transit so people can get to work
- Affordable housing (4 votes)
 - o Affordable housing Index
 - o Needed to see if affordable housing is going up or down
 - o Need to create an affordable housing index
- Human rights training (3 votes)
 - o All civil servants should be trained in human rights
 - o Canada's record is abysmal
 - o Canada lacks knowledge to adequately report
- Education
 - o Free post-secondary school
- Information and access for Government Supports
 - o Getting support to access benefits (3 votes)
 - o inadequate benefits or being denied benefits
 - o We need to have people in the community to be advisors to help people to get benefits
 - o People on social or disability assistance need help to apply + get these benefits
- Appeal mechanisms
 - o Should make appeal systems more transparent
- Fair Taxation (2 votes)
 - o Tax the rich
 - o Fair taxation
- Plan must have goals + targets + indicators
- Evidence based public policy
- Human rights
- Frame poverty as a human rights issue
 - o Need these rights embedded
 - o OECD ratified
 - o All enabling legislation for poverty needs a preamble that references Rights UNDRIP International Covenant Economic Social and Cultural rights (2 votes)
 - o BC would be the first jurisdiction to have this as the preamble
 - o Big role of government in backing rights
 - o Government is the "primary duty bearer"
 - o BC Government should back BC Liberties in Charter challenge on food + housing
- All business / corps should be required to make their books/ spending + profit public (1 vote)
 - o Businesses shouldn't claim right to privacy
 - o This would alleviate temporary foreign worker issue
- How do we know the poverty plan is working
 - o We need measures
- Food Security
 - o We need to have a foodbank reduction index (2 votes)

- Monitor reduction in usage or the # of foodbanks to go down
- Need a “teacher feeding Index”--teachers are feeding kids and need to measure this to see reduction in the teachers feeding kids
- Need a meal program in schools
- Teachers aren’t heroes for feeding children
- Stigma
 - Programs/ campaigns and funding aimed at breaking stigma/ stereotypes,
 - Address barriers to employment (2 votes)
- Investigate abuse of power and inconsistencies with service delivery policies at Nanaimo ministry offices (3 votes)
- Screen Food bank & women’s shelter volunteers (2 votes)
- Decision makers too far removed – need bottom up approach and paid advocacy
- Recognize that people need to be involved & acknowledged (2 votes)
- Government role
 - Take some action on all these government meetings (White paper, CLBC housing)
- Housing
 - Fix up unused vacant housing to become housing complexes (old shacks, hotels) for people with disabilities, low income (1 vote)
 - Tiny houses- implement in Nanaimo (shipping containers) like Vancouver (1 vote)
 - More community housing/gardens/living room style spaces/ kitchens for people for free (1 vote)
 - Support for families in transition/ second stage housing staff there to support 24/7 so families can stay together (1 vote)
 - More pet friendly & senior housing
 - More immediate funding and subsidies for housing (1 vote)
 - More co-op housing too expensive currently specific for people with disabilities (1 vote)
- Income
 - Pay increases so good quality staff work nights/shift work
- Communal housing
 - Opportunities to get together with like minded people with capital to buy communal housing, much too expensive to afford mortgage on your own
- Income supports
 - Increase disability assistance rates – too low to pay bills, food, clothes, pet (food/care) (1 vote)
 - Additional support for people with disabilities
- Medical
 - Increase medical coverage – chiropractor, podiatry, dental, vision, broaden (3 vote)
 - Dental health is linked to health & heart – recognize this
 - Look at Alberta’s service delivery – offer better services
- Discrimination
 - Education/ training to stop discrimination against PWD (4 votes)
 - Paid advocacy, people need to be heard
- Ministry
 - Misinformation from ministry staff- give them more training on new policies (1 vote)

- Relationship building, one on one support with ministry staff – bring back case worker/ liaisons (2 votes)
- Staff should have more discretion to provide supplements/grants to citizens (1 vote)
- Government should have to accept advice of doctors (Ministry denied doctor recommendation for additional food supplement)
- Ministry should meet with community groups directly (self-advocates of Nanaimo meet monthly)
- More trust/build trust with regional ministry staff
- Provide staff training to recognize how difficult it is to go into an office in the first place
- Need to understand dignity & respect
- PWD and people on income assistance should be treated fairly (4 votes)
- Have a case worker, individualized service
- Better funding
- Advocacy
 - Increased access to better advocacy (1 vote)
 - Community, social advocates, assisted access
- Integrated accessible services (5 votes)
 - A physical space – 1 stop shop
 - Navigator/support for all
 - Stop increasing the caregiver burden
 - Expanded hours
 - Simplify the procedures to access services
 - Give people a hand-up, not hand out
 - Less bureaucracy
 - Let people decide, self-govern
 - Streamlined source for information, resources, services
 - Government should look after people
 - Government going towards technology
 - Need to go back to people centred services
 - Cut off by ministry because of paperwork--Administrative burden
 - Greater flexibility
 - Reduce Bureaucracy
- Evaluate to measure success (1 vote)
- Change in societal care concepts – family/ neighbours/ friends need to reach out
- Flat rate income pension (1 vote)
- MSO for all (medical service for I/A clients not just PWD's) (1 vote)
- Keep the money multiplier effect happening (backwards) lower income people will spend more money locally
- Transportation services
 - Railroad through Nanaimo to Ladysmith (3 votes)
 - Buses are expensive not accessible
- Government can provide shelter (1 vote)
 - Army tents
 - Vacant land, vacant buildings

- Diverse communities and housing options
- Daycare
 - \$10/ daycare (2 votes)
- Seniors
 - Seniors are living in poverty
- Funding for infrastructure
- Community volunteer program (1 vote)
 - Bring it back
- Access to employment standards (1 vote)
- Housing
 - Housing for seniors w/ pets
 - More subsidized housing (1 vote)
 - RTA protection for people renting rooms , and people in alternative arrangements (3 votes)
- Basic supports in community
 - Clean clothes
 - Laundry
 - Showers
- Income
 - Living Wage (3 votes)
 - Increase minimum wage (1 vote)
 - Basic income--Seriously look at this (2 votes)
 - Living wage
 - Proactive look at difference look at basic income & minimal wage in order to prevent same situation for workers in Ontario
 - Universal Income
- Community Resource Boards (3 votes)
 - Decentralization of programs
 - Flexibility in distributing resources to different communities in need
-
- Incentive to employers to give similar hours to employees with PWD or incentives to PWD top up as they can only work limited hours of work (1 vote)
- More full time jobs instead of multiple part time jobs
 - Students had to choose between working in order to survive or go to school
- Getting rid of marriage inequality for PWD couple (4 votes)
- NGOs more funding in order to meet the needs in the communities
 - They had to fight for funding instead of working together
 - Nanaimo citizens advocacy closing their doors due to no funding
- Housing
 - Container housing
 - Better housing/ zoning policy
 - Examining quality housing
 - Better tenancy protection
 - Also for people from outside of country

- Air B&B needs more regulation
- Subsidy for landlords to provide long term rental (1 vote)
- Increase quantity of student housing
- Not just building house but who the house is built for
- Affordable housing through rent subsidies (5 votes)
- Disability issues
 - People With Disability can't find housing at current PWD rate
 - Stuck in housing that is not accessible to him
 - Hallway can't fit wheelchair
 - Hard to crawl from place to place
 - Increase disability rates (5 votes)
- Better coverage for medical services for internationals (1 vote)
- Food security
 - Farm to table cafeteria food program for kids at school
 - Raise standard for quality of hospital food (Outsource contracts to people who are passionate about hospital food)
 - Better nutrition for elderly people leads to lower healthcare needs
 - ``Five acre farm'' in Nanaimo (2 votes)
 - Cheap food/ subsidize food (corporately not just individual) (1 vote)
 - Regional Farm partnership with food share
 - Educational program about food and nutrition
 - Have more urban food production
 - Introduce Agriculture program at local university
 - Agriculture minister to insure ALR is for food production not marijuana production
 - Grocery stores sell ugly vegetables at reduced rate (1 vote)
 - Food policy like in France (give expired food to people in need instead of throwing out)
 - Facilities to make food and provide to people instead of throwing them out
- Need more support from city instead of economy of developers
- Education and student debt
 - Create student loans solutions
 - Reinitiate needs based out front grant system
 - Increase education funding
 - Increase funding to decrease need for institutions to operate as businesses
 - Reverse privatizing school system
 - More socialized school system like European system
 - Re-educate society on socialization of school system (ABE program)
 - Programs to work for university to pay off loans
- Tax reform
 - Tax reform specifically to address inequality (1 vote)
- Increase sense of community (1 vote)
 - Sense of responsibility for each other
- Outreach workers/supports to help maintain housing (3 votes)
- More support to continue, break intergenerational poverty

- Childcare
 - o Subsidize education, childcare (3 votes)
 - o Childcare programs, flexible work hours, Job sharing , work from home a break for parent to stay home w/ children
 - o Access to safe, high quality and affordable childcare
- Rent controls (3 votes)
 - o Landlords are raising rent and subsidies are not helping
 - o IA rent increases, landlord raises rent, doesn't help
 - o Zoning flexibility in secondary suites to increase rental stock
- Transportation
 - o In parts of Britain those over 55 get free transit--can we do this?
 - o Could improve issue social isolation, more access to services
 - o Reduce travel to doctors
 - o Increase transport to larger centres to access services. If not they may be forced to relocate from smaller communities (Between towns)
- Food security
 - o Community gardens, education, expanding fresh produce distribution/ storage of perishable food for food banks
 - o More taxes on sugar, alcohol, disincentives by increasing taxes on unhealthy items. Reducing access to unhealthy food options.
- Government policy on work
 - o End policies where people can't work when on income assistance
 - o Don't punish people for working
 - o People want to work but need to allow them to work to increase stability before leaving assistance
 - o Become independent before need more I.A.
- Addictions
 - o Get people to treatment sooner, as needed, immediately
 - o More beds , access to services, early intervention
 - o Mental Health and addictions – provide right service at the right time
 - o Education, prevention
 - o Prevention--right now you need to be sick in order to access
 - o Access to therapy, stop downward spiral
 - o Consistent funding for education/ intervention programs for mental health + addiction (1 vote)
- Medical
 - o Available doctors reduce costs for non-covered items
 - o Universal coverage for dental, prescriptions etc.
 - o See England healthcare system
 - o Preventative and early care--don't wait until stage 4 to treat cancer
- Education
 - o Free University (See Australia, Norway, Finland etc.) (1 vote)
 - o No barriers
 - o Applied learning coops

- Gap year for students to travel or work so when they go back to school they may have clearer idea/ more mature know what they want to do – make better choices (England/ Ireland. Europe)
- Community and local
 - More money to municipalities to help provide free rec passes
 - Local government \$ funding