



Transcript: Community Meeting on Poverty Reduction

**Prince George, BC
February 17, 2018**

Introduction and Event Summary

On February 17, 2018, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction hosted a community meeting in Prince George, BC to discuss poverty and poverty reduction with local residents. The event brought together approximately 90 to 100 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 Kenora Stewart from Lheidli T'enneh First Nation, followed by opening remarks from Dawn Hemmingway, Co-Chair of the Minister's Advisory Forum for Poverty Reduction and Murry Krause who also sits on the Ministry Advisory Forum.

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 which they used to reflect their individual perspectives on the issues and their priorities. Following the individual priority setting, participants were asked to determine as a table the top three (3) priorities that they would like to report.

Dawn Hemmingway and Murry Krause 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 in poverty right now?

- Emergency shelters
 - o If you arrive at the shelter too late you can't get in
 - o There is limited or no privacy in many shelters
 - o People have to share room at the shelter
 - o Drug free
 - o Safety can be an issue
 - o The shelter is not open all day – you can't always stay even if it's cold outside
- Law Enforcement
 - o It can be a power struggle with police
 - o Police can just stop you and card you for just being there
 - o There are not a lot of provincial programs available to help in the community, when you are in prison or when you are coming out of prison
- Safety/security
 - o You need a safe place to keep your things
 - o You are always unsure when you're going to lose good stuff
 - o Need to have secure finances
- Services
 - o You shouldn't have to be questioned about your address to get services
 - o You shouldn't be denied benefits because you don't have an address
 - o People need comfortable dry, warm clothing
 - o The working class is now known as the working poor
- Employment
 - o Stop Work BC from denying services to seasonal workers
- Benefits
 - o OAS, GIS and seniors supplement are not enough
- Income
 - o Need to be in debt just to survive
 - o Your working wage is not enough to go beyond meeting basic needs
- Health care
 - o There is a lack of free/ affordable dental and optical care
- Stigma/ Judgment
 - o Empower people to understand we are all equal
 - o Need to change the culture - take the time to change the language
 - o Issue of inclusiveness – “Meeting people where they are at”
 - o Shame and judgement of self/others
 - o It is hard to ask for help from others and community organizations
- Housing/Homelessness
 - o You have to live with multiple people just to afford a place
 - o There is not enough food and housing
 - o There are not enough community shelters

- There is a lack of affordable housing options/ cooperative housing
- There is a lot of homelessness
- People are bed-less (couch surfing)
- Some people have been looking for housing for over 3 months
- Only getting \$375 a month for shelter, it is not enough
- It is hard to maintain stable housing
- The affordable housing is often substandard (slum lords, bugs/rodents)
- Landlord/ tenant relationships can be challenging
- Landlord/Tenant Act issues supports/accountability
- Parents with small children can't find suitable/ large enough housing
- The cost of housing means there is not enough, money left over in a household's budget for other basic needs, like food and clothing
- High utility costs also pose a challenge
- Not enough co-op housing where tenants pay a % of income on rent
- Invisibility – (students, couch surfing) whether intentional or not
- Addictions
 - There are not enough resources for disability, drug, alcohol
 - People don't know how to access
 - Lack of supportive housing (for mental health, addiction, pregnant)
 - There are some staff /outreach but not enough
 - No female drug and alcohol facilities
 - Lack of supportive housing
- Transportation
 - Transportation costs (driver's license costs, bus cost)
 - Snow removal, lack of bus, sidewalk closings affect mobility
- Seniors
 - Seniors need accessible housing
 - Not enough affordable housing for seniors
 - Lack of subsidies for seniors
 - Lack of medical coverage
- Life skills training
 - Need teen life skills to help make them transition
 - Need for adult life skills (sink leaks, pilot lights)
- Income Support
 - The assistance provided by the Ministry does not provide enough for:
 - Childcare
 - Getting back into the workforce
 - Haircuts
 - Clothing
 - Transportation
 - Deductions
- Disability

- People need furniture to start up
- It is tough enough to get a “normal job” when living in poverty due to disability
- Emergencies
 - During fires people were evacuated to PG
 - How do they get home?
 - What happens after?
- Income Assistance
 - Not eligible
 - There are three different levels of income assistance
 - Basic income assistance is very low
 - PWD is harder to access
- Health care
 - Dental care services are poor
 - Lack of dental care has negative effects
 - Dental affects perception by others
 - It affects employment
 - It ends up costing more later
 - Painful
 - People end up having to use food money and other supports to get dental care
- Food Security
 - Food costs are high
 - People with medical issues need access to healthy food
 - Need accessible foodbanks
 - You get things that you can't eat or you won't eat
 - The food that is available is not too nutritious
- Government Services
 - Rules to access can create barriers
 - There are too many rules and too much paper work
 - A lot of people don't understand the forms
 - The language on the forms is complex and difficult to understand
 - Need help of government to avoid all forms of poverty (1 vote)
- Supports and Services
 - Need mental health supports
 - Institutionalized from care home
 - Transition from jail/other institutions is difficult without supports
 - Released from corrections and in transition – where do you go?
- Regional Differences
 - There are no case workers – if you lose the number to call, you don't know how to access help or information
 - We need a local contact
 - People that don't live here don't know the local resources
 - Prince George a HUB

- People come from across the north for medical services
- Food Security
 - Prisoners get food but kids at school don't
 - Kids should get a hot lunch
 - Kids come home hungry
- Employment
 - There are not a lot of jobs in Prince George
 - People don't necessarily want to move to the bigger centre
- First Nations
 - The reserve is 20km out of Prince George
 - It is hard to get into town
 - Band office and store are the only jobs on the reserve
 - Community van helps to get to jobs/ stores but it's still tough
- Homelessness
 - Sleeping on the streets is an issue
 - There are not enough beds
 - The cost of housing is high
 - There should be strict criteria to qualify for a bed
- Services and supports
 - Edmonton had better supports such as a clothing closet, a pantry for food and canned goods and in summer they have summer clothing
 - People need skills and supports such as teaching, parenting, counseling
- Living in Poverty
 - People are spending all of their money on rent, utilities – don't have money for food
 - Utility bills are very high
 - Communication costs are high
 - People need a phone to apply for a job
 - Gas bills
 - Grocery bills
 - "Every Shark has its bite"
 - Banks are gouging people
 - Utilities are not included in social assistance
 - People are getting their gas cut off - \$500 is not affordable
 - Had to pay reconnection fees
 - This month had a \$400 utility bill
 - Next month another \$500
 - Reconnection cost is \$250
- Homelessness
 - Minus 20 in Prince George yet people are living on the streets
 - We are failing our citizens when they are on the streets
 - There are not enough beds
 - How can we help people to make better choices?

- People with pets cannot go to a shelter
- People have nowhere to put personal item
- Shelters do not allow personal items
- Income Assistance
 - Getting a clothing supplement with income assistance is difficult
 - The Ministry always ask “are you in imminent danger?” If you say no, you don’t get help
 - Crisis supplements are the same if you are not in imminent danger you will get refused
 - There is a lack of information on coverage for mental health under income assistance
 - The clothing supplement package is thick
- Transportation
 - There is no transportation to industry work site
 - There are no buses
 - This can be a barrier for people who don’t have a driver’s license
 - Public transit is limited on weekends
 - Transit routes do not go everywhere – there are lots of places that can’t be accessed by transit
 - People can’t get to work
- Kids/Youth
 - Kids are not comfortable talking to their school counsellors
 - Poverty impacts kids
 - It is impacting kids at school and there is no one to turn to
 - Poverty impacts children’s identity and how they see themselves
 - The cycle of poverty continues over generations
 - The impact on children is a core issue that needs to be addressed
 - Kids growing up with violence is an issue
 - Drugs and drug dealing affects kids
- Discrimination
 - People in power making decisions for people living in poverty are not the same
 - People sticking to the rules and basing their decision on the rules is not what people need – people’s circumstances are often different and the rules need to reflect this more
- Housing and Home Ownership
 - Need creative solutions to home ownership
 - Low price for town houses but getting \$ for down payment is challenging for people
 - The amount paid in rent could have paid off buying a home
 - Social assistance rules – if you have an asset (own home) you cannot get social assistance
 - Saving up money for an asset will impact getting assistance it becomes a vicious cycle
- Health care and dental care
 - Braces cost too much
 - Lack of a family doctor can be a problem
 - People are waiting for family doctor

- Basic dental care is hard to pay for
- Recreation
 - Transportation to recreation can be a barrier
 - Sports equipment costs a lot of money (even used equipment)
 - Limit to sponsor kids for activities
- Childcare
 - There is no affordable childcare
 - Parents are leaving kids with their grandparents for support
 - People have to work opposite shifts so that one person is home to look after the kids
- Youth
 - Growing up in poverty has life-long impacts
 - Clothing for kids is an issue - kids outgrow their clothes so fast
 - If you spend more money on clothes, it leave less money for other necessities
 - As kids grow money is spent on food
 - When you spend money on clothes you have no money for food
 - There should be lunch provided at school
 - Lack of access to proper nutrition
 - Nutrition impacts a child's cognitive learning and development
 - We need a lunch program at school
- Mental Health
 - People with mental health issues may not have sufficient support
 - Private treatment is very expensive
 - People end up on street because of self-medication
- Housing
 - People pay \$400/month on rent in low income housing in Alberta
 - Economy booms/bust, we had to move back to BC
 - Low cost housing was like a prison
 - Rent in Prince George has been going up
 - When we move out the landlord will move the rent up
 - Landlords are trying to get people on income assistance out of their buildings
 - People are buying strata units to get people on assistance out
- Food Security
 - Lack of transportation to access resources
 - Lack of fresh choices (most food is close to expiry)
 - Lack of funds to purchase food
 - Lack of funds to have community food programs more often
 - Community food programs were 4 days a week but were cut back to 2 days a week
- Housing
 - The only affordable housing is in a 'bad" neighbourhood
 - It is a place where I don't want to be
 - There is a lack of stock and a lack of places to rent
 - Prince George is a funnel community - every highway comes through here

- Landlords screen out people that they don't want to help
- There are not enough funds to pay shelter costs
- There are issues with the quality of the housing
- Limited funds to repair rental units
- Two or three generations have to live together to afford housing
- First Nations
 - People moving off reserve to a community with no supports
 - Band funds are not offered if people are not living on reserve
 - First Nations people only get about three quarters of the funding (family support) a non-First Nations person would get
 - There needs to be more support for First Nations people
 - If you have status and work on band land you do not get CPP
- Transportation
 - Poor transportation options
 - It is not possible to get to certain areas of town – including some of the areas where there is better housing
 - Transportation costs are high
- Personal care
 - High cost for laundry facilities
 - Limited facilities in rental units
- Violence and Crime
 - Many people carry weapons (knives, spray, guns, etc.)
 - People do not feel safe in specific neighborhoods
 - Threats of intimidation
 - Threats of being robbed
 - People carry weapons because they feel at risk
- Drugs/ Alcohol and Mental Health Issues
 - Drug and Alcohol addictions
 - Mental Health issues
 - Not enough recovery beds
 - There are not enough resources for help
 - Recovered addict still treated like an active addict
- Community Services / Drop in centre
 - Need to have “winter hours”
 - People present the same issues for accessing resources all year long
 - Lack of options for people who are “banned” from almost/all resources
- Regional issues
 - Need a Northern living allowance
 - Living in the North is more expensive
 - Transportation costs are higher – have to travel greater distances
 - More expensive up north due to amenities being spread out more
 - Utilities are higher due to heating costs

- Housing and shelter costs are high for people living on a fixed income – low income families
- Living in Poverty
 - Lack of awareness that poverty exists – only applies to certain populations
 - Cost of living keeps increasing but wages do not
 - Cultural view that poverty is a choice (stigma associated with poverty)
 - Reduced life expectancy
 - Increased mental health issues
 - Increased substance use + abuse
 - Cost of living is increasing
- Education
 - Cost of education too high not obtainable for some
- Social Isolation
 - Cultural Isolation
 - Mindset of society that the “problem” is too large to mitigate, impossible to “fix ”
 - Social isolation is the result of poverty
- Healthcare
 - Invest time and money to improve in the long run
 - Need to take preventative measures
- Community Resources
 - Many resources are wasted
 - Duplication of services
 - Lack of communication between resources
- Employment
 - People face different barriers to working
 - Lack of transportation can be a barrier for some
 - Access to and the cost of childcare is also a barrier
- Housing
 - There is a lack of affordable housing
 - The housing that is available is not adequate
 - Problem of not having a Tenancy Branch in communities
- Food Insecurity
 - Not having the financial means to purchase food
- Stigma and Housing Security
 - People are evicted because of poor communication skills and poor life skills
 - Down-casting of disadvantaged individuals and minority groups
 - Corrupted power – need to create awareness
- Income assistance
 - Money
 - Supports
 - Funding for supports
- Societal/Systemic Issues

- Doing business is the culture in Canada
- Lack of trauma-informed care
- Lose the “bottom-line” attitude
- Demonstrate that human life is valued to thrive beyond business relationships
- Access
 - Waiting lists too long
 - It is hard to access BC Housing
 - It is hard to access treatment and other levels of care
- Seniors
 - Turning 65 is a tough transition
 - OAS is not enough to make ends meet
 - Pension are too low/ costs too high
 - Medical is expensive
 - If you are lucky to have a place to live, it’s expensive
 - There are bills to pay and food to buy
 - When you transition from the work force to retirement it often results in poverty
 - WCB is good but if you turn 65, you are cut off and your pension is low
 - People who were injured and who were getting WCB lose it when they turn 65
- Stigma
 - Poverty affects your self-esteem
 - Not feeling valued in society when you are in poverty
 - Social Isolation – there is a sense that you are a 2nd class citizen
- First Nations
 - Live in city to be closer to services but then no assistance from Band
 - Pension is small
 - Being off reserve you lose touch with your community and culture
- Homelessness
 - Many people on the streets are educated, they are talented, and you have to listen to how they ended up on the streets
 - Often people are on the streets because they have seen their income slide lower and lower
 - It pushes them onto drugs
 - Some people think that people are homeless because of their addiction but this is not always the case – it is a way to try to cope with the harsh realities of life on the streets
- Barriers/ stigma
 - Doctor won’t sign for disability = rights denied
 - I’m a hard worker, skilled(peace maker) but trained/expected to be something else
 - Clothes, eyes, teeth stop you from finding a job
- Systemic Barriers
 - The system places unrealistic expectations on people
 - Financial requirements to obtain/ keep employment are unreasonable
 - There’s intelligence/ skill to living in poverty, not everyone has it

- Stress/depression/anxiety is high, leads to physical issues
- Working poor, low income, pensioners all need more help
- Children of low income families get discriminated against
- Due to the challenges of barriers people become = discourage from continuing their education
- There are barriers to accessing services
- Accessibility of information is poor
- Wait times for social assistance
- Physical barriers to access resources due to mobility
- Multiple levels of barriers such as being housebound, registering for school, cannot get to food line, transit system times
- Food security
 - Children and pets get fed first
 - Individuals won't eat or take their medication in order to make sure that their loved ones are cared for
 - Healthy food is expensive to buy
 - Hunger/need for necessities can lead to theft
 - People are forced into dumpster diving to get by
 - There should be better procedures for restaurants to be able to donate food instead of throwing it away at the end of the day
 - People are using support to pay for shelter, and then not enough is left for food
 - Cheapest food is worst quality (junk food)
 - Stores throwing out food not needed (donation law)
 - Solutions on how to mark donated food so it's not returned to stores for cash
 - Access to healthy food is an issue
 - Meals are important to stay healthy
- Income Support
 - People need a functional amount of money for shelter
 - Rent increased when people were given the \$100 extra
 - Points for club cards when getting prescriptions taken away (had used points for food purchase)
- Health care
 - Affordable medication
 - Proactive healthcare
 - Not enough income for vitamins
 - No allowance for supplements – non pharmaceutical treatments
 - User fees \$20 physio, chiropractors, optical glasses, dentists
- Living in Poverty
 - Serious affordability concerns
 - Cost of living has gone up but assistance from government has not gone up
 - Not allowed to access 2 for 1 sales when using ministry assistance
 - Quality of life is low

- Stigma
 - o Poor get poor treatment
 - o Government programs discriminate
 - o Not treated with dignity and trust
 - o Ministry workers not treating clients well
 - o Bad attitudes (at SDPR Ministry)
 - o Taught in school how to treat people
 - o People feel unseen, vulnerable, demoralized
 - o Society has attitude – stigma
 - o Social attitude needs to change (perception that poor people are lazy etc.)
- Mental health
 - o People face more and more issues
 - o People are treated worse
 - o When trying to get off drugs there is no way to prove who you are without ID
 - o Can't just go to another pharmacy
 - o Disconnect between the drug strategy and what is happening
 - o Lack withdrawal services that allow/ enable life
- Access and Advocacy
 - o People are treated differently if there is an advocate present
 - o Homeless people don't have an advocate
 - o Not enough advocates
 - o One-on-one support is needed
 - o Mentoring is needed
 - o Non-profit funding is restricted
 - o Consistency issues
 - o Hard for people to access resources
 - o Bad legislation (doesn't fit, needs to be redone)
 - o Resources are spread out and you have to go from place to place to place
- Shelters
 - o Not enough shelter beds
 - o Food only between certain hours
 - o No pay phones
 - o Security in shelters is an issue
 - o Personal belongings are at risk of being stolen
 - o Clinics are far away
 - o Cold days people being kicked out by security
 - o No safe hangout places other than shelters
 - o No public showers
 - o No storage lockers to keep belongings safe
- Legal
 - o Cuts to Legal Aid
- Youth

- No support for someone aging out
- Youth at 18 can't apply for assistance due to 2 year law
- This policy is forcing young people to crime and addiction
- Schools not paying for assessments for kids
- Fees for sports, band school fees as barriers
- Income
 - Minimum wage not enough
 - Wages go up/prices go up
- Employment
 - Small wage jobs don't have benefits
 - More debt to go to work
 - People are worse off than on income assistance
 - No encouragement to work
- Child care
 - Childcare workers make more than parents
- WorkBC
 - Fund for work supplies denied due to seasonal work (forestry, tree planting)
 - Alternative work/employment planning
 - Unable to work with WorkBC – denied reachable program
 - Lack of response regarding complaints by Ministry
 - Mandated to use WorkBC by Ministry if unable must use alternatives
- Advocacy
 - Advocating for yourself can have repercussions
 - Need for support to navigate the systems in place
 - There are lengthy delays getting through the system
 - People make bad choices due to limited resources
 - The process is too complicated, lengthy (computer literacy)
 - Phone and internet are not considered essential but people are unable to access services, look for work without a phone and internet or access to email
- Homelessness
 - People are living day to day
 - Need somewhere to go at night
 - If shelters don't allow their belongings individuals won't stay
 - Need for after-hours drop in
 - Extreme temperatures – however some individuals still denied entry due to past behaviour difficult
 - People who are seen as difficult are at risk of frostbite
 - Requires advocacy
- Transportation
 - Can't connect with services
 - No access to affordable/convenient/ safe transportation
- Resources

- There is the expectation that people should only have bare necessities
- Things that help people connect with community are often considered as extras
- Children's activities shouldn't be thought of as luxuries
- Childcare
 - Adequate
 - Affordable
 - Accessible
- Shelters
 - Community agency contracted
 - Accountability not always there
 - Who is responsible for getting the job done and ensuring funding spent correctly?
 - Respectful environment
 - Where do we go to?
 - Told to go to RCMP, RCMP will say that it is not their role
- Transportation (2 votes)
 - No access to bus tickets/passes
 - Only PWD have access to transportation services
 - If on a job search, should have access to a bus pass
- Mental Health
 - Mental Health issues need to be addressed
 - No resources
 - No support
 - No programming
 - Psychiatric unit – de-escalation of situations - need more training
- Housing
 - Affordable
 - Safe
 - Supports in place to keep housing / help maintain
 - Subsidize
 - Rent is \$1000 per month for a small unit, unreachable for people unless you live with 4 or 5 other people to help share the costs
 - Having that many people living together can cause other problems
 - Subsidy for individuals with addiction is non-existent
 - Harm reduction (Housing First??)
 - How do they afford housing?
 - Shelter funds \$375 00 = inadequate for actual costs of rent
 - Minimum \$700 for one bedroom in Prince George
- Communication/ Co-ordination
 - No coordination across Ministries
 - People fall through the cracks
- Mental Health
 - Cultural and trauma informed care is needed

- Services need to be better informed/educated to better assist
- Cultural training
- Asking what community are you from?
- Learn a bit of the language
- Reaching out to community organizations for help No response
- Medication
 - Contributing to poverty when need to pay for medication out of pocket
 - Seniors receiving OAS/GIS having to choose between medication and eating
 - Benefits covered by Ministry are minimal (2 votes)
 - Most people pay out of pocket
 - No coverage for dentures (\$1000 not enough)
 - Minimal and inadequate medical and dental care
 - In most cases medical and dental care is not covered
 - Leads to poor self-esteem, anxiety and depression
- Accessible Housing
 - More funding for landlords to accommodate people with special needs
 - Rental Support for people with disabilities, long term renters
- Landlords
 - Programs to keep rent low (subsidies)
 - Landlords can raise rent with every new renter
 - No incentives to keep long term renter
 - Landlords if want to remove tenant can start “renovating” residence to evict tenant
 - Going through arbitration is difficult and challenging to navigate
 - No arbitrator in Northern BC
- Services
 - Centralization of services is a barrier
 - Moving away from face-to-face
 - Not proactive its reactive
 - Need a long term strategy and government investment over time
- Youth
 - More support/ help for individuals aging out of system (e.g. life skills)
 - More initiatives for kids in care – (e.g. life skills training)
 - Need a better transition
 - Forced to leave at 19
 - Need to empower youth to break the cycle
 - Long term strategy, act independently over time
 - Investing in youth is required
 - MCFD needs to be less antagonistic /adversarial
 - Work collaboratively with people
 - Need more help for grandparents caring for children
- Barriers
 - Shame associated with literacy issues and needing assistance

- Navigating through medical or government systems to get assistance
- Not able to access programs designed to help low income people due to:
 - Lack of comprehension
 - Lack of cognitive ability
 - Lack of trust
- Resources
 - Resources are used up trying to get funding
 - Not enough value placed on programs
 - Election cycle – encourages short-term views and need long term solutions
- Supports
 - Training for advocates
 - Get more advocates
 - Take care of front line workers
 - Higher wages for front line workers
 - Valuing front line workers
- Inequality
 - Wage discrimination
 - Unpaid women's labour
 - What happens when all the people who don't have kids need support and don't have access to unpaid women's' labour?
- Seniors
 - Affordable senior care
 - Access to seniors' housing is a high barrier
 - Senior alcoholics with medical conditions
 - Not enough home care
 - Transitional/co-ed seniors' housing
 - Co-ed shelters
 - Transitional houses
 - Once issues are addressed or stabilized people have nowhere to move
 - Elders who can't get out in winter, so need the support for this but no longer for the other issues
- Discriminations
 - Stigma for housing
 - First Nations face discrimination
- Food Security
 - Cost of food has increased
 - Food insecurity is huge
 - Getting access to affordable and nutritious food
 - Need access to a place to keep, store and prepare food
- Supports
 - Support for people who have cognitive difficulties
- Well-being

- People on limited income cannot get out of where they are – sense of hopelessness
- Low cost – free activities to encourage social interactions
- Programs may be good while they run – but no follow-up (funding, support)
- Continuation of programs vs stops to programs
- Work BC not treating seasonal employees the same as permanent employees
- Mental Health and Addictions
 - No options for people who are dual diagnosed
 - Wait lists
 - Temporary to permanent housing
 - Treatment centers – mental health issues
 - Available hours for services
 - Getting doctors for at risk clients
 - Stigma with clinics
 - If you don't go to the Doctor or psychiatrist you get dropped
 - Treatment centre limitations
 - Mental health medications that are not allowed at treatment centres
 - All-inclusive treatment options
 - Medication
- Homelessness
 - Housing not the primary issue, it is what is behind the lack of housing
 - What are the preliminary issues that are preventing them from being housed
 - Appropriate housing
 - Housing (low income) is located in an area that is hard to reach
 - It is located where it is hard to access services
 - Need more safe housing

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

- Community outreach
 - Information on income and housing supports should advertised
 - Information should be made more widely available (1 vote)
 - Help to get ID (2 votes)
 - Employment counseling and access to job lists
 - More available jobs
 - Drug and alcohol counseling
 - More affordable safe places to sleep/ shelter
 - More engagement sessions like this (3 votes)
 - Advertise more in shelters
- Services
 - More rental subsidies available or/ and rent-to-own-subsidies (1 vote)

- Income based exemptions on property taxes (1 vote)
 - Free dental/ optical services (medical equipment like hearing aids, dentures, etc.)
- Food Security
 - Grocery stores could pass out food to others in need
 - Perhaps restaurants could also help (1 vote)
- Stigma/Equity
 - Reducing the stigma/judgement around being in jail
 - Help people to get employment
 - Reducing judgement/shame/guilt & brainstorming solutions how to do this
 - Be honest
 - Apply laws equally and justly
 - Tax the rich more
- Supports
 - Have more shelters, more hours available and individual rooms (5 votes)
 - More recovery houses – clean /sober times (1 vote)
- Education
 - Access to training for work tickets and schooling
 - Cooperative training (1 vote)
 - Help people transition into work while in the recovery house
 - Easier to get your GED
 - Free education
- Outreach Support
 - More community engagement + sessions in person where people are paid equally for their time
- Homelessness Supports
 - Post office boxes that are an actual address that is free
 - With storage lockers
 - With added community showers and kitchens
- Wages
 - Minimum wage increase
 - Subsidize wages for people in recovery (1 vote)
 - Decrease the barriers of paper work & changing regulations so people can know what they get
- Life Skills
 - Get life skills into the schools at an early age (1 vote)
 - Finances
 - Change a light switch
 - Adult basic education, offered younger
 - Trade school (Alberta)
- Transportation
 - Driver's license offered
 - Subsidized bus passes

- More funding for HandyDART
 - Expanded bus route
 - % of income for pass cost (2 votes)
 - More sidewalks/wider
- Dental care
 - 5 percent of work is pro-bono (2 votes)
 - Add to MSP coverage
- Female or family alcohol/ drug treatment (8 people)
 - New hope in the North
- Mental Health (3 votes)
 - More supportive housing
- Affordable Housing
 - More BC Housing
 - Government cap 1/3 of income to rent, government subsidizes difference (1 vote)
 - Co/op housing more
 - Communal housing
 - Supportive housing – mental health
 - Wider bracket eligibility co-op
 - Shelters (more)
 - Second stage housing (more)
 - Rent to own (builds pride)
 - Mandate apartment/building a % low income (3 votes)
- Landlord/tenant relationships
 - Mediator before this step
 - Accountability
 - Office in Prince George
 - Foreclosed slumlords – low income
 - By-law for rental standards
 - Not enough left after rent for basic needs, food clothing, etc.
- Parents with small children/families
 - Included childcare (better subsidy)
 - Day care % of income
 - Employer provides day care
- Have one level of income assistance no differences by region/season
 - Utility subsidy
 - Case managers
 - Energy efficient buildings
 - Legislation change (3 votes)
- Lack of resources/don't know how to access/changes too often
 - Map
 - App
 - Not 30 page book

- De-emphasize funder (not 3 organizations doing the same) (2 votes)
- Medicine Hat – 1 person connects to all
- PG foundries
- Community Collaboration
- Centralized
- Invisibility
 - 1 stop shop/ a hub (3 votes)
- Seasonal workers
 - Stop WorkBC from denying services to seasonal workers (3 votes)
- Holistic solutions
 - Can't be a piecemeal solution – must be holistic, comprehensive, inclusive
 - Must be high quality and non-politicized
 - When its political it get fragmented
- Affordable living
 - Increase income assistance rates
 - Put in rent controls so that landlords cannot increase our rents
 - Lower utility rates (Gas Hydro etc.) (2 votes)
 - \$200 a month gas bill
 - Should have different option for heating your home
 - Having a pellet stove for heating is better but you have to be a home owner
- Housing Ownership
 - Develop low-fixed income program so people can become home owner (5 votes)
 - You can bring down your cost (Put in a pellet stove)
 - Home ownership would be a practical goal
 - Improve heating/ home for energy efficiency (Double Pane window)
- Accessible Services
 - Start “Clothing Closet” and “Food Pantry at the school (Edmonton Albert Model) (3 votes)
 - Have food hampers at school (1 vote)
 - Have community centre next to school or part of school
 - Safe place, close to school
 - Church to be more involved with clothing closet and, food pantry
 - Improve timing of childcare access (i.e. access to services for people working nightshifts)
 - Provide free bus passes for all people on assistance (1 vote)
 - Public Transit to access further out of town (i.e. industrial work sites)
- Homelessness
 - Have public health nurse for street people intervention (2 votes)
 - Develop homeless connection convention once a year
 - Provide information, resources, food etc.
 - Services should go to where homeless people are
 - Provide “tiny homes” for people to sleep/store their personal items (1 vote)

- Provide proper bathroom (kept clean) and storage space where homeless people are (1 vote)
- Medical/Dental
 - Coverage for orthodontics
 - Remove additional cost for dental, doctor, optometrist, dentures, physio-therapy, massage therapy, chiropractor, and doctor requested medical equipment (3 votes)
- Services
 - Provide high quality services to family, especially for kids
 - Place priority on children
 - High quality services for root issues (2 votes)
 - Stop WorkBC from denying services to seasonal workers
- Safe affordable housing (7 votes)
- Money for housing
- Better rental units
- Better neighborhoods
- No absentee landlords
- Better landlord engagement (1 vote)
 - Landlord doesn't care about state of rental unit
- Increase assistance
 - Increase "bottom rate" (1 vote)
 - Low income working families can't afford many basic needs or additional activities
- Community cohesiveness
 - Remove judgement between cultures (1 vote)
 - More community involvement between agencies and neighborhoods
 - Organize block parties
 - Strengthened social connection between community agencies (2 votes)
- Treatment
 - Better Detox/ intake hours
 - Longer stays
 - Short wait times for treatment
- System change
 - Change corporate tax structure (2 votes)
 - Changes of attitude towards lifestyle, self-talk, situations (1 vote)
 - Housing, income, attitude (1 vote)
- Access to housing and employment
 - Increase access to communication (phone and internet) for people seeking housing
 - An agency to create a "labour ready" program for people willing to work
- Respect and Value People
 - Recognizing the dignity and individual talent
 - Respect individuals and taking time to get to know them as individuals
 - Look at leaders, peers, colleagues to their own people in their own language
 - Support people to achieve their dreams (4 votes)

- Recognize that families take different shapes (1 vote)
 - Lodges for elders where culture + traditions are in place
- Equality in supports
 - People need special support (1 vote)
 - Increase pension by 25% (4 vote)
 - Remove the penalty on married couples
 - Each person in a marriage contributed to their own individual pension yet has to share (2 votes)
 - This is something you have a “right” to but not given those “rights fully (3 votes)
 - Individuals who have contributed to our country are not recognized (elders + vets) (2 votes)
 - Those off reserve need to be equal to those on reserve, causes weakness of nations (2 votes)
- Cultural Diversity
 - Cultural traditions need to be reclaimed
 - Racism and discrimination (individuals being judged and treated the same)
 - Don’t judge based on appearance (e.g. viewed as a drunk)
- Mental Health Supports
 - Increased mental health and addiction services are needed
 - Help those suffering to be productive contributing members (2 votes)
 - More advocacy – stop soiling services
 - Create safe spaces for accessing services
 - Universal counseling/supports for families impacted by child abuse, trauma, violence
- Education
 - Build increase awareness around poverty, mental health and addiction to reduce stigma (5 votes)
 - Affordable post- secondary school
- Financial support
 - Social assistance = Guaranteed income (2 votes)
 - Income indexed to inflation (3 votes)
- Social structures
 - Invest in being proactive
- Housing
 - Access to affordable and adequate housing (4 votes)
- Equality
 - Ensure the powerful elite are not restricting opportunities (1 vote)
- Distribution of Wealth (1 vote)
 - Not sure how to make this work without resorting to communism
- Improved communication
 - Prevent duplication of services (2 votes)
- Access to housing (2 votes)
 - More subsidized housing

- Minimum living allowance that is sufficient(5 votes)
- Rent subsidy that includes utilities
- Add subsidy to help cover the costs of utilities
- Put caps on the amount of rent that can be charged
- Advocates that can help tenants get rent
- Inspectors to check housing safety (black mold, proper maintenance)
- Subsidy flexible for room rental
- Increase the length of stay and protections for room and board tenants
- Legal Aid Tenancy Branch reinstated (3 vote)
- Prescriptions
 - Bring back legislation to get points on prescriptions again
- Food Security and Health
 - Healthy food versus cheap junk food (4 points)
 - Grocery stores put lines through donated food
 - Best before/use by dates
 - Consider ways to be more flexible around food safety so more food can be donated
 - Farmers market dollars – subsidy to the farmers
 - Food program educating people on how to buy and cook healthy meals
 - Bulk food buying
 - Healthy food programs at all schools (3 votes)
- Medical coverage (5 votes)
 - Free medical – no fee for MSP
 - Realistic coverage for glasses
 - Zero user fees – no cost at service provider
 - Fully covered for chiropractor, physio, psychologist, eye exams
- Transportation
 - Smaller busses
 - More frequent trips
- Changing Perception (1 vote)
 - Change perception of people in poverty by others (1 vote)
 - Taught in elementary school (in curriculum)
 - Employer training
 - Commercial advertising
 - Legislative change to treat everyone as equal (1 vote)
- Advocacy and Supports (2 votes)
 - Increase funding for advocates
 - Training and support for advocates
 - Reinstated Legal Aid Tenancy Branch
- Services and Support
 - More safe shelters for people living on the streets
 - Safe affordable childcare options
 - More funding and resources for mental health and substance misuse (5 votes)

- Collaboration
 - o Funding model keeps everything separated (too piecemeal)
 - o Fear of crossover/working collaboratively/ duplication of services
 - o Need to work together (2 votes)
 - o Make collaborative work more culturally acceptable
 - o Remove idea of competition, power differential between agencies
 - o Structure the funding method to support collaboration
 - o Structure the funding so more is available to communities
 - o Partnership/ collaboration should be part of model
 - o Provide for cross-training
 - o Address issues you specialize in and refer others
 - o Lottery corporation – open it up to other organizations to provide better services
- Paid advocacy services
 - o Not affiliated with anyone, only for the client (1 vote)
- Change in policies
 - o EI reach back
 - o Work BC shouldn't be only point of contact for federal programs
 - o Reducing red tape, more accessible easier to navigate
- Youth
 - o Early intervention in schools (4 votes)
 - o In-house childcare (Accessible/ regulated)
 - o Engage schools more
 - o Provide service on-site (social workers)
 - o Pro-active approach
 - o Use the community skills kids need (include elders)
 - o Mentorship programs
 - o Kids and Families
 - o Stop pushing kids into alternative education, it discourages kids
 - o No barriers, wrap around services in the early years
 - o Resources in house
 - o Extracurricular activities
 - o Need to empower youth
- Guaranteed Income
 - o Federal Standard of living versus provincial standard
- Housing
 - o Small housing communities
 - o Cooperative housing
 - o Build sense of community (not individualized)
 - o Create integration not socio-economic pockets, breakdown barriers
 - o Efforts to target landlords that are taking advantage of tenants
 - o Subsidy for housing

- Encourage access to housing for individuals with mental health issues + addictions (substance abuse) (3 votes)
- Social Inclusion
 - Promote equal access to opportunities
 - Promote access to recreation and other opportunities
- Cultural Education
 - Sensitivity training
- Employment – Food Prep
 - Staffing
 - Safe visitors
- Supportive living
 - Group homes for support
 - Not in complex care
 - Not in shelter
 - Women and children going to be able to keep the bad influences out
 - Similar to seniors not able to get home support
 - Mental health access before situation is critical and hospitalization is needed
- Social/Political change
 - Political will (6 votes)
 - Community engagement
 - Help people understand that there are other things going on
 - Recognize the effect of trauma
 - Remove stigma
 - Transparency in funding
 - A community plan – continuity in programs, funding
 - Not a one size fits all plan
 - Looking at the whole picture
 - Educating the community on the issues and on their community
 - Valuing people
 - Value on everyone, same access to emergency services
 - Non-political advocate to put pressure where and when needed
 - Acknowledgement of our past and what the issues are
 - Connection between all levels of government and funding
 - % of income going to poverty reduction
 - Problem is going to be with us therefore funding should be stable (1 vote)
 - Education for enlightenment and humanization
 - Trauma informed practice
 - Education to humanize
- Housing – with Supports
 - More supported housing and more types
 - Connections
 - Pride in self

- Less hospital visits
- Less interaction with police
- Pride in their home
- Address emotional aspects – loneliness
- Programs/connections for people who fall outside other programs
- Issues identified early and support offered throughout their life