

Union of BC Municipalities

Submission on the Development of
the BC Poverty Reduction Strategy

March 23, 2018



Introduction

The Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) represents 100% of local governments in British Columbia, and has advocated for policy and programs that support its membership's needs since 1905. We are a policy-based organization, guided by member positions established through resolutions at our annual Convention. The UBCM membership presently consists of 162 Municipalities, 28 Regional Districts and 8 First Nations.

Poverty reduction is a significant issue for BC local governments, and as a collective, they have endorsed numerous resolutions relating to the wide-ranging aspects of poverty reduction, including: housing, homelessness, income assistance, food security, child poverty, and the need for a province-wide poverty reduction strategy.

Poverty Reduction

For example, at the 2016 Convention, resolution B47 was adopted, which noted that the poverty rate in BC continues to be among the highest in Canada, yet BC is the last province in Canada to have a commitment to a poverty reduction plan.

This resolution asked the provincial government to “develop and implement a provincial poverty reduction strategy to reduce the number of people living in poverty in BC by setting concrete targets and timelines to reduce poverty.” A similar request was made in 2015 through resolution B44.

The UBCM membership has also endorsed resolutions specific to children living in poverty and have asked the government to introduce a strategy to eliminate child poverty in BC (resolutions 2014-B40, 2009-SR2, 2004-B135). Resolution 2014-B40 specifically identified a goal of eradicating child poverty by the year 2020.

UBCM commends the government on moving forward with the development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy for BC. Once the Strategy is finalized, we ask the government to ensure there are sufficient financial resources to support the Plan (2014-B41), including funds to support local poverty reduction initiatives (2015- B72).

Homelessness and Housing

On the issue of homelessness and housing, the UBCM membership has called on other orders of government to work together to “place equal emphasis on homelessness prevention and crisis response, to increase funding for housing outreach, referral and advocacy services, and to provide additional funding to address addictions and mental health” (2017- B52).

This resolution was preceded by numerous, similar resolutions calling on the provincial

and federal governments to develop a national housing strategy and complementary provincial housing strategy as part of a comprehensive plan to address homelessness (2016-B45, 2015-B14, 2015-B45, 2015-B46, 2015-B108, 2015-B109, 2013-B54, 2009-C28, 2008-A3, 2007-B58, 2007-B109).

Local governments have also highlighted the need for increased rental housing stock, as a means to mitigate the impact of rising rental costs on low-income and vulnerable British Columbians (2017-B53, 2016-OF1, 2015-B14, 2015-B47, 2015-B48, 2015-B49, 2014-B46, 2013-B54, 2012-B143, 2009-C28, 2008-A3, 2007-A7, 2007-B40, 2007-B108, 2007-B197, 2006-B118, 2005-B47, 2004-B30, 2000-B77, 1998-B15, 1991-A13, 1991-B56, 1990-A20, 1990-A21).

UBCM's 2018 Housing report, *A Home for Everyone: A Housing Strategy for British Columbians*, puts forward four major policy shifts as priority action areas, and 32 specific recommendations. Three of the policy shifts focus on a continuum from addressing homelessness, through to creating substantial new rental housing stock, to stabilizing the ownership market so that the possibility of homeownership once again becomes realistic for a greater number of British Columbians. The fourth major policy shift recognizes that all of this will require stronger working relationships between governments. The four policy shifts are:

1. A rental housing strategy that substantially increases the amount of rental housing available to British Columbians, over the next decade.
2. A demand management strategy that stabilizes house prices so that British Columbians can once again realistically be able to own a home without incurring crippling debt.
3. A comprehensive homelessness strategy to substantially reduce the number of people who are homeless by reducing pathways into homelessness and increasing pathways out of homelessness while continuing to provide appropriate services to those who are currently homeless.
4. An all government approach towards housing affordability, where each order of government works and collaborates at a community level to bring about community appropriate change. Local governments are ready to be active partners in this approach.

The report and recommendations can be accessed on the UBCM website:
<http://www.ubcm.ca/assets/Whats~New/UBCM%20Housing%20Strategy.pdf>

Income Assistance

BC local governments have called on the provincial government to increase income and disability assistance rates (2017-B53, 2016-B120, 2015-B45, 2014-B42, 2014-B44, 2013-B130, 2013-B55, 2011-B175, 2000-B30, 2000-B31, 1999-A22).

For example, resolution 2016-B120 noted that income assistance rates set by the provincial government of BC were well below the federal government measurements of low income in Canada, and that BC income assistance rates have not been increased since 2007. This resolution asked the provincial government to increase income assistance rates in BC by 2017.

UBCM acknowledges and supports the government for changes introduced in 2017 to income and disability assistance rates, which include an additional \$100 each month for those receiving income and disability assistance, and the ability to earn an additional \$200 month without impact on their payment. UBCM also supports the restoration of the annual bus program for those on disability assistance.

Food Security

Poverty and food security are intricately linked, and BC communities have sought to address the issue of food insecurity for low-income individuals.

In 2013, the City of Victoria proposed resolution B56, which noted that the number of people who are food insecure in communities in BC continues to rise in spite of a growing number of charitable food redistribution efforts; and that all orders of government should accept their responsibilities to develop policies and programs that will end hunger in Canada. The resolution urged the provincial government to “ensure food security for all British Columbians and eliminate the need for food banks by implementing measures that provide adequate and accessible income support for the non-employed and improve the earnings of those in the low-wage workforce”. This resolution was supported by the UBCM membership at the 2013 Convention and builds on a similar resolution that was endorsed in 2010 (B51).

More recently, the membership called for the creation of a Universal Healthy School Food Program (2017-B127) to enable all students in Canada to have access to healthy meals at school. This resolution advised that 1.7 million Canadian households, including almost 500,000 individuals in BC alone, experience food insecurity; and that the current patchwork of school food programming reaches only a small percentage of students.

Childcare

For those families with children that are living in poverty, BC local governments recognize the significant costs associated with childcare.

In 2011, the UBCM membership endorsed resolution B65, which asked the provincial government to significantly increase funding to childcare as part of a concerted effort to reduce child poverty and strengthen the economy of British Columbia.

Several past resolutions have asked for improved access to high quality, affordable early childcare (2017-B50, 2016-B49, 2016-B50, 2016-B51, 2014-B39, 2012-B50, 2007-B54, 2007-LR8, 2005-B156, 2001-B98).

UBCM commends the government for the \$1 billion commitment in February 2018 for the first phase of the BC Universal Childcare Plan.

Conclusion

UBCM appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the development of the BC Poverty Reduction Strategy, as this is a significant issue affecting BC communities. UBCM represents 100% of local governments in British Columbia, and our submission reflects positions supported by our membership as a whole.

We have attached a selection of resolutions that were referenced in this report. The remaining resolutions can be accessed either through our resolutions database (<http://www.ubcm.ca/resolutions/default.aspx>) or by contacting our UBCM office.

We welcome further opportunities for engagement with the provincial government on the development and implementation of the BC Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Inquiries regarding this submission may be directed to UBCM at ubcm@ubcm.ca or by phone at (604) 270-8226.

Poverty Reduction Resolutions

2009 SR2 CHILD POVERTY

UBCM Executive

WHEREAS several provinces have recently committed to reducing poverty through coordinated planning and legislative changes;

AND WHEREAS BC has the highest after-tax child poverty rate in Canada for the 6th year in a row, and the UBCM membership has endorsed resolution 2004-B135, which requested that the Government of Canada undertake, in a comprehensive and non-stigmatic manner, to end child poverty:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UBCM support the proposed initiative by the BC Representative for Children and Youth to bring forward a child poverty plan, similar to the Province of Ontario's Poverty Reduction Plan, that will include the implementation of a comprehensive, cross-ministry strategy to address child poverty.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

2014 B40 CHILD POVERTY

Delta

WHEREAS British Columbia has the highest child poverty rate in Canada, with one in five children living in poverty;

AND WHEREAS British Columbia's child poverty rate has been higher than the Canadian average since 1999, and the highest of all provinces most years in the last decade:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government be requested to adopt a comprehensive poverty reduction plan with legislated targets and timelines, and a goal to eradicate child poverty in British Columbia by 2020.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

2014 B41 POVERTY REDUCTION

Prince Rupert

WHEREAS the Province of British Columbia is one of only two provinces in all of Canada that does not have a Poverty Reduction Plan;

AND WHEREAS there is a need for such a plan to help support those who suffer from poverty in our province, in particular children and seniors:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM request the provincial government to create and implement a Poverty Reduction Plan, as well as set aside the resources to support this plan.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

**2015 B44 POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY FOR
BRITISH COLUMBIA**

Terrace

Whereas British Columbia has one of the highest rates of poverty in Canada;

And whereas the price of poverty is borne by all British Columbians through higher justice system costs, greater demands on the health care system, increased pressures on community services and reduced economic productivity;

And whereas British Columbia is the only province in Canada without a poverty reduction strategy:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM advocate to the provincial government to develop and implement a poverty reduction strategy to reduce the number of people living in poverty in BC by setting concrete targets and timelines to reduce poverty.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

**2015 B72 FUNDING PROGRAM FOR LOCAL
POVERTY REDUCTION INITIATIVES**

Surrey

Whereas the provincial government is encouraging local governments to collaborate with the community through the Community Poverty Reduction Strategy;

And whereas UBCM provides administration of various grants through the Local Government Program Services:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM request that the Province of British Columbia, in partnership with UBCM, initiate a grant program to fund local poverty reduction initiatives.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

**2016 B47 POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY FOR
BC**

**Powell River City,
Vancouver, Prince Rupert,**

Whereas the poverty rate in British Columbia continues to be among the highest in Canada yet BC is the last province in Canada to have a commitment to a poverty reduction plan;

And whereas many impacts of poverty are experienced at the local level, and local residents pay for poverty in increased health care costs, higher crime, higher demand for community, social and charitable services, lack of school readiness, reduced school success, and lower economic productivity:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM urge the Government in BC to follow the lead of all other provinces by adopting a comprehensive and accountable provincial poverty reduction strategy to reduce the number of people living in poverty in BC by setting concrete targets and timelines to reduce poverty.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

2015 B14 TAX INCENTIVES – AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Vernon

Whereas the lack of rental housing tax incentives has caused a reduction of investment in rental units, resulting in a decline in the amount of available rental inventory in most cities and towns across the country;

And whereas many municipalities attempt to address this shortage but are unable to provide the tax incentive required to motivate the private sector to invest in the rental marketplace;

And whereas the capital cost allowance that was allowed by Canada Revenue Agency on rental units could be applied to reduce an individual's total taxable income, thereby acting as an incentive towards this type of investment which was recouped upon sale of that asset to another party;

And whereas the lack of affordable housing and the incidence of homelessness is a growing and complex problem affecting all British Columbians and Canadian communities:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM call on the federal government, through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and other avenues as appropriate, to re-examine the long term benefits of providing a capital cost allowance to investors in rental projects that can be used where those business losses can be used against other income, including employment income.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

**2015 B45 SHELTER ALLOWANCES & RENT
SUBSIDIES**

Fraser Valley RD

WHEREAS the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and UBCM recognize that homelessness is a national concern requiring long-term solutions;

AND WHEREAS the 2014 Fraser Valley Regional District Homelessness Survey Report recognizes that homelessness in general is directly related to unaffordable rental rates, the erosion of the social safety net, and insufficient social housing inventory;

AND WHEREAS the Fall 2014 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation British Columbia Rental Report identifies the average rent for a one bedroom apartment in British Columbia as \$953 while at the same time the provincial shelter assistance rate for an employable one parent family is \$375 and has not increased since 2007;

AND WHEREAS there is an increased risk of homelessness for households spending over 50% of their income on housing costs:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM urge the provincial government to increase income assistance shelter allowances and expand and lengthen rent subsidies as part of homelessness outreach and support funding from BC Housing.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

WHEREAS local governments in British Columbia face a growing challenge of homelessness and local governments have been forced to deal with homelessness issues that fall under the mandate of the Province of British Columbia, including but not limited to health care, housing and immediate access to support programs, on an ad hoc and fragmented basis;

AND WHEREAS various pertinent ministries, local governments, social service agencies, health authorities, housing authorities, and police forces are allocating significant resources to dealing with homelessness issues, which often stem from mental health and/or substance abuse issues, in an uncoordinated manner, resulting in duplication and overlapping of efforts:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM request that the Province of British Columbia develop a comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable province-wide homelessness plan that sets out a series of actions, timelines and financial requirements aimed at ending homelessness in the province, while supporting community-led initiatives on homelessness, in a compassionate, dignified and fiscally responsible manner;

And be it further resolved that UBCM, through FCM, ask the federal government to agree to a federally funded national housing strategy.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

**2015 B47 A HOUSING ACTION AGENDA FOR
BRITISH COLUMBIA**

Vancouver

WHEREAS housing is becoming increasingly unaffordable in many areas of the province due to a range of factors, including speculation, the rising cost of land and strong demand driven by population growth;

AND WHEREAS rental housing, which provides housing affordable to a wide range of tenants with low or mid-range annual incomes, has not been built in large volume since the end of provincial and federal programs, resulting in record low vacancy rates in many areas;

AND WHEREAS Premier Christy Clark has recently acknowledged the severity of the problem for renters and first-time home buyers, promising to consider options available to make housing more affordable:

Therefore be it resolved that the Province develop and implement a comprehensive housing program, including measures to stimulate rental housing construction, maintain existing rental housing, reduce speculation, increase investments in social and non profit housing and expand opportunities for first-time home buyers.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

2015 B48 PURPOSE BUILT RENTAL HOUSING

Maple Ridge

WHEREAS the provision of incentives for private investors and developers to build purpose-built rental housing would increase the rental housing supply and contribute to overall affordable housing options; as demonstrated through programs in the United States, like the Low Income Housing Tax Credit;

AND WHEREAS the discontinued federal Multi-Unit Residential Building program provided for an incentive to create rental housing, not replacing this program has created diminished rental housing stock;

Therefore be it resolved that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities request that the federal government review current tax structures and programs to provide incentives for investment that increase purpose-built rental stock.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

**2015 B108 HOMELESSNESS PARTNERING
STRATEGY**

Fraser Valley RD

Whereas the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Union of BC Municipalities recognize that homelessness is a national concern requiring long-term solutions;

And whereas the 2011 to 2014 Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) identified sixty-one “Designated Communities” in Canada, with seven in British Columbia, to be eligible for HPS funding;

And whereas despite continued homelessness challenges in many communities across British Columbia, the 2014 to 2019 HPS program renewal did not include a review or update of eligible “Designated Communities”:

Therefore be it resolved that the Union of BC Municipalities urge the federal government to:

- Update the Homelessness Partnering Strategy “Designated Communities” eligibility list to reflect significant homelessness challenges faced by many communities not previously identified as having serious homelessness challenges; **and**
- **Amend the funding criteria to consider a broad range of factors including community capacity and the specific needs of individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness;**

And be it further resolved that federal government funding of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy be increased to take into account new communities added to the program.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED AS AMENDED

2015 B109 HOUSING FIRST FUNDING

New Westminster

Whereas the federal government's Homelessness Partnering Strategy has recently initiated a significant program shift by placing much greater emphasis on 'Housing First;'

And whereas this program shift has redistributed funds and resulted in tightened eligibility criteria which has served to limit access to programs for those not meeting the criteria;

And whereas this redistribution is causing funding reductions in housing outreach, referral and advocacy programs to people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness, including vulnerable seniors, low-income families, and women and children fleeing abuse:

Therefore be it resolved that the federal and provincial governments provide Housing First funding as an enhancement to important community programs and not at the expense of those programs.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

**2016 B45 RENEWED CALL FOR A NATIONAL
HOUSING STRATEGY**

Burnaby

Whereas the lack of affordable housing and the incidence of homelessness is a growing and complex problem affecting all British Columbian and Canadian communities;

And whereas an incomplete continuum of housing options negatively impacts individual and family well-being, local economic growth and sustainable, complete community development:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM urge the federal government to expedite the development of a national housing strategy.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

2016 OF1 BUILDING NEW STUDENT HOUSING

Victoria

Whereas the Alliance of BC Students (ABCS) has identified that over the past ten years, the growth in full time and international student populations at British Columbia post-secondary educational institutions has greatly outpaced development of new student housing spaces, forcing students to search for affordable housing off-campus in rental markets with low vacancy rates;

And whereas ABCS research indicates that if the restriction on debt were removed for the development of university residences, the business case exists to unlock over 20,000 new student housing spaces province wide:

Therefore be it resolved that the provincial government remove the restriction on public entity debt that presently applies to British Columbia's public post-secondary educational institutions, **or employ other mechanisms that have been successful in providing housing options**, thereby enabling these colleges and universities to take on debt to build new student housing.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED AS AMENDED

2017 B53 RENTAL HOUSING

Esquimalt

Whereas lower investment in rental housing stock over the past 30 years have resulted in a low vacancy rate and steadily increasing rental costs in many communities;

And whereas market conditions have led to increased appetite for rental building owners to invest in upgrades to their buildings which provide improved unit quality, safety, and energy efficiency, but this creates the impetus for existing tenants to be evicted and subsequently experience challenges finding suitable and affordable replacement housing:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM call upon the Province to provide a funding model and regulatory framework to assist local governments in reducing the impact of "renovictions" on tenants while continuing to encourage investment in upgrading older rental housing;

And be it further resolved that UBCM call upon the Province to increase the housing allowance portion of Income Assistance and Disability Assistance, as well as housing subsidies through BC Housing, to mitigate the impact of rising rental costs on low-income and vulnerable British Columbians.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

2017 B52 ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

New Westminster

Whereas the homeless population in Metro Vancouver increased by 29.8 per cent between 2014 and 2017;

And whereas the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy has focused its resources on crisis response to the chronically and episodically homeless resulting in those at-risk of homelessness not being eligible for housing support and advocacy services;

And whereas municipalities have experienced significant funding cuts to housing outreach, referral and advocacy services, and inadequate funding from other orders of government to address addictions and mental illness is significantly impacting the sheltered and unsheltered homeless population:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM urge the provincial government to work collaboratively with the federal government to place equal emphasis on homelessness prevention and crisis response, to increase funding for housing outreach, referral and advocacy services, and to provide additional funding to address addictions and mental health.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

2014 B42 RENTAL SUBSIDIES FOR LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

Kitimat

WHEREAS the District of Kitimat is concerned that the current economy has resulted in high rental rates and has affected the ability of residents on low and fixed incomes to acquire housing in Kitimat and throughout the region;

AND WHEREAS access to safe, affordable housing is a requirement to create healthy communities:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM call on the provincial government to increase BC Housing rental subsidies for low-income households in communities affected by industrial development.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED AS AMENDED

2014 B44 RENTAL ASSISTANCE FOR HOUSING COOPERATIVES

Metro Vancouver

WHEREAS non-profit cooperative housing provides valuable mixed income housing for a range of households, with low-income cooperative members benefiting from rent subsidies geared to income assistance;

AND WHEREAS in the next twenty years operating agreements with over 180 cooperative housing providers will expire, affecting almost 11,000 units in Metro Vancouver and more than 14,500 units across the province; in the short term, by 2017, rent-geared-to-income subsidies for low-income members will cease for one-quarter of housing cooperatives in BC:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that local governments throughout British Columbia urge the federal and provincial governments to work together to reduce the uncertainty for vulnerable members of housing cooperatives by ensuring that long-term, cost-shared rental assistance programs are in place as federal cooperative housing agreements expire.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

**2015 B45 SHELTER ALLOWANCES & RENT
SUBSIDIES**

Fraser Valley RD

WHEREAS the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and UBCM recognize that homelessness is a national concern requiring long-term solutions;

AND WHEREAS the 2014 Fraser Valley Regional District Homelessness Survey Report recognizes that homelessness in general is directly related to unaffordable rental rates, the erosion of the social safety net, and insufficient social housing inventory;

AND WHEREAS the Fall 2014 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation British Columbia Rental Report identifies the average rent for a one bedroom apartment in British Columbia as \$953 while at the same time the provincial shelter assistance rate for an employable one parent family is \$375 and has not increased since 2007;

AND WHEREAS there is an increased risk of homelessness for households spending over 50% of their income on housing costs:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM urge the provincial government to increase income assistance shelter allowances and expand and lengthen rent subsidies as part of homelessness outreach and support funding from BC Housing.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

2016 B120 INCOME ASSISTANCE RATES INCREASE

Mackenzie

Whereas the income assistance rates set by the provincial government of BC are well below the federal government measurements of low income in Canada;

And whereas the BC income assistance rates have not been increased since 2007:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM call on the provincial government to increase income assistance rates in BC by 2017.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED AS AMENDED

2017 B53 RENTAL HOUSING

Esquimalt

Whereas lower investment in rental housing stock over the past 30 years have resulted in a low vacancy rate and steadily increasing rental costs in many communities;

And whereas market conditions have led to increased appetite for rental building owners to invest in upgrades to their buildings which provide improved unit quality, safety, and energy efficiency, but this creates the impetus for existing tenants to be evicted and subsequently experience challenges finding suitable and affordable replacement housing:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM call upon the Province to provide a funding model and regulatory framework to assist local governments in reducing the impact of "renovictions" on tenants while continuing to encourage investment in upgrading older rental housing;

And be it further resolved that UBCM call upon the Province to increase the housing allowance portion of Income Assistance and Disability Assistance, as well as housing subsidies through BC Housing, to mitigate the impact of rising rental costs on low-income and vulnerable British Columbians.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

2010 B51 POVERTY REDUCTION PLAN

White Rock

WHEREAS poverty and its effects is something that each local government is faced with:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the importance of a poverty reduction plan be communicated to the leaders of all political parties in British Columbia highlighting the need to provide adequate and accessible income support for the non-employed, improve the earnings and working conditions of those in the low-wage workforce and improve food security for low-income individuals and families.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

2013 B56 ENSURE FOOD SECURITY

Victoria

WHEREAS income security and food security are inextricably bound, and the number of people who are food insecure in municipalities in BC continues to rise in spite of an ever-growing number of charitable food redistribution efforts;

AND WHEREAS enabling people to feed themselves with dignity requires everyone's participation, and Canada is obligated under international law to provide an adequate standard of living which includes the human right to adequate food and nutrition; with the most comprehensive way to do this being for all levels of government to accept their responsibilities to develop policies and programs that will end hunger in Canada:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM urge the provincial government to ensure food security for all British Columbians and eliminate the need for food banks by implementing measures that provide adequate and accessible income support for the non-employed and improve the earnings of those in the low-wage workforce.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

2017 B127 NATIONAL SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAM

Vancouver

Whereas 1.7 million Canadian households, including almost 500,000 individuals in BC alone, experience food insecurity, and the current patchwork of school food programming reaches only a small percentage of our over 5 million students, with Canada remaining one of the only Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development nations without a national school food program;

And whereas the Coalition for Healthy School Food is working at a national level to advocate for the creation of a cost-shared Universal Healthy School Food Program that will enable all students in Canada to have access to healthy meals at school, serving culturally appropriate, local, sustainable food to the fullest extent possible:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities advocate for a Universal Healthy School Food Program to provincial and federal governments.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

2011 B65 PROVINCIAL CHILDCARE FUNDING

Fernie

WHEREAS the province of British Columbia has the highest level of child poverty in the country;

AND WHEREAS affordable quality childcare plays a central role in the economic and emotional health of families and children:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government significantly increase funding to childcare as part of a concerted effort to reduce child poverty and strengthen the economy of British Columbia.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

2016 B49 CHILD CARE DELIVERY REGULATION AND FUNDING

East Kootenay RD

Whereas there is immediate need for more child care spaces and increased number of people working as early childhood educators in the East Kootenay and British Columbia;

And whereas the main barriers to the creation of new spaces and maintaining existing spaces is not within local government control but is related to provincial funding, licensing and health requirements, educational requirements, increasingly unaffordable childcare costs for parents, and unacceptably low rate of pay for most early childhood educators:

Therefore be it resolved that the Province of British Columbia, the provincial health authorities, and relevant post-secondary institutions work to solve the immediate and long term needs and gaps in child care delivery, regulation, fee structure and provincial funding;

And be it further resolved that UBCM and interested local governments be invited to collaborate and participate in developing solutions but that it is understood that child care is not a core mandate or service for local government and interest in participation in solutions is not an invitation for further downloading of responsibility or funding for child care from the Province.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED

2017 B50 AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE

Delta

Whereas the current lack of qualified and affordable daycare for working families in BC is hindering economic growth and creating financial stress for many families;

And whereas British Columbia has the second-highest child-care fees in Canada;

And whereas wait-lists for daycare in some areas exceed 3,000 children:

Therefore be it resolved that the provincial government be requested to develop an affordable child care system that provides a regulated space for every child whose family needs it.

CONVENTION DECISION: ENDORSED