

# Community Poverty Reduction Pilot Projects

2014 Progress Report





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# Message from the B.C. Government and UBCM

It's often said that a well-paying job is the best form of income support for families. But even as the provincial economy regains strength in the wake of the recession, too many British Columbians – many of them families with children – are struggling to get by.

While income assistance can be a short-term help, in order to really make a difference we have to address the root causes of poverty with targeted supports like skills training, employment assistance, affordable housing, early childhood development services, and tax policies that let people keep more money in their pockets.

In British Columbia, government invests billions of dollars every year in programs and services. And yet, as this report reminds us, families are not always aware of or able to access the help they need. That's why our organizations – the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) – have joined forces to test a new, more focused approach to:

- Work with individual families to develop tailor-made strategies out of poverty;
- And use what we learn from that experience to guide the development of community-specific poverty reduction approaches.

Results to date are promising. Low-income families have worked with us to help refine our understanding of the barriers they face – and the most effective ways to meet their needs in their communities. Municipal leaders in Cranbrook, Kamloops, New Westminster, Port Hardy, Prince George, Stewart and Surrey are developing and implementing plans to address the strengths and realities of their communities and citizens.

While it is critical to maintain provincial programs and services, our experience with this project underlines the importance of one-on-one assistance for families to navigate and access the many supports that already exist in our communities. It also reminds us that families cannot forge a path out of poverty until their most basic needs – including food, shelter and health care – are addressed.

This report provides an overview of current government and community-level programs, strategies and services in British Columbia. It summarizes what we've learned and sets out our priorities for these and ongoing community-based poverty reduction efforts. Part I of the report focuses on the role the B.C. government plays in service delivery for families. Part II includes the six original Community Action Plans developed by the pilot communities in 2012, as well as the poverty reduction strategy that the City of Surrey had already developed. Although the Community Actions Plans evolved differently in each community, the plans provide valuable information about what each community identified as barriers for families living in poverty, along with innovative ideas for addressing them. Also included are MCFD Family Consultant Status Reports that highlight their current community engagement and direct work with families.

We are committed to reporting on the status and success of these pilots by July 30th each year. Although we are not expanding the pilot project at this time, we will continue to work with local governments to develop and implement community poverty reduction strategies or enhance their existing plans to benefit individuals and families in their communities. This report is the next step forward. Together, we can help ensure that all B.C. families have the opportunities they need to take part in, and benefit from, our strengthening economy.



Honourable Stephanie Cadieux,  
B.C. Minister of Children and Family Development



Rhona Martin, President  
Union of British Columbia Municipalities



## PART I:

# B.C. Government Actions to Address Poverty

## Introduction

The impacts of poverty, including poorer health outcomes and decreased opportunities for children and youth, undermine our overall strength as a province and represent an enormous loss of human potential. In other words, poverty is everyone's business.

Governments at all levels have developed programs to help prevent and alleviate poverty. For example, British Columbia now invests over \$2.5 billion<sup>1</sup> a year in income assistance and employment programs through the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation (SDSI); more than 98,000<sup>2</sup> individuals and families benefit from provincial affordable housing programs; and provincial tax credits offset costs in areas such as sales tax for those with lower incomes.

Recognizing that welfare is not a solution to poverty, the Province is focused on building a stronger economy and getting more people into full-time employment. Municipal leaders are playing a key role in planning and preparing for new economic opportunities, in close consultation with a range of partners, from employers to First Nations, to post-secondary institutions.

With more than one million jobs expected in the next decade, it's important that our work to alleviate poverty does not reduce incentives for self-sufficiency. Rather, we must ensure that more low-income British Columbians get the jobs, skills and supports they need. To achieve long-term, sustainable change, the focus needs to be on the prevention – rather than the treatment – of social problems. And no single government or organization can succeed at this task in isolation.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development has taken the lead on behalf of the Province to engage with families and make sure their issues are heard, understood and – as far as possible – addressed. While most provincial programs and services for low-income families are developed and delivered outside MCFD, ministry staff are knowledgeable about their communities, and can play a critical role in helping families navigate the spectrum of available supports.

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<sup>1</sup> BC Budget 2014; annual funding to Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation for 2014/15.

<sup>2</sup> Government of British Columbia, Housing Matters, 2014

**FIGURE 1: B.C. Government Supports and Services to Reduce Poverty**

The following is an at-a-glance look at the programs, supports and services the B.C. government provides throughout the province, as well as programs offered at the community level.

AREAS OF SERVICE	GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS AND SUPPORTS
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public School System</li> <li>• School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program</li> <li>• StrongStart BC programs and centres province wide</li> <li>• After-school sport and arts programs available free of charge for vulnerable children in 14 school districts across the province</li> <li>• BC Training and Education Savings Grant to help parents save for their child’s post-secondary education</li> <li>• Funding for socio-economically vulnerable students through CommunityLINK and the Vulnerable Student Supplement</li> </ul>
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BC Jobs Plan</li> <li>• BC’s Skills for Jobs Blueprint: Re-engineering Education and Training</li> <li>• StudentAid BC</li> <li>• Community Adult Literacy Program</li> <li>• WorkBC Employment Services Centres</li> <li>• Aboriginal and youth employment programs</li> </ul>
Income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum wage amongst highest in Canada</li> <li>• Reduction in provincial personal income taxes</li> <li>• Income assistance</li> <li>• Child care grant programs</li> <li>• Assistance for Persons with Disabilities</li> <li>• Family and Youth Partnership Project</li> </ul>
Health/ Child care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Health Programs</li> <li>• Child Care Subsidies</li> <li>• BC Healthy Kids Program (includes free dental care)</li> <li>• GP for Me Program</li> <li>• Increased access to physician services, including rural areas</li> <li>• More than 800,000 residents do not pay MSP premiums</li> <li>• Farmers Market Nutrition Coupon Program</li> <li>• Food Skills for Families Program</li> <li>• New Early Childhood Tax Benefit starting in April 2015</li> </ul>
Settlement Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WelcomeBC BC: Newcomers’ Guides are available online in multiple languages</li> <li>• Free English language courses</li> <li>• English as a Second Language Settlement Assistance Program</li> </ul>
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Matters BC - 2014 Plan</li> <li>• \$3.6B since 2001 for affordable housing in B.C.</li> <li>• Rental Assistance Program (RAP)</li> <li>• Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER)</li> <li>• Home Adaptations for Independence Program</li> <li>• Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), with a focus on housing first</li> <li>• Women’s shelters, emergency shelters and outreach programs</li> <li>• Community Partnership Initiatives program</li> <li>• <i>Strata Property Act</i></li> <li>• <i>Residential Tenancy Act</i></li> </ul>

<b>Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial Transit Plan – provincial, federal, community and TransLink</li> <li>• Travel Assistance Program for medical care</li> <li>• Bus Pass Programs</li> <li>• Investments in cycling lanes, trails and paths</li> </ul>
<b>Communities</b> – Delivered by local governments and grassroots organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community kitchens</li> <li>• Public libraries</li> <li>• Community grant programs, including diverse service and non-profit organizations addressing poverty-related issues</li> <li>• Recreation fee subsidies</li> <li>• Community gardens</li> <li>• Food banks</li> <li>• Parenting programs and supports</li> <li>• Public parks and playgrounds</li> <li>• KidSport grants</li> <li>• Social planning committees</li> </ul>

## Community Poverty Reduction Pilot Projects

In May 2012 – with the understanding that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to poverty – the Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities began a series of pilot projects to test a new, more focused approach to connect families directly to the services they need in their communities.

To test this approach, the partners established pilots in Cranbrook, Kamloops, New Westminster, Port Hardy, Prince George, Stewart and Surrey. As part of these pilots, Family Consultants from the Ministry of Children and Family Development worked with community partners and service providers in each of the seven municipalities to develop Community Action Plans or build upon existing plans that identified the key barriers to moving people out of poverty.

Recognizing the intersection of roles and responsibilities for low-income supports and services, the pilots focused on bringing community resources together from across a range of ministries, organizations and sectors, and on encouraging local innovations.

In some communities, the Family Consultants took the lead; in others, they adapted their role to support and enhance work already underway. *Was this a successful approach? Are families getting what they need? How we can leverage existing supports and services and build on our accomplishments to date?* These are the kinds of questions that were asked in examining the outcomes of the pilot projects.

This report:

- Highlights the key themes and barriers to poverty that each of the pilot communities identified;
- Identifies areas of government responsibility – municipal, provincial and federal – and outlines the services and supports that are currently available to B.C. families;
- Sets priorities for the year ahead.

## The Role of MCFD Family Consultants

The MCFD Family Consultants worked collaboratively with families living in poverty and with community partners in the seven communities to address the key challenges that low-income families face when attempting to move out of poverty. By engaging with families to understand their lived experiences and also facilitating a community dialogue about poverty, opportunities were created to build and implement both individual family and community plans that address issues such as health, income, employment, childcare, recreation, transportation, education and housing. The information collected through the work with families and with the community is used to identify systemic themes/barriers for families and to develop strategies to mitigate them. MCFD Family Consultants also focus their efforts on partnering with communities through the flow of information process (see Figure 3). This approach gives the communities greater opportunities to provide services and supports to families living in poverty. As a result, many more families who were not directly involved with the MCFD Family Consultants still benefitted from the Community Poverty Reduction Pilot Projects.

## Working with Communities

Where pilot communities did not yet have a poverty reduction strategy or framework in place, the MCFD Family Consultants worked with local governments and community agencies to lay the groundwork to develop Community Action Plans. MCFD Family Consultants worked collaboratively with community partners with the goal of identifying key barriers to moving people out of poverty. Each community then selected three to six barriers to focus on (see Figure 4).

Where poverty reduction strategies already existed, MCFD Family Consultants helped the communities' efforts by supporting – or participating on – existing tables and planning committees that had been struck to address poverty.

In each of the participating communities, the pilot projects presented an opportunity to bring people together to talk about what is working, what is not working and how we might be able to work together more effectively to better meet the needs of B.C. families.

While this report cannot provide a comprehensive list of the work underway in each community, it must be acknowledged that each of the communities is engaged in a range of activities and initiatives aimed at improving the lives of families living in poverty. For example, local governments are finding creative ways to encourage participation in recreational activities by lifting barriers such as user fees, transportation and childcare costs; some are exploring or have adopted a Living Wage; others are taking creative steps to enable access to transportation, such as affordable transit passes for low-income earners. Community service providers work collaboratively to deliver a range programs and services for families.

## Working with Families

In addition to working with municipalities and community services agencies in each of the pilot communities, the MCFD Family Consultants worked directly with families to help them identify key barriers and challenges they face living in poverty and develop and implement individual plans to move out of poverty. Their ultimate goal was to help change these families' circumstances and help them become

self-sufficient by connecting them with programs, services and supports in their communities. This work included:

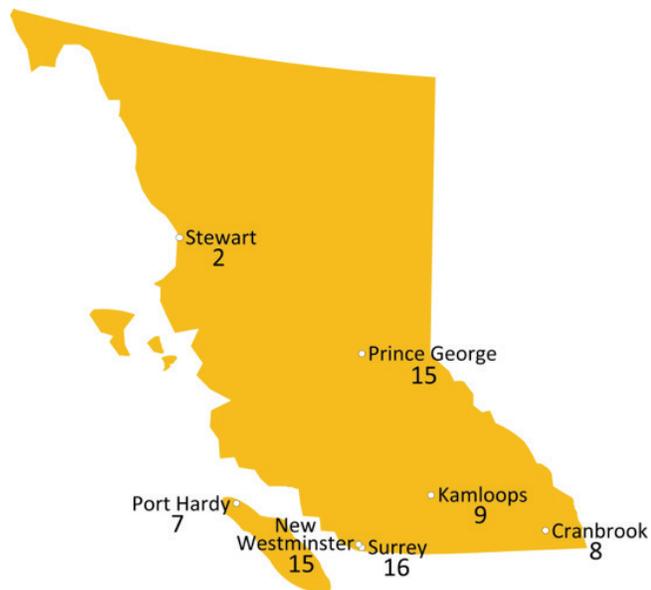
- Advocating across government for families to receive support services, such as mental health and addictions counselling, parenting skills, anger management support and employment skills.
- Working with local municipalities to access free transportation, shelter, household furniture and appliances.
- Supporting families to connect, or reconnect, to their cultures.
- Helping families to receive dental and medical services.
- Supporting families to access the child-care subsidy and/or developing plans to address child-care needs.
- Connecting families to parenting support groups within their local communities.

In working with families, the MCFD Family Consultants were able to utilize the lived experience of the families to help government and its key partners to better understand the barriers that families face, both systemically and at the community level. MCFD Family Consultants became the voice of the individual families and the pilot communities by ensuring that the information, trends, key barriers and systemic issues identified through their work were reported to government (see Figure 5).

In the early stages of the project, community partners and families identified a concern that families could possibly be at risk of child protection intervention if information on their personal family situation was tracked by MCFD. To mitigate this concern, data from the pilot projects is managed outside of the Integrated Case Management system, and participating families were not identified from MCFD caseload in the pilot communities. Families were referred primarily through community agencies or self-referrals.

**FIGURE 2:** *Participants by Community*

This map shows the distribution – by community – of the 72 families who received direct services through the pilot projects. On average, families had 2.3 children. The main referral sources included community health nurses, schools, churches, community agencies, the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation and self-referrals (often in response to posters).



## Engaging families was challenging

Between August 2012 and March 2014, the number of families supported through the pilot projects was 108 referred and 72 directly served.

The families who received direct supports and services reported having positive experiences, but the lower-than-expected participation rate suggests there is room for improvement in this area. The targeted caseload for each of the seven half-time consultants was to range from 10 to 15 families. To make this approach more effective in the future, we need to find ways to increase referrals. In addition, we need to find ways to increase the proportion of referred families who remain involved and receive the assistance they need.

## Participating families provided positive feedback

Families who participated directly in the pilot projects described the work as “priceless.” Their quality of life improved, barriers were lifted and stress levels declined. Many families either were not aware of the services and supports available, or did not know how to access them prior to their participation in the pilot projects. The one-to-one support provided by the Family Consultants made a significant difference.

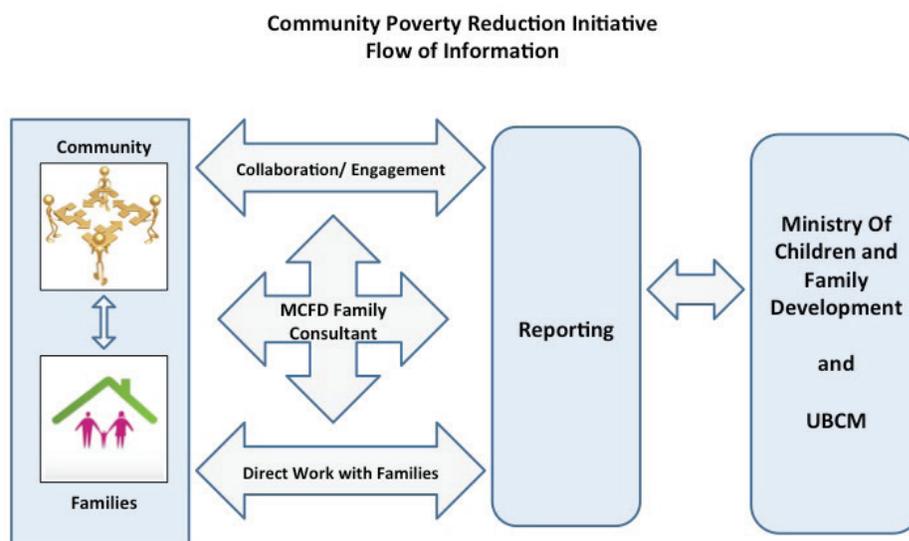
One parent said the Consultant “has taken a difficult situation and has proceeded to make it an easy one.” Another said, “You can put a price on a lot of things but you can’t on stress and anxiety. The consultant with her resources has – and I hope will be able to continue to – aid us in our time of need; there are many people that have similar situations.”

Municipal leaders were also impressed. One participating mayor said, “This project is much needed in our community and we are very proud of our accomplishment. It would be very challenging without the establishment of the consultant’s position.”

*“The consultant has taken a difficult situation and has proceeded to make it an easy one. We need more people like this consultant to make the world a better place to live. Thank-you...”*

**FIGURE 3:** *Community Poverty Reduction Initiative – Flow of Information*

This model illustrates how Family Consultants currently receive, resolve and escalate feedback from the families and pilot communities in which they are working.



## Pilot projects identified barriers to poverty reduction

In addition to providing direct supports to B.C. families, the pilot projects laid the groundwork for province-wide strategies that draw on resources from all levels and have the potential to work in all communities. To that end, they produced important information about the barriers families face, how those barriers vary from place to place, and how well resourced each community is in breaking those barriers down.

**FIGURE 4:** *Themes/Barriers Addressed in the Community Action Plans*

The following chart depicts the key themes and barriers identified by families in each of the pilot communities.

Themes/Barriers	<i>Cranbrook</i>	<i>Kamloops</i>	<i>New West</i>	<i>Port Hardy</i>	<i>Prince George</i>	<i>Stewart</i>	<i>Surrey</i>
<i>Access/Awareness of services</i>	✓	✓	✓				✓
<i>Childcare</i>						✓	
<i>Collaboration of services</i>						✓	
<i>Connection to Family</i>				✓			
<i>Coordination of services</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓		
<i>Education</i>		✓		✓		✓	✓
<i>Food Security</i>		✓	✓			✓	
<i>Health</i>		✓				✓	✓
<i>Housing</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓		
<i>Stigma of poverty</i>	✓				✓		
<i>Transportation</i>			✓		✓	✓	

## Communities needed different types of support

As expected, larger communities, such as Surrey and New Westminster, had a greater existing capacity to develop poverty reduction plans, while some of the smaller communities benefited from more assistance in planning. Overall, the pilot projects showed that the individual-family approach can – with adequate resources – make a real difference in people’s daily lives.

Just as the one-on-one approach was helpful to families, community-specific strategies are vital to ensuring that the needs of individual families are heard, respected and addressed within the unique social, economic and cultural context of their communities.

## Pilot projects supported development and growth of community plans

When the Community Poverty Reduction Pilot Project launched, some of the participating communities already had poverty reduction strategies in place or had begun to address poverty within their community. The approach in each pilot community was envisioned to have two components: direct work with families and community profile/action plans. The MCFD Family Consultants approached their work in each community the same way, but the projects evolved quite differently depending on the type of work underway, as well as the specific needs of each community.

With the support of the Family Consultants and in collaboration with government, families and community services agencies, many pilot communities were able to leverage existing programs and services, while also identifying other key priorities and barriers they need to address in order to build a stronger foundation of supports and services for families in their communities.

A number of communities expressed concern about the tight timelines and deliverables of the project and felt this was not conducive to a true community-development approach. Some communities adopted the Community Action Plans developed in partnership with the Family Consultants, while others did not. Through further collaboration and consultation, however, there has been renewed focus and momentum on moving forward with community poverty reduction strategies – adapted to the needs of each pilot community.

Each community has – or is in the process of developing – a Community Action Plan, or is enhancing their existing poverty reduction strategy. Each is progressing at its own pace, based on capacity. For example:

- The action plan in Stewart includes building partnerships with local mining and construction companies – as well as the local high school – to increase apprenticeship opportunities for local youth. It also includes a school breakfast program and a number of efforts to improve local transportation options.
- Cranbrook's plan includes working with landlords to increase access to affordable housing, and a partnership with businesses to provide free school supplies for low-income families.
- Surrey's plan, which was already underway when the MCFD/UBCM project began, includes a range of measures to increase the supply of affordable housing, improve services for young children and increase school completion rates.

In Part II of this report, the Community Action Plans are included as examples of the types of plans that were developed with the help of local governments and community organizations in the pilot communities. These Community Action Plans are representative of communities' early work towards addressing issues related to poverty in their respective communities. In working with MCFD's Family Consultants since May 2012, much was learned by both the communities and MCFD – information that will help inform future strategies and action.

# Roles and Responsibilities

## Pilot projects reinforced the need for collaboration

As illustrated in Figure 4, each of the pilot communities identified its own set of issues to address. The table also shows how communities' priorities – and families' needs – did not fit neatly into any one category. They crossed the lines of municipal, provincial and federal government jurisdictions. This points to the absolute necessity of taking an inter-ministerial, cross-sector approach to supporting low-income families in British Columbia.

**FIGURE 5:** *Government Roles/Responsibilities for Community Priorities*

The following chart depicts the systemic themes identified in each pilot community and illustrates the blend of federal, provincial and local supports for low-income families. Please note that the federal government is responsible for supports and services for Aboriginal people living on reserve, whereas provincial and municipal governments are responsible for supports and services for Aboriginal people living off reserve.

\$ = Accountable (funding)                      🏠 = Responsible (implementation & support)

Systemic Themes	Community Priorities							Level of Government		
	Cranbrook	Kamloops	New Westminster	Port Hardy	Prince George	Stewart	Surrey	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Housing	✓	✓		✓	✓			🏠	\$🏠	\$
Housing: On-reserve Aboriginal	✓	✓		✓	✓				🏠	\$
Housing: Off-reserve Aboriginal	✓	✓		✓	✓			🏠	\$	
Food Security/Food Banks		✓	✓			✓		🏠	\$🏠	🏠
Health		✓				✓	✓	🏠	\$	🏠
Childcare						✓		🏠	\$🏠	\$
Transportation			✓		✓	✓		\$🏠	\$🏠	\$
Education/life skills/job training		✓		✓		✓	✓	🏠	\$🏠	\$

**FIGURE 6:** Key barriers the pilot communities identified to moving out of poverty

Families in the pilot communities worked with Family Consultants to identify key barriers to moving out of poverty. The following chart provides an in-depth look at the range of supports and services available to British Columbians.

NO COLOUR = Provincial    **GREEN** = Municipal    **ORANGE** = Federal    **PURPLE** = Other Agencies

Barriers to Moving Out of Poverty	Government Roles and Responsibilities
<b>HOUSING</b>	
<p><b>A continued need for affordable and suitable housing for families. For example, available housing is often in areas affected by drugs, alcohol, street violence, etc.</b></p> <p><b>No subsidized housing in remote/rural communities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Province has lead responsibility for housing and, since 2001, has invested more than \$3.6 billion to provide affordable housing for low-income individuals and families. This year, more than 98,000 households will benefit from affordable housing programs (a 20 per cent increase since 2006)</li> <li>• The rental assistance program (RAP) helps families earning less than \$35 thousand/year with money to help with rent payments in the private market</li> <li>• Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) provides low-income seniors (aged 60 plus) with direct cash assistance to subsidize their rent in the private market. As well, a supported housing model that bridges the gap between independent housing and residential care provides 4,376 subsidized living units</li> <li>• In March 2014, the governments of BC and Canada committed to an additional investment of \$300 million over five years (to 2019) to help more British Columbians in need to access affordable housing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communities are unable to access the funding required for homeless shelters</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since launching Housing Matters BC in 2006, the Province has expanded the range of housing options and doubled the number of provincially-subsidized apartments and shelter spaces available for the homeless.</li> <li>• The Province invested approximately \$185 million last year to support more than 11,000 emergency shelter spaces, subsidized units and rent supplements for those who were homeless across British Columbia. This includes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately \$70 million to fund 1,850 permanent year-round shelter beds in 34 communities – more than double the number that existed in 2001</li> <li>• And up to \$1.5 million to provide more than 1,100 temporary shelter spaces during extreme weather in over 80 communities across B.C.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>A lack of housing on- and off-reserve for Aboriginal families</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 200 off-reserve units have been built to provide safe, secure and culturally appropriate housing for youth, women, elders and those struggling with addictions</li> <li style="background-color: #fde9d9;">• Federal government has responsibility for housing on reserves</li> <li style="background-color: #d9ead3;">• Since 2012, the Aboriginal Housing Management Association has been overseeing more than 4,200 units, including emergency shelters and the Aboriginal Outreach Program. Between April 1, 2012 and March 31, 2013, more than 1,750 Aboriginal people found stable housing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lack of understanding about available housing supports</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the Community Partnership Initiative program, the Province provides advice, referrals to partnership opportunities and interim financing, and arranges long-term financing for non-profit societies to create self-sustaining, affordable housing developments</li> </ul>
<p><b>Difficulty accessing funding to bring housing up to acceptable standards</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the Home Adaptations for Independence program, the Province provides up to \$20,000 per home to help low-income seniors and people with disabilities to finance home modifications</li> </ul>

NUTRITION / FOOD SECURITY / HEALTH CARE	
<p>Families can't always access fresh, nutritious food</p> <p>Lack of education on the benefits of healthy eating and cultivating one's own food</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since 2012, the Ministry of Health has provided \$4.75 million to the BC Association of Farmers' Markets to implement the Farmers Market Nutrition Coupon Program (FMNCP), which provides subsidies in the form of coupons to low-income pregnant women, families with children and seniors to buy select BC foods at local farmers' markets. FMNCP participants must receive nutrition and skill-building classes to be eligible to receive coupons. As of 2014, the FMNCP will be operating in over 40 communities in BC</li> <li>• Since 2011, the Ministry of Health has funded \$1.57 million to the Canadian Diabetes Association to implement the Food Skills for Families (FSF) program. FSF teaches healthy eating and cooking skills, with a focus on reaching Aboriginal, new immigrant, Punjabi, low-income families and seniors. The success of this program demonstrates that building cooking and food preparation skills among adults improves healthy eating behaviors for participants and families</li> </ul>
<p>Food banks are not accessible to all families (e.g. no transportation, restricted criteria, limited allocation of food, limited hours of operation, etc.)</p> <p>Food bank offerings are not always culturally appropriate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food banks are often run by not-for-profit organizations based on the needs of individuals and families in the region</li> </ul>
<p>Access to family doctors is a challenge in many communities; families are often forced to use walk-in clinics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government partnered with the Doctors of BC with the goal to provide every British Columbian with a family doctor by 2015 through the GP for Me program. In February 2013, government announced \$132.4 million to further expand the program across the province</li> </ul>
<p>A lack of specialized medical services in remote communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some regions of the province have experienced challenges with the recruitment and retention of specialist physicians, and the BC government allocated \$20M through the Physician Master Agreement to help address these issues:</li> <li>• Government has also established programs in the North and Interior to attract, retain and train doctors to work in rural areas, providing access to the same high-quality health care for all British Columbians. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2004, the Province established the Northern medical program to educate more doctors in Northern BC, graduating its first class in 2008</li> <li>• In 2012, the government opened the Southern Medical Program in Kelowna</li> <li>• The Rural Physicians for BC program provides new and additional supports for rural communities that have experienced the most difficulty in recruiting and retaining physicians</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Nurse Practitioners also play an important part in ensuring rural British Columbians receive local primary care. Currently there are 252 Nurse Practitioners registered throughout BC increasing access in locations like Burns Lake, Lillooet, Bella Bella and Sayward</li> <li>• The Province continues to work with Doctors of BC to support specialists and improve British Columbians' access to physician services</li> <li>• The Travel Assistance Program (TAP BC) is available to eligible BC residents who are required to travel outside their home community to obtain non-emergency, physician-referred specialist medical care. TAP is a corporate partnership between the Ministry of Health and private transportation carriers</li> </ul>
<p>Service providers need to be more aware of early intervention and prevention services for people at risk of mental health problems and addictions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ministries of Health and Children and Family Development are jointly accountable for mental-health and substance-use programs and services. <i>Healthy Minds, Healthy People: A Ten Year Plan to Address Mental Health and Substance Use in British Columbia</i> aims to address these issues across demographic groups</li> </ul>

CHILDCARE	
Limited child care spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Provincial Office for the Early Years, established in January 2013, has overall responsibility for the Early Years Strategy. It will work across ministries to ensure that the early years services government provides are integrated and seamless for families</li> <li>• The Ministry of Children and Family Development will invest \$292 million for child care in 2014-15, a 38 per cent increase since 2000-01</li> <li>• Approximately 104,000 licensed child-care spaces are funded in communities around the province</li> <li>• Through the BC Early Years Strategy, MCFD is investing \$32 million over the next two years to create up to 2,000 new licensed child-care spaces throughout the province, with the goal of opening up to 13,000 new spaces over the next eight years</li> <li>• MCFD will also develop an online child-care registry and waitlist system that will make information about child-care spaces more readily available to parents</li> </ul>
Daycare affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To make child care more affordable for families, government is introducing the BC Early Childhood Tax Benefit starting in 2015. The benefit will provide \$146 million annually to approximately 180,000 families with children under the age of six years (up to \$660 a year per child)</li> <li>• MCFD also provides child care subsidies to help low-income families afford child care, helping approximately 50,000 children each year</li> <li>• The federal government provides a Universal Child Care Benefit of \$100/month per child under the age of six</li> <li>• The Canada Child Tax Benefit is a non-taxable amount paid monthly to help eligible families with the cost of raising children under 18 years of age</li> <li>• The National Child Benefit is a joint initiative of the federal, provincial and territorial governments, and First Nations, which helps prevent/reduce the depth of child poverty</li> </ul>
Lack of before- and after-school care programs for families with children with disabilities and behavioral challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before- and after-school programs are run at the discretion of individual schools and school districts. Eg. In Surrey, the After School Sport and Arts Initiative is funding a three- year after-school disability sport programming pilot</li> <li>• The Early Years Strategy will focus on creating up to 2,000 new licenced child care spaces over the next two years. The focus of these spaces will be on under-served areas of the province and on school grounds, where children can smoothly transition from early years programs, to the classroom, to after-school care</li> </ul>
Lack of specialized daycares for shift workers and those people who work outside normal business hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decisions around hours/days of service are set by individual service providers, which can be non-profit (including local governments) or private (including sole proprietors, corporations, etc.)</li> <li>• The Province supports many child care providers to deliver extended weekdays and/or weekend care, including care before 6am, care after 7pm, overnight care, care on statutory holidays and on weekends</li> </ul>
TRANSPORTATION	
Limited or no transit services available in all communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Province, through BC Transit, partners with local governments to provide transit in BC outside of Metro Vancouver. In 2012/13, the Province provided \$89 million in operating funding</li> </ul>
Limited or non-existent transportation for Aboriginal people living on reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal government has responsibility for transportation services on reserves</li> </ul>
A lack of affordable transit services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through Bike BC, the Province is partnering with local governments to invest a further \$2.28 million to expand and build cycling lanes, trails and paths in the coming year. Since 2008, the Province has committed over \$14 million to Bike BC</li> <li>• Ten BC Transit communities offer discounted family travel, such as free travel on weekends for children under 12 who are accompanied by a parent or guardian</li> </ul>

<p>Families living on low income are not eligible for bus passes or cannot afford to purchase bus passes and use existing income to pay for transportation costs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SDSI's BC Bus Pass Program ensures that 90,000 people on disability or income assistance, as well as low-income seniors, have unlimited access to public transit for only \$45 a year – a \$50-million annual investment</li> </ul>
<p>Limited transportation for medical purposes for rural/remote communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Travel Assistance Program (TAP BC) is available to eligible BC residents who are required to travel outside their home community to obtain non-emergency, physician-referred specialist medical care. TAP is a corporate partnership between the Ministry of Health and private transportation carriers</li> </ul>
<p><b>EDUCATION / LIFE SKILLS / JOB TRAINING</b></p>	
<p>Concerns about high school students in rural/remote communities not receiving necessary skills/training needed for jobs/university/trades</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Province funds a number of programs for at-risk and vulnerable youth through the Ministry of Justice</li> <li>• The National Child Benefit is a joint initiative of the federal, provincial and territorial governments, and First Nations, which helps prevent/reduce the depth of child poverty</li> <li>• The Province has lead responsibility for K-12 and post-secondary education. In addition, a number of complementary skills training programs and services are funded at the provincial and federal level</li> <li>• Many of these programs are specifically designed to help youth successfully access the labour market, including the skilled trades</li> <li>• In 2012/13, more than 8,000 young British Columbians participated in our youth employment programs, and in 2013/14 the Province invested almost \$17 million in similar programs. Some of these programs include: BladeRunners, which provides unemployed youth at risk – 70 per cent of whom are Aboriginal – with job readiness training and on-the-job work experience</li> <li>• For students looking to get a jump start on a career in the trades there are the Accelerated Credit Enrolment in Industry Training (ACE-IT), and Secondary School Apprenticeship (SSA) offered through the Industry Training Authority in partnership with secondary schools across the province. The BC Ministry of Education provides approximately \$19M annually to support the ACE-IT and SSA programs</li> <li>• The Youth Mean Business program is designed to get unemployed youth the entrepreneurial skills they need to successfully create their own business</li> <li>• The Youth Skills BC program helps unemployed youth improve their existing skills and gain new ones through practical experience and training</li> <li>• The WorkBC.ca site has also been redesigned to make it more mobile-friendly and engage youth in exploring their career options and better understanding and prepare for entry into the labour force</li> <li>• 85 WorkBC Employment Services Centres are located province wide and deliver the Employment Program of BC (EPBC), which provides services and supports to unemployed British Columbians</li> <li>• More than 146,000 British Columbians have received services through WorkBC Employment Services Centres since the EPBC was launched on April 2, 2012</li> <li>• StudentAid BC provides access to grants and scholarships to help with the cost of education for eligible students</li> <li>• In 2012/13, B.C. provided \$37 million through the BC Loan Reduction Program – a completion grant benefitting almost 24,000 students</li> <li>• B.C. has developed programs that reward students who finish their studies – either reducing or forgiving their loans to make it easier for graduates to get out of debt faster</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Loan Forgiveness Program forgives 100 per cent of BC Student Loans over a three-year period when eligible professionals – such as nurses (LPNs), nurse practitioners, midwives, pharmacists and doctors – agree to work at a publicly funded health care facility in an under-served BC community</li> <li>• In addition, all students benefit from education-related tax credits, savings programs (RESPs) and a broader range of scholarships and bursaries</li> <li>• The ministry has committed to investing \$331 million in employment and labour market programs for 2014-15, with more than \$301 million recovered from the federal government through the Labour Market Development Agreement</li> <li>• The LMDA transfers to BC the responsibility for programs and services aimed at helping EI-eligible clients prepare for and enter the workforce</li> <li>• The Province just launched <i>BC's Skills for Jobs Blueprint: Re-engineering Education and Training</i> so that young British Columbians can capitalize on the career opportunities most needed by BC's growing economy</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The federal government is responsible for funding skills training in provinces and territories through the new Canada Job Fund, which replaces the former Labour Market Agreement.</li> <li>• The Canada Job Fund will provide BC with \$65 million per year over a six-year period. This year, BC is obligated to put aside \$9.7 million of these funds for the Canada Job Grant – a subset of the Fund – that pays for specifically employer-driven training</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lack of services that provide life skills and job skills</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CALP – Community Adult Literacy Program – provides support for community-based programs that deliver literacy programs to adults</li> <li>• Government provides support for the Aboriginal Training for Employment Program, which assists Aboriginal people to transition into sustainable employment through training programs and employment placements</li> <li>• Since 2011, three new mines have opened, five more are under construction or permitted, and the Province has approved six major expansions to existing mines, creating more than 1,100 new jobs</li> <li>• The five LNG plants that are being proposed are expected to deliver over \$1 trillion in GDP benefits to BC by 2046 and LNG means more than 100,000 new jobs throughout our province, once the five proposed plants are fully operational</li> <li>• Thanks to this and other economic growth, BC can expect over one million job openings by 2020, and over 40 per cent of these jobs will need trades or technical training</li> <li>• Right now there are over 35,000 people in the trades training system – double the number since 2004</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many programs that focus on life skills and training for youth are delivered through community partnerships. For example, in Surrey, the Province funds the REACH program – Recreation, Employment Readiness, After School, Citizenship, Healthy Lifestyles – that is delivered through a partnership between the Surrey school district, the RCMP, the City of Surrey and the YMCA</li> </ul>

COORDINATION, COLLABORATION AND AWARENESS / ACCESS TO SERVICES	
<p>Limited access to culturally sensitive and responsive services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities best know the needs of their citizens and local governments often partner with provincial and federal governments to deliver specialized supports and services</li> <li>• WelcomeBC has enhanced its programs and launched new services and initiatives to help newcomers settle into B.C., including services and information about English language courses, employment, health, and education services, as well as helping BC meet a critical labour market need by bringing immigrants and employers together</li> <li>• Ongoing work to negotiate treaties with First Nations peoples supports economic development, as well as renewed attachments to culture, language and tradition</li> <li>• In 2011/12, British Columbia received \$105.5 million from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), which included funding for settlement services (\$92.2 million), enhanced language training (\$11.8 million), anti-racism programs (\$0.6 million) and the immigration portal (\$0.9 million). BC also received \$7.1 million for administration</li> <li>• As of April 1, 2014, settlement services are now provided directly by CIC. To smooth the transition of settlement services, CIC and the BC government have prepared a two-year Transition Settlement Agreement dated April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2016. The agreement outlines the use of deferred federal funding in BC to support the transition of settlement services</li> <li>• The Province now has a limited role in settlement services since the federal government resumed administration and delivery of programming in the province. The vast majority of settlement services will be delivered by CIC</li> <li>• Under the agreement, Canada has agreed to allow BC to exhaust deferred federal funds from previous years to finance identified service gaps and provincial priorities where appropriate</li> </ul>
<p>Limited availability of multi-language brochures and online translation services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WelcomeBC provides a number of multi-language channels for disseminating information, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online translation services for the BC Newcomers' Guide in 14 languages (2014 coming soon)</li> <li>• Newcomers' Guide instructional videos in 11 languages</li> <li>• Multilingual infographic videos for Provincial Nominee Program and Foreign Qualifications Recognition</li> <li>• Nine multilingual Pre-arrival Guides will be translated into 11 languages</li> <li>• Brochures/rack cards/pocket guides</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Historically, the Province funded settlement agencies that provided information and referrals to help immigrants navigate services and application processes. Now these settlement services are funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada</li> <li>• WelcomeBC BC: Newcomers' Guides are available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local editions, including 12 new 2014 versions</li> <li>• 14 existing versions will be removed from WelcomeBC.ca and updated with settlement information, for a total of 26</li> <li>• A new WelcomeBC Provincial Nominee Program Eligibility Tool is also planned</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>Families continue to be unaware of the services and resources available in their community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation are working closely with community partners to link community poverty reduction strategies with the Family and Youth Partnership (FYP) program.</li> <li>• FYP was introduced in April 2012 to assist young families between 19 -24 on Income assistance and youth leaving care who may require income assistance to find work and a sustainable livelihood. By linking the two programs, government can better identify the barriers being faced by low-income families and what can be done to address them.</li> <li>• Similar to the work of the consultants, Key Workers with FYP provide the practical, hands-on support that families need to help them navigate through the system in order to receive the supports and services they need.</li> <li>• Provincial responses to date include the development of 326 StrongStart BC programs, offering free early learning programs for children under six and their caregivers – and, in the process, connecting families to resources and supports in their communities</li> <li>• The Provincial Office for the Early Years improves coordination and access for families</li> </ul>
<p>Better communication and collaboration are needed across social service agencies, and across government mandates and jurisdictions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are a range of programs and services offered in communities that provide practical support to families.</li> <li>• Community services organizations in many BC communities have found ways to better serve individuals and families in need. For example, the City of Surrey, along with local services organizations, produced a series of brochures to help connect citizens to available services in the region</li> </ul>
<p><b>STIGMA OF POVERTY</b></p>	
<p>A general lack of awareness/ understanding about the issues and impacts of poverty</p> <p>Families feel judged, penalized and left without resources and services</p> <p>Families experience negative stereotypes and become socially isolated</p> <p>People do not want to be identified as poor so remain hidden</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governments have no mandated role in addressing stigma. However, as with other social issues, such as bullying, this is an area where all levels of government – and of society – can make a difference</li> </ul>

## Next Steps

The past two years have provided a great opportunity for better understanding the issues facing families living in poverty today – along with the relative capacities of communities to address them. While there are activities occurring at all levels of government, clearly more needs to be done.

We recognize the individual strengths that all parties bring to the table. Municipal, provincial and federal governments all make a difference, but the greatest strength comes from working together – at all levels of government, and in partnership with community services organizations – to identify and address key issues for B.C. families. We all have a significant role to play.

Fraser-Nicola MLA Jackie Tegart has been asked to act as a poverty liaison. She will visit each pilot community and work with all levels of government and community organizations in order to move these community plans forward.

The Province will continue to work with municipal, federal and community services partners to build on the foundation of the work to date, including MCFD's work with UBCM. Priorities include:

### **Hosting a Second Community Poverty Reduction Strategies Stakeholder Forum**

Building off the first Poverty Forum held February 22, 2013, this forum will bring key players together from community organizations, service delivery agencies and government, with a focus on what is working, what is not and will help inspire innovation and collaboration.

### **Targeting initiatives towards safe affordable housing, food security and overall health**

Work to date has underlined that meeting these basic needs is a critical first step in helping families move out of poverty. The Province and the federal government recently committed an additional \$300 million to help more British Columbians in need to access affordable housing between 2014 and 2019.

### **MCFD will work with its cross-government partners to profile the issue of poverty to the existing provincial cross-ministry ADM social policy steering committee**

This will help improve the coordination of the wide range of supports and services available from ministries, including: Health; Education; Transportation; Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation; Social Development and Social Innovation; Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training; and Children and Family Development.

### **Working with major industry and small business to increase employment opportunities**

Through the BC Jobs Plan, the Province will continue to work with community partners to advance economic development, skills training and job growth.

### **Supporting the MCFD Family Consultants in each community to raise awareness about available programs and services**

This could include broadening the access points for one-on-one support beyond MCFD. For example, the Consultants could work out of libraries, recreation centres, municipal offices, etc. This could also include working with local governments and community organizations to support the creation of a series of brochures that outline key supports and services available for B.C. families. These brochures may include Housing, Health, Education and Skills Training, Transportation, and Child Care and could be available at public places like libraries, rec centres, community centres, food bank and churches.

## Part II: Community Poverty Reduction Strategies

### Community Action Plans (January 2013)

The following Community Action Plans were developed by Family Consultants in the pilot communities, in partnership with UBCM, business, municipal government and community organizations. Some of the plans built on what was already in place in these communities; others were developed from the ground up. Communities saw value in putting together these plans – or building on existing plans – and working to identify key barriers for families in their communities. These plans have been implemented to varying degrees. The Province is committed to continuing to work with community partners to find ways to raise awareness about – and leverage – existing supports for individuals and families in these communities and throughout B.C.

These Community Action Plans are representative of communities’ early work towards addressing issues related to poverty in their respective communities. In working with MCFD’s Family Consultants since May 2012, much was learned by both the communities and MCFD – information that will help inform future strategies and action.

<b>COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN – CRANBROOK</b>			
<b>COORDINATION OF SERVICES</b>			
<i>Short-Term Actions: To create a forum for social service agencies to collaborate and share perspectives regarding community issues</i>			
<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Milestones / Key Tasks</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
A forum for agencies to come together to discuss common issues in the community and share their perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinvent the monthly meeting of the “Brown Bag Lunch” to provide a common meeting point for agencies. Agencies will be invited and encouraged to participate in 1 hour of round table discussion and 1 hour of professional development</li> </ul>	2012-09-30	Community Connected
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize lunch meetings to look at the demographics and trends to better understand –the families affected by poverty</li> </ul>	2012-09-30	
<b>ACCESS / AWARENESS OF SERVICES</b>			
<i>Short-Term Actions: To lead families to resources by a variety of means approaching the access issue from many angles</i>			
<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Milestones / Key Tasks</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
Supports to lead families to resources services by a variety of means approaching the access issue from many angles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create an accessible resource binders with information on service agencies, and make them available at a variety of public venues (various agencies, library, schools, Cranbrook Rec-plex, malls, etc.)</li> </ul>	TBD	Community partners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop process and tools to support agencies providing links to other agencies</li> </ul>	TBD	Community partners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Map that has been completed in Cranbrook needs to be available in the community and in visible places (downtown, both malls, library, Recplex, etc.)</li> </ul>	TBD	Community partners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2008 Cranbrook “Survival Guide” to be revamped and include poverty resources (where to go for a free shower, where to look for housing, etc.)</li> </ul>	TBD	Community partners

## STIGMA OF POVERTY

**Short-Term Actions:** *To address the fact that some families feel they cannot access services due to stigma around who they are*

Deliverables	Milestones / Key Tasks	Target Date	Responsible
The community has a better understanding and acceptance of poverty in the community, so that families to feel accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To show the faces of poverty in our community through newspaper articles, posters, presentations and community meetings</li> </ul>	2012-12-31	Living Wage and other agencies presenting "Face of poverty"

**Short-Term Actions:** *To make school supplies available to children whose families cannot afford them*

Deliverables	Milestones / Key Tasks	Target Date	Responsible
The business sector to sponsor a school so that school supplies are available to all children in need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approach the business sector through contact with the Chamber of Commerce and presentations</li> </ul>	TBD	TBD
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish supports to provide a backpack of school supplies for each child in need in Cranbrook</li> </ul>	2013-08-31	TBD
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Families will be able to approach the business sector or school prior to the first day of school so that each of their children in need will have a good start to the school year</li> </ul>	2013-08-31	TBD

## HOUSING

**Long-Term Actions:** *Address the limited spaces for families to live that are affordable*

Deliverables	Milestones / Key Tasks	Target Date	Responsible
A single service to provide well screened housing for families, reducing the number of steps involved for families when looking for housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a central registry for families to research housing that will include community partners helping families to complete housing applications</li> </ul>	2012-11-30	TBD
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with landlords on the stigma associated with poverty</li> </ul>	TBD	TBD
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a central place for landlords to connect and find tenants</li> </ul>	TBD	TBD
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create incentives for landlords to rent to families</li> </ul>	TBD	TBD
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a listing of mother-in-law suites</li> </ul>	TBD	TBD

## COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN – KAMLOOPS

### ACCESS TO SERVICES

**Short-Term Actions:** *Current services are often difficult to access for families impacted by poverty*

Deliverables	Milestones / Key Tasks	Target Date	Responsible
Families report improved experiences with service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine changes processes and how services are provided to be more supportive, compassionate and facilitative services for clients</li> </ul>	TBD	Adolescent Outreach Counsellor, Phoenix Centre
Allied services work more closely together and provide a more seamless service to those in need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with frontline workers to explore how processes could be changed to provide more seamless and supportive services</li> </ul>	TBD	Coordinator, Kamloops Homelessness Action Plan Legislative Poverty Awareness

## EDUCATION (LIFE SKILLS TRAINING)

Short-Term Actions: *Create awareness in the importance of life skills is needed amongst service providers*

Deliverables	Milestones / Key Tasks	Target Date	Responsible
Provide people with life skills including functional literacy, functional math, independent living skills, personal development, job skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community to advocate for more life skills training programs</li> <li>Develop awareness amongst service providers as to the importance of life skills</li> </ul>	2013-03-31  2013-03-31	Community Development Worker, United Way  Chair, MCFD Community Poverty Strategy Consultant

## HEALTH / FOOD / HOUSING / COORDINATION OF SERVICES

Short-Term Actions: *Begin to address the relationship between affording housing and food especially for the Aboriginal community*

Deliverables	Milestones / Key Tasks	Target Date	Responsible
Improved families access to fresh nutritious food is improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community collaboration with local growers and distributors for incentive options to provide produce to families in poverty</li> </ul>	2013-03-31	Family Response Worker, White Buffalo Aboriginal and Metis Health Society
Families have begun to gain a better understanding of the nutritional needs of their families and reflect this in their choices of diet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the cultivation of community gardens</li> <li>Provide education to target groups on the benefits of healthy eating and cultivating their own food</li> </ul>	2013-03-31 2013-03-31	Adolescent Outreach Counsellor, Phoenix Centre
A wider, inter-agency focus in the community on issues of nutrition for those families who are in poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek further collaboration with School District #73 to strengthen support for students from families where poverty is an issue</li> <li>Create stronger working alliances between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal services for those who are in poverty or homeless</li> <li>Target unique issues that impact upon the Aboriginal communities</li> </ul>	2013-03-31  2013-03-31  2013-03-31	Executive Director, Kamloops Elizabeth Fry Society

## COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN – NEW WESTMINSTER

### ACCESS / AWARENESS OF SERVICES

Short-Term Actions: *Assist clients at the first points of contacts to complete forms required for accessing services and supports*

Deliverables	Milestones / Key Tasks	Target Date	Responsible
Clients assisted at the first point of contact to complete forms required for accessing services and supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizations to identify people who are willing to help clients complete the forms required for accessing supports and services utilizing the help of volunteers and the assistance of other organizations.</li> <li>Process review in one year, to determine if clients are getting the assistance they need at first point of contact</li> </ul>	2013-01-31  TBD	TBD  TBD

<b>Short-Term Actions: <i>Provide multilingual services to clients and cultural awareness training for service providers</i></b>			
Diverse clients are able to access a range of services and supports that are culturally sensitive and responsive	• Provide multilingual services to clients	2013-03-31	Settlement Services, School District #40 and MCFD
	• Provide cultural awareness training for service providers	2013-03-31	
	• Agencies involved in supporting diverse low income families in New Westminster will assist with organizing workshops/forums in the community designed to improve cultural awareness	2013-03-31	
<b>Long-Term Actions: <i>Update multi-language brochures and online translation services</i></b>			
Update multi-language brochures and online translation services	• Translators identified within service agencies to assist with translating written material	2013-03-31	Settlement Services, School District #40 and MCFD
	• Multi-language brochures updated	2013-03-31	
	• On-line translation services updated	2013-03-31	
<b>Long-Term Actions: <i>Ensure service providers have training in cultural sensitivity</i></b>			
Deliverables	Milestones / Key Tasks	Target Date	Responsible
Service agencies provide workshops for their staff and other services providers focusing on culturally appropriate communication and listening skills	• Workshops established for services providers focusing on culturally appropriate communication and listening skills	2013-03-31	Settlement Services and School District #40
	• Follow up in one year to ensure staff are receiving training	TBD	TBD
<b>Long-Term Actions: <i>Identify first points of contact in community and determine gaps in service</i></b>			
Vulnerable people will have more awareness of the services available to them and easier access to this knowledge	• Community organizations will identify people working at first points of contact and enlist their assistance to identify and mitigate the gaps they observe for the clients	2013-03-31	The hospitality project and School District #40 identified they are working on this, MCFD will assist
	• Clients will be equipped with services and information in various languages and use overarching systems/ website to keep up to date and identify gaps	2013-03-31	
<b>COORDINATION OF SERVICES</b>			
<b>Short-Term Actions: <i>Refer to the New Westminster Homeless Coalition Interagency Collaboration Model to develop a plan for case management</i></b>			
Deliverables	Milestones / Key Tasks	Target Date	Responsible
A collaborative and coordinated environment amongst the agencies that do not experience the strain of competing for service funding	• Senior City Planner to provide a copy of the New Westminster Homeless Coalition Interagency Collaboration Model and report to MCFD and New Westminster Chamber of Commerce.	TBD	Senior City Planner



CONNECTION TO FAMILY: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE			
Short-Term Action: <i>Address the major concern regarding domestic violence in the community of Port Hardy</i>			
Deliverables	Milestones / Key Tasks	Target Date	Responsible
Increase community awareness about domestic violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish an "Action Committee for Domestic Violence" to work on various initiatives to promote awareness of domestic violence through organizing/hosting educational seminars, putting together information packages to hand out to various agencies and churches and running articles in the local paper</li> <li>North Island Crisis and Counseling Centre will liaise with women centre staff and other community partners to establish action committee</li> <li>Identify a location to host regular meetings</li> <li>Articles will be published in the local gazette newspaper and Band newsletters that will promote awareness about domestic violence and where to access help (support services, online resources etc)</li> </ul>	2013-01-31  2013-01-31  TBD 2013-01-31	North Island Crisis and Counselling Centre
Assist victims and community members to access support services or appropriate referrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to information materials to print and distribute in community and through organizing/hosting educational seminars</li> <li>Reinstate "Respectful Relationships Workshops" for Domestic Violence offenders</li> </ul>	2013-01-31  2013-01-31	
Connect offenders to support services so as to decrease their risk to reoffend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have offenders complete "Respectful Relationships Workshop" as a component of their sentence/rehabilitation plan</li> </ul>	2013-01-31	
EDUCATION			
Short-Term Actions: <i>Ensuring students finishing high school have the necessary skills needed for jobs/university or trades programs</i>			
Deliverables	Milestones / Key Tasks	Target Date	Responsible
Career Day at the local high school with an increased focus on job and life skills to be held Spring 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a committee of community and school district members to help plan a career day at the local high school</li> <li>Engage community members to participate in planning the career day</li> <li>Incorporate different skill sets into career day such as financial literacy and life skills for living independently</li> <li>Consult with local businesses and community agencies to incorporate their knowledge of work skills needed</li> </ul>	2013-01-31  2013-01-31  2013-01-31  2013-01-31	North Island Crisis and Counselling Centre  Aboriginal Education Advisor from North Island College

<b>HOUSING</b>			
<i>Long-Term Actions: Address a lack of adequate and accessible housing for low income families</i>			
<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Milestones / Key Tasks</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
Develop a Port Hardy Action Committee for Housing focused specifically on the community of Port Hardy  Apply for seed funding through Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Port Hardy Action Committee for Housing. There is a regional housing and homelessness committee but not a committee specific to Port Hardy. By focusing on one community it will be easier to support a housing project</li> </ul>	2013-01-31	North Island Crisis and Counselling Centre
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage people with expertise in different areas to be part of committee (landlords who know how to do home renovations, bank reps/financial planners that are proficient in project financing, city council members who are well versed in zoning and by-laws for housing projects) etc.</li> </ul>	2013-01-31	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify affordable housing options for low-income families</li> </ul>	2013-04-30	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and gain the support of people who are skilled at writing proposals</li> <li>Gain support from the Mayor, Town Council and the community to move a housing initiative forward</li> </ul>	2013-04-30	

<b>COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN – PRINCE GEORGE</b>			
<b>HOUSING</b>			
<i>Short-Term Actions: To establish evidence based information regarding the spectrum of housing needs in Prince George</i>			
<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Milestones / Key Tasks</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
Identify the issues for safe affordable housing for low income families in Prince George	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring together evidence that will support expert knowledge for the following three topics:</li> <li>Identify the nature of the issue</li> <li>How it affects different populations</li> <li>Determine what is currently in place</li> </ul>	TBD	BC Housing, Community Partners Addressing Homelessness, Community Development Institute, University of Northern British Columbia, Métis Housing, Prince George Real-Estate Board

Develop a plan to address the relevant issues surrounding safe affordable housing for low income families in Prince George	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A plan to address the relevant issues surrounding safe affordable housing for low income families in Prince George</li> </ul>	2013-01-31	BC Housing, Community Partners Addressing Homelessness, Community Development Institute, University of Northern British Columbia, Métis Housing, Prince George Real-Estate Board
Peruse a living wage strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify a living wage in Prince George</li> </ul>	2013-01-31	The United Way

### TRANSPORTATION

**Short-Term Actions:** *To establish evidence based information regarding the spectrum of transportation needs in Prince George*

Deliverables	Milestones / Key Tasks	Target Date	Responsible
Establish evidence based information regarding the spectrum of transportation needs in Prince George	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring together evidence that will support expert knowledge for the following three topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the nature of the issue</li> <li>• How it affects different populations</li> <li>• Determine what is currently in place</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	TBD	The Prince George Poverty Strategy Working Group
A strategy to address the relevant issues surrounding transportation for low income families in Prince George	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy to address the issues surrounding transportation</li> </ul>	2013-09-30	The Prince George Poverty Strategy Working Group

### COORDINATION OF SERVICES

**Short-Term Actions:** *To establish evidence based information regarding the collaboration and coordination between agencies serving low income families in Prince George*

Deliverables	Milestones / Key Tasks	Target Date	Responsible
Establish evidence based information regarding the collaboration and coordination between agencies serving low income families in Prince George	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring together evidence that will support expert knowledge for the following three topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the nature of the issue</li> <li>• How it affects different populations</li> <li>• Determine what is currently in place</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	2013-09-30	The Prince George Poverty Strategy Working Group
A strategy to address the relevant issues surrounding the collaboration and coordination between agencies serving low income families in Prince George	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy to address the issues surrounding the collaboration and coordination between agencies serving low-income families in Prince George</li> </ul>	2013-09-30	The Prince George Poverty Strategy Working Group

<b>COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN – STEWART</b>			
<b>TRANSPORTATION / HEALTH</b>			
Short-Term Actions: <i>Conclude the 2-year conversation with the Northern Health Authority (NHA) to confirm the plan for subsidized medical transportation out of Stewart including specialists' appointments, i.e. optometrist, mental health, drug abuse, etc.</i>			
Deliverables	Milestones / Key Tasks	Target Date	Responsible
A business plan for a public transportation business in the community developed and call for proposals to take on the business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A business plan for public transportation is available to members of the community interested in starting a public transportation business.</li> </ul>		Mayor of Stewart Councillor Transportation portfolio City Councillor and Healthy Communities Committee Chair
<b>COLLABORATION OF SERVICES</b>			
Short-Term Actions: <i>Create a formalized group, "Stewart Community Services Committee", with the purpose of sharing information about services, resources, events and issues in the community and providing support to one another</i>			
Deliverables	Milestones / Key Tasks	Target Date	Responsible
Establishment of the Stewart Community Services Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of the Stewart Community Services Committee</li> <li>Establish common mandate, vision and goals for the group and meet on regular basis</li> <li>Establish a comprehensive approach to dissemination of information in the community (monthly eNewsletter, etc)</li> </ul>	2012-10-31	RCMP, Stewart Health Center, Bear Valley School, District of Stewart, Chamber of Commerce, Public Library, Stewart Historical Society, Arts Council, mining and construction companies, Recycle Group  Chair, MCFD Community Poverty Strategy

<b>FOOD</b>			
<b>Short-Term Actions: <i>Initiate a school breakfast program</i></b>			
<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Milestones / Key Tasks</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
Students from low-income families have nutritious breakfasts and snacks while at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organize a team responsible for the breakfast program</li> <li>Determine funding for the breakfast program</li> <li>Implement the breakfast program</li> </ul>	TBD	Parents Advisory Committee and the Bear Valley School staff  Bear Valley School Principal  Breakfast Program Team  Breakfast Program Team
		TBD	
		TBD	
<b>Short-Term Actions: <i>Implement a food bank program in the community</i></b>			
The low-income families have access to the food bank program and be able to feed themselves better	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey the low-income families on the kinds and amounts of food necessary for them on a weekly and monthly basis; find a storage place for non-perishable food; organize a process of distribution</li> <li>Create system and form for families to order food</li> <li>Establish a storage location for non-perishable foods</li> <li>Organize a process for the distribution of food</li> </ul>	TBD  TBD  TBD  2013-03-31	Community volunteers Community Emergency Fund and Christmas Hampers program  Community Emergency Fund
<b>CHILD CARE</b>			
<b>Short-Term Actions: <i>Develop a plan for child care services (ages 0-5) in the community of Stewart</i></b>			
<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Milestones / Key Tasks</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
A business plan available to members of the community interested in starting a daycare facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate what is needed to organize a community childcare facility</li> <li>Connect the business planner from Stewart with the from MCFD childcare for the North</li> <li>Find individuals interested in operating a daycare facility</li> <li>Promoting the development of early childhood education in the community</li> </ul>	TBD  TBD  TBD  2013-04-30	Delegated member of the Healthy Communities Committee  Healthy Communities Committee Chair

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/ TRANSPORTATION / HOUSING / INCOME / SUPPORT /

IS HOW WE  
END POVERTY  
IN SURREY

The City of Surrey and its local partner agencies have developed their own Poverty Reduction Plan, which they are now working to implement. A copy of this is how we end poverty in Surrey can be found at: [www.surrey.ca/files/Surrey\\_Poverty\\_Reduction\\_Plan\\_Web\\_Version.pdf](http://www.surrey.ca/files/Surrey_Poverty_Reduction_Plan_Web_Version.pdf)

## Family Consultant Status Reports (March 2014)

The Family Consultant Status Reports for all seven pilot communities provide a snapshot of the work of the Family Consultant in their respective communities as of March 2014. Family Consultants produce regular updates that provide an overview of the activities they are involved with at the community level, as well as their direct work with families. Community reporting focuses on community meetings and partnerships, community strengths and initiatives underway, and local and systemic issues and challenges.

Note: a new Service Request Form was recently implemented that will allow for more comprehensive reporting and evaluation of the direct work with families. Information obtained from the work with families and community is then analyzed and used to identify the larger systemic themes and barriers.

## Community And Family Status Reports

<b>CRANBROOK</b>	
<b>Community Engagement, Partnerships and Strategic Linkages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly attendance to the Urban Governance Meetings which brings community partners together to address issues of poverty and homelessness.</li> <li>• Monthly attendance to the Cranbrook Social Planning Society Meetings which brings community partners together to address overall community planning.</li> <li>• Monthly attendance to Early Childhood Development meetings.</li> <li>• Working in partnership with the Social Planning Society to create a multi-layered web-based resource of community services.</li> <li>• Meets and works with a range community service providers to identify issues/ challenges facing families living in poverty and identifying opportunities to collaborate.</li> <li>• Working with Salvation Army and local school to develop a weekend food backpack program for students.</li> <li>• Presentation to City Council scheduled for April 7, 2014. Discussions are underway with the Mayor about how to move the strategy forward in the community. Next steps may include re-establishing of the Poverty Reduction Working Group and reviewing the original action plan that was developed 2012.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Issues/ Themes Identified</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing: emergency shelter closes as of March 2014; funding for a multi-unit housing complex for low income individuals and families was denied.</li> <li>• Health: loss of two family doctors in the community</li> <li>• Food/Nutrition: no place available to obtain food for dietary restrictions; food bank often receives outdated food</li> <li>• Legal: lack of program or resource to assist families with court processes (filling out applications, etc).</li> <li>• Childcare: Families cannot afford childcare costs and no childcare available for evening or shift workers</li> </ul>

<p><b>Family Support/ Referrals</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked with 8 families</li> <li>• Supported a family by obtaining local transit tickets so the family could get to/ from appointments and to/from the grocery store as they had no other means of transportation.</li> <li>• Assisted parents to develop a plan that would allow them to work from home to take care of their children while also becoming self-sufficient and no longer having to rely on income assistance.</li> <li>• Connected a family with medical services they needed that they could not afford to pay for out of pocket.</li> <li>• Referral to housing outreach program for families requiring low income housing options or facing eviction.</li> <li>• Assisted two families to access activities for their children through Jumpstart and Kidsport.</li> <li>• Provided families with information and the process of court for family and criminal matters.</li> <li>• Located and provided free recreational tickets for families (skating carnival, movie passes, etc).</li> <li>• Provided information to families about healthy food basket, food bank and farmer's market</li> <li>• Connected a family with the local free produce garden for fresh food.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>KAMLOOPS</b></p>	
<p><b>Community Engagement, Partnerships and Strategic Links</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at monthly meetings of the Changing the Face of Poverty Committee which brings community partners together to address issues of poverty and homelessness.</li> <li>• Monthly attendance to the Life Skills Network which is a group of community professionals who meet to address challenges faced by those who are homeless or under threat of homelessness.</li> <li>• Working in partnership with the Social and Community Development Supervisor, City of Kamloops to move the strategy forward in the community.</li> <li>• Member of Home Free Working Group which is a table that carries out system planning for transformative change at the community level.</li> <li>• Meeting and works in partnership with community service providers to identify issues and challenges facing families living in poverty.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community Issues/ Themes Identified</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Furthering education is challenging for single parents with regard to finances and childcare.</li> <li>• Access to sound financial advice and tax preparation for low income families</li> <li>• Single parent wants to prepare for reintegration into workforce, challenges with childcare and transportation and validation of qualifications.</li> <li>• Concern about processed foods at the food bank being close to their expiry dates, and many families do not have freezers for storage.</li> <li>• Available housing has not enough bedrooms for larger families.</li> <li>• Shortage of affordable child care placements.</li> <li>• Access to legal services, support with child support and shared finances.</li> <li>• Expectation that families in need have telephone, cell phone and internet access. Community partners are working on gathering and distributing phones via Family Consultant. Family Consultant also to speak to recycling depots about availability of personal computers and other electronic community devices.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Family Support/ Referrals</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently working with six families. Outcomes for families: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mother of three manages to get child support from ex-partner.</li> <li>• Mother of six secures mental health services for daughter.</li> <li>• Mother of two secures low cost housing in Kamloops and comprehensive package of care to address her mental health and physical health needs.</li> <li>• Mother of one disabled child wins court case against her imminent eviction from rental property and we are currently seeking larger property with a deadline of June.</li> <li>• Cost free storage for household possessions found for a mother who has been evicted from her apartment.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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<p><b>NEW WESTMINSTER</b></p>	
<p><b>Community Engagement, Partnerships and Strategic Linkages</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new consultant assumed the position in July 2013.</li> <li>• Meetings occurred with a range of stakeholders including the School District, MCFD, Community Health, Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation, Immigrant Services Society, the Hospitality Project and Elizabeth Fry Society.</li> <li>• Discussions with key stakeholders suggest that developing a new poverty framework/strategy is the preferred direction rather than using the plan that was developed in 2012.</li> <li>• Attended a New Westminister Social Issues Committee of Council meeting on January 7, 2014. Co- presented with City Social Planner to provide an update on the Poverty Initiative and to get approval for the City's role in developing asset maps and gathering socio-economic data.</li> <li>• A stakeholder meeting was held on February 6, 2014 to re-introduce the poverty initiative and the outcome was support for the development of a new poverty framework. The original action plan would be used as a guiding document.</li> <li>• Background work would include creating a community profile, asset mapping specific to neighborhoods and developing a process of having conversation with families living in poverty to understand their lived experience.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community Issues/ Themes Identified</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable and appropriate housing for families. Families are often living in housing that is not safe, too small, etc.</li> <li>• There are extensive wait lists for B.C. Housing.</li> <li>• Access to affordable, healthy food</li> <li>• Transportation is an issue for families; people do not have the money or use money for transportation that takes away from food.</li> <li>• Informed by a community service provider that some immigrant families are not comfortable going to the MSDSI office. For families who do not speak the language, it can be very intimidating.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Family Support/ Referrals</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently working with 4 families; 2 new referrals received.</li> <li>• New Westminster Family Place has provided a place to meet with families that attend their program. This allows the parent to have some time with the consultant while the child is being supervised by a staff person from family place.</li> <li>• Attended New Westminster Food Bank to connect with families.</li> <li>• Supports/referrals provided to families include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported two families to make application to B.C. Housing</li> <li>• Accompanied and referred 1 family to Kidsport for child to access LaCrosse and parks and recreation subsidy</li> <li>• Referred one family to Kidsport low cost equipment</li> <li>• Contacted two agencies in the community to inquire about volunteer opportunities</li> <li>• Referred one family to Harvest Box</li> <li>• Accompanied a family to Quest (low cost grocery store)</li> <li>• Contacted Pro-Bono Lawyers to locate information for family re: wills. Family was eligible for free services as she was 55</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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<b>PORT HARDY</b>	
<p><b>Community Engagement, Partnerships and Strategic Linkages</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The focus has been on meeting with community leaders to focus/strategize on the topic of poverty and learn about the different programs/projects that were happening in the community to address poverty.</li> <li>• Currently working in partnership with the District of Port Hardy to re-establish a Poverty Reduction Working Group that has a broad representation from community service providers, business, government and the Aboriginal community.</li> <li>• The first meeting was held on April 9, 2014. There was an interest in moving forward with developing a poverty strategy/framework for Port Hardy. One of the first pieces of work will be to develop a community profile that provides an overview of the face of poverty in Port Hardy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community Issues/ Themes Identified:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No subsidized housing, lack of adequate (size, state of repair) housing, lack of affordable housing.</li> <li>• Lack of highly paid employment opportunities</li> <li>• Bus transportation only available during daytime.</li> <li>• Only one grocery store in town; prices are high</li> <li>• Racism</li> <li>• Food Bank does not have lactose-free milk and other alternatives for children/ parents with allergies and sensitivities</li> <li>• Child Tax Benefit delays from Federal gov't due to change of address or children returning from foster care – families must wait 2-3 months while changes are processed</li> <li>• Out of town medical transportation – runs by donation, but clients pressured are expected to make donations.</li> <li>• Access to dental care and specialized medical services.</li> </ul>

<b>Family Support/ Referrals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 new referrals ; 5 families served</li> <li>• Outcomes for families: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assisted a family to obtain a recreation subsidy so child could play soccer</li> <li>• Connected parents with food supplements at Food Bank, Salvation Army and school</li> <li>• Assisted mom to shop for baby formula - when kids sick and mom has no transportation</li> <li>• Provided advice and forms for applying for the Child Tax Benefit.</li> <li>• Made referrals for legal assistance – child custody, maintenance, divorce.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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PRINCE GEORGE	
<b>Community Engagement, Partnerships and Strategic Links</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The original action plan developed in 2012 did not move forward.</li> <li>• The focus has been on meeting with community leaders to provide an update on the status of the initiative and learn about the different program and community tables in the community that address poverty.</li> <li>• The consultant has been meeting with community service providers to recruit families to work with and securing space in the community to meet with families.</li> <li>• Meetings have been held with members of the UBCM Healthy Communities Committee to explore next steps for moving the strategy forward in Prince George.</li> <li>• Plans are underway to reconvene the original Poverty Reduction Working Group. A first meeting date has been set for May 22, 2104.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Issues/ Themes Identified:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are significant issues related to public transportation. Hours of operation are limited and families cannot afford the cost.</li> <li>• Families are having difficulty obtaining a family doctor</li> <li>• Lack of suitable housing. Landlords are not maintaining houses so families are dealing with high heat bills due to old furnaces, etc. Families are using food money to pay for heat costs.</li> <li>• Large waitlists for housing accommodation.</li> </ul>
<b>Family Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with families to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assisted a family to apply for BC Housing subsidies.</li> <li>• Provided information on federal funding to attend school programs and information on continuing education programs.</li> <li>• Provided information on how to access the rental bank program, food security, food hampers, the food coupon program and the good food box.</li> <li>• Provided information about support for business idea/planning/proposals through the Aboriginal Business Development Fund.</li> <li>• Provided information to families on bullying.</li> <li>• Contacted MSDSI and was able to assist single mom to maintain her apartment despite an eviction notice.</li> <li>• Assisted a family to obtain a swim pass.</li> <li>• Assisted a single mom with information/resources to address necessary roof repairs to her home.</li> <li>• Provided information to an Aboriginal woman about how to obtain her status.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>STEWART</b>	
<b>Community Engagement, Partnerships and Strategic Links</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The community of Stewart has been fully engaged in the Poverty Reduction Strategy since it began in 2012.</li> <li>• An outcome of the Community Action Plan is the development of the Stewart Community Connections group, along with a monthly newsletter to community members. This group elected a Stewart Services Committee to oversee the social and mental health issues of our families and individuals.</li> <li>• The committee has evolved into Stewart Services Society (SSS) that will play an important role in forging and developing partnerships with key players.</li> <li>• A community information night was held with representation from MCFD and Northern Health with 1/5 of the Stewart population attended the evening which included a community dinner.</li> <li>• The Stewart Poverty Working Group is meeting to identify new goals and targets for the Community Poverty Reduction Plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Issues/ Themes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No childcare is still a concern for the community. The Stewart Services Society identified this to be their main issue/goal to address.</li> <li>• Food security improved a lot as there are only four Food Bank participants left. Stewart Food Bank, however, made a decision to continue its work as the situation can change overnight ( e.g. due to power outages or avalanche control road closures)</li> <li>• Education and employment continue to pose a barrier.</li> </ul>
<b>Family Support/ Referrals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtaining referrals in Stewart continues to be a challenge given the small population and concerns by families about being identified as needing help</li> <li>• Continued efforts to work with the school and public health to seek out family referrals</li> <li>• A new approach is being used to reach out to low income families: delivering workshops on topics such as cooking on a budget and budgeting.</li> <li>• Work to date has occurred with two families.</li> <li>• Assisted family to obtain grants for children to participate in figure-skating and hockey.</li> <li>• Assisted mom with developing a resume and she obtained full-time employment.</li> <li>• Assisted single mom to further her post-secondary education through distance education.</li> </ul>

<b>SURREY</b>	
<b>Community Engagement, Partnerships and Strategic Links</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Community Action Plan developed in 2012 did not move forward as Surrey already had a Poverty Reduction Plan (THIS). Meetings have since been held with the Senior Social Planner from the City of Surrey and the Coordinator of the Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition to determine how the poverty initiative can be value-added to the current work underway.</li> <li>• Currently exploring establishing a Poverty Working Group made of organizations serving families living in poverty. The focus of the group will be to establish a community of practice that brings service providers together share information about services and programs, identify the strengths/challenges/gaps and create mechanisms for ensuring that family voice and lived experience is captured.</li> <li>• MCFD will participate on the already established Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition.</li> <li>• Regular attendance to a number of community tables including Early Years, Middle Years.</li> <li>• Regular meetings with community partners to develop relationships, to learn about existing services and recruit families to participate in the program.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Issues/ Themes Identified:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working families are having a hard time accessing the food bank.</li> <li>• Often, food received from the food bank is close to the expiry date. Families do not have freezers and are not able to freeze food that cannot be consumed immediately.</li> <li>• In order to access services and programs, families often have to print application or referral forms and then faxing them. Costs are attached to printing and faxing, which they cannot afford.</li> <li>• Language barriers are preventing families to ask for services, as they feel they cannot express their needs, and feel like they are often treated with disrespect.</li> <li>• Student loans cover tuition costs and do not provide enough for living expenses. Receipt of student loans makes families ineligible for income assistance.</li> <li>• Families are not able to afford recreational activities for their children.</li> <li>• Many families are facing tenant/ landlord issues, and live with it as they feel they have no options.</li> <li>• Even two parent working families are not able to make ends meet. The male in the family often has to work two jobs, taking time away from his family.</li> <li>• Affordable and sustainable housing is extremely difficult in Surrey. Also, waitlists are long with some families on a waitlist for four years.</li> </ul>
<b>Family Support/ Referrals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 referrals received and currently working with 4 families.</li> <li>• Arrangements made with Surrey Library to utilize space to meet with families.</li> <li>• Outcomes for families:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two families referred and accessed Quest Food Exchange (low cost grocery store).</li> <li>• Two families referred to and accessed the Free Tax Clinic at the Guilford Library</li> <li>• Connected family to Jump Start (Canadian Tire program to access free recreation for children)</li> <li>• Connected family to Clothes on Wheels</li> <li>• One referral to KEYS Housing and Health Solutions (free medical/dental)</li> <li>• Two families referred to the Food Bank; consultant accompanied mom to the food bank and connected her with the staff.</li> <li>• One referral to "Camp Alexandra"- Spring Break Day camps.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



