

# Community Poverty Reduction Strategy Committee

## Proposed Action Plan for January 2021 to September 2022

Updated: December 13, 2021

Based on the New Westminster Community Poverty Reduction Strategy (December 2016), and a review of emergent issues and opportunities, it is proposed that the following actions be implemented over the 18-month period between January 2021 and September 2022. Please note that the previous plan was largely paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, a number of City and community pandemic related initiatives were launched that directly or indirectly addressed the needs of people living in poverty and with low-incomes.

Areas of Focus and Priorities	Year(s)	Responsibility	Steps
<b>Community Poverty Reduction Committee</b>			
1. That the Community Poverty Reduction Committee continue to augment its membership, including from the Indigenous community and those with lived and living experience of homelessness and poverty.	Ongoing	MCFD Consultant	Continue to update orientation package.
2. That the City of New Westminster (City) endorse the Vibrant Communities Canada's 'Cities Reducing Poverty Charter.'	2022	City	Prepare an accompanying report and seek Council endorsement.
<b>Financial Literacy and Employment (FLE)</b>			
3. That the Community Poverty Reduction Committee, through Family Services of Greater Vancouver (FSGV) and utilizing the Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program Grant, facilitate increased access to financial empowerment, income boosting and taxfiling services. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, this will largely be achieved through interactive and remote technology.	2021	FLE Working Group, FSGV	FSGV has signed an agreement with the City and has received funding to undertake the agreed upon activities.
4. That the Community Poverty Reduction Committee work with the Lower Mainland Purpose Society (LMPS) and other local non-profit organizations to access adequate and sustainable funding for the New West Rent Bank, including from the senior levels of government.	2021/22	FLE Working Group, City, LMPS	City has endorsed funding, in the amount of \$35,000 per year, to cover administrative costs for an additional three years, and the Province has also contributed funding.
5. That the Community Poverty Reduction Committee work with mainstream financial institutions to develop and/or promote alternative short-term, low-interest loan products.	2021/22	FLE Working Group	Learn about products and assist in their promotion to vulnerable populations.

Areas of Focus and Priorities	Year(s)	Responsibility	Steps
<b>Housing and Shelter</b>			
6. That the Community Poverty Reduction Committee, in collaboration with the Homelessness Coalition Society, explore opportunities to support new emergency shelter capacity and supportive and non-market housing. This would include but not be limited to: raising public awareness about the need for such accommodation and encouraging members to attend events and prepare correspondence in support as part of the development approvals process for such developments.	2021/22	Committee, Homeless Coalition	Raise public awareness related to need for such developments, including through the sharing of research and statistical information, and inform committee members and the larger community of opportunities to get involved and to provide support.
<b>Information, Services and Support</b>			
7. That the Community Poverty Reduction Committee, in collaboration with the City and the Homelessness Coalition Society, advocate for the restoration of funding for housing outreach, referral and advocacy programs. Starting in 2014, cuts to these programs totaled close to \$400,000.	2021/22	MCFD Consultant, City, Committee, Homeless Coalition	City has provided \$90,000, with Lookout Housing and Health Society being the selected proponent, for enhanced homeless outreach, which equates to two new workers. City staff have recommended an equivalent amount to extend these services till the end of 2022.
8. That the Community Poverty Reduction Committee support food security efforts in New Westminster, including the COVID-19 pandemic response and implementing the City's Food Security Action Plan.	2021/22	City, Committee, New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society	City has successfully applied for Reaching Home Grants, totaling \$345,740, which are supporting up to five food security and resource hubs and feeding about 800 people per week, as well as other meal programs.
9. That the Community Poverty Reduction Committee engage with the Digital Inclusion Initiative to determine if there would be interest by initiative partners to assist low-income families, which may have difficulty accessing on-line supports and remote learning.	2021/22	MCFD Consultant, City, Committee	City is partnering on this initiative, and has allocated \$15,000, through a Strengthening Community Services Program grant, and allocated decommissioned City smart phones. While the emphasis is on the unsheltered, it is expanding its scope to include isolated seniors and low-income families.

Areas of Focus and Priorities	Year(s)	Responsibility	Steps
10. That the Community Poverty Reduction Committee work with the New Westminster Public Partners Committee and Kids New West to support the work of organizations addressing the needs of families, children and youth related to the COVID-19 pandemic.	2021/22	MCFD Consultant, City, Committee	Identify the needs of families, children and youth related to the pandemic, and identify a role for the Public Partners and Kids New West.
11. That the Community Poverty Reduction Committee advocate to the Provincial and Federal Governments for paid sick leave for all workers.	2021/22	City, Committee	Community Poverty Reduction Committee has written letters to local MPs and MLAs and supported advocacy campaigns for paid sick leave. Both levels of government have now instituted paid sick leave for workers.
<b>Public Awareness and Empowerment (PAE)</b>			
12. That the Community Poverty Reduction Committee continue to update the Poverty Profile, which includes city-wide and neighbourhood information related to poverty and low incomes.	Ongoing	City	Share with local faith and non-profit organizations to apply for funding and to target interventions. This profile (last updated in September 2021) will be updated in 2022 using 2020 Taxfiler data and 2021 Census data.
13. That the Community Poverty Reduction Committee explore means by which to increase participation in elections by people who are homeless and people living in poverty and with low-incomes.	2021/22	PAE Working Group	Work with Legislative Services, Elections BC and Elections Canada.
14. That the Community Poverty Reduction Committee, in collaboration with the City and the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, promote opportunities for Community Action Network (CAN) training graduates. This partnership is increasing the involvement of people with lived and living experience of homelessness and poverty in planning and policy development processes and advocacy efforts.	2021/22	PAE Working Group, City, BC Poverty Reduction Coalition	City is working with the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition on an 'Ethics in Engagement' Project and identifying opportunities for graduates to be involved in engagement processes.
15. That the Community Poverty Reduction Committee, in collaboration with the City, assist with the Arts Empowerment and Social Change (AESC) Project. This project will empower residents with lived and living experience in homelessness and poverty, enabling them to share their experiences through photography, poetry and storytelling. The experiences documented will form the basis of an on-line or mobile exhibit, which will be used to raise public awareness about poverty and its impacts, and inform a new Community Poverty Reduction Strategy.	2021/22	PAE Working Group, City	City has issued a request for proposals, selected an artist mentor, and is working with three non-profit organizations on the implementation of the project.

Areas of Focus and Priorities	Year(s)	Responsibility	Steps
16. That the Community Poverty Reduction Committee support other projects related to awareness and conversations about issues related to economic insecurity and housing affordability.	2021/22	City, Douglas College, All	Elliot Rossiter, a professor at Douglas College, will be submitting a grant application (with the New Westminster Museum & Archives and the Arts Council of New Westminster and others) in 2021/22 to do exhibitions, arts, essays and community conversations about issues related to economic insecurity and housing affordability issues, including community opposition to supportive and non-market housing.

<b>Social Connectedness</b>
-----------------------------

17. That the Community Poverty Reduction Committee, in collaboration with the City and the Hey Neighbour Collective, assist with the Hey Neighbour Initiative (HNI). This initiative will facilitate social connectedness, resilience and community engagement in multi-unit buildings. This will include social programming and other targeted interventions in existing buildings and rethinking how the City works with developers on new buildings so they are integrating best practices with regard to design and programming.	2021/22	City, Committee, Hey Neighbour Collective	City is partnering with the Hey Neighbour Collective and the Seniors Services Society on a Seniors Integrated Support Pilot Project. The initial focus will be Ross Tower but it could be scaled-up to include other seniors independent living residences, and potentially purpose-built, market rental housing developments.
--	---------	---	--