

Update: Edmonton's Poverty Elimination

Initiative Title:	Edmonton's Poverty Elimination
City Council Sponsor(s):	Mayor D. Iveson / Councillor B. Henderson / Councillor S. McKeen
Supporting Department and Lead Staff:	Community Services, Lyall Brenneis / Kate Gunn

BACKGROUND:

The Issue of Poverty

- In 2012, there were over 100,000 Edmontonians living in poverty. The extent of poverty cuts across ages, gender and population groups. It is estimated that poverty costs Albertans \$7.1 Billion per year, including health care costs, crime, intergenerational and opportunity costs.
- In 2012, City Council convened a group of community partners to launch the Poverty Elimination Initiative. Originally called the Poverty Reduction Initiative, this Steering Committee determined that a partnership of community organizations working on the issue of poverty in Edmonton together, facilitated by the City of Edmonton, would be best positioned to steer the needed change. Furthermore, early on the Committee partners collectively decided that this Initiative was an opportunity to be transformative and work towards "eliminating" rather than just "reducing" poverty.
- The Poverty Elimination Steering Committee in 2012-13 brought together champions and partners across sectors with a shared vision to collectively taking action to end poverty in Edmonton. The Committee also worked closely with the United Way's "Creating Pathways out of Poverty" initiative and the Province's Poverty Reduction Strategy. In 2013, the Poverty Elimination Committee led the work through the development of Unleashing our Potential: Preliminary Poverty Elimination Strategic Framework and through targeted community engagement and awareness building.

Transition and Timelines

- In March 2014, a new Mayor's Task Force on Poverty Elimination will be announced and launched through formal bylaw. The new Task Force will build on the foundational work done by the Poverty Elimination Steering Committee in 2012 -13. The final report of the earlier Poverty Elimination Steering Committee will highlight key areas of action for the new Task Force to consider as it launches at a March 2014 Symposium. This will mark the culmination of the work of the earlier Poverty Elimination Committee and the transition of the work to eliminate poverty to the new Mayor's Task Force.

- The new Task Force will undertake its work on poverty elimination that will likely culminate in a ten year action plan and recommendations by early 2015. Once the Task Force work is completed, the Poverty Elimination Initiative and work will likely continue in order to establish a mechanism to implement, oversee and report on the next steps regarding poverty elimination in 2015-2017.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

- The objective of the Poverty Elimination Initiative is to develop and implement a plan to end poverty in Edmonton within a generation.
- The key outcomes for Edmonton's Poverty Elimination Initiative at the end of 2017 are the following:
 - Launch, establish and oversee the work of a new Mayor's Task Force on Poverty Elimination in 2014, building on the foundations laid by the community partnership work on poverty elimination in 2012-13.
 - Develop a Task Force-led ten year action plan and recommendations by early 2015 with strategic actions to end poverty in Edmonton.
 - Establish a governance structure in 2015 to direct and coordinate the ongoing Poverty Initiative once the Task Force completes its report. This will steward the implementation of the Task Force report and recommendations to see successful achievement of the goal of ending poverty in a generation.
 - Implement incremental short-term actions that will demonstrate the Initiative's commitment to ending poverty as well contribute to the long-term goal of ending poverty.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

- The work on poverty elimination fulfills the goals of the City's *The Way Ahead* goal of improving Edmonton's livability and *The Way We Live* plan's objectives of making Edmonton a caring, affordable and inclusive city.
- Specifically, *The Way We Live* calls for the City to:
 - Engage stakeholders, other orders of government and community (Objective 3.2.5)
 - Advocate to reduce poverty and its effects (Objective 3.2.6)
- The Initiative also aligns with the Provincial Social Policy Framework and the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

START-UP BUDGET REQUIREMENTS:

- Estimated costs to support the Task Force and next phase of poverty elimination in Edmonton are \$220,000. These funds will provide the resources needed by the Task Force to develop a 10 year action plan on poverty elimination over the next 12 months. These funds will be requested as part of the 2014 Budget Update Report in April, 2014.

TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION OF PROJECT PLAN:

- A Project Plan will be completed by June 2014 that outlines key activities and milestones of the Poverty Initiative from 2014 to 2017.
- Key milestones that highlight the completion of the Poverty Initiative at the end of 2017 include:
 - Initial recommendations for action and research are identified by the Poverty Elimination Steering Committee in early 2014 will provide a foundation for the establishment of a new Mayor's Task Force on Poverty Elimination by City Council bylaw - *March 2014*.
 - A Mayor's Task Force is established in early 2014 including representation from key sectors critical to the work of ending poverty in Edmonton and involving high level representation from the provincial and federal governments. The Task Force also works with provincial and national networks on poverty reduction and elimination - *March 2014 to December 2017*
 - The Mayor's Task Force produces an Edmonton Poverty Elimination Action Plan and recommendations for Council approval – **Spring 2015**
 - The Poverty Initiative continues once the Task Force concludes with a new mandate to oversee implementation of the Task Force action plan and recommendations. Action initiatives within the plan may include diverse new approaches, policy development and advocacy, collaboration with the business community, shifts in programs and services and community-based projects. *December 2017*.