

Poverty Reduction Strategy for Winnipeg

Civic Election 2014

During an election, the public, news media and candidates will attempt to summarize and 'solve' an array of community issues, though it is rare for social issues to be seriously considered in their complexity.

Poverty is one of the issues that will not likely get a lot of attention, although it directly affects about 10% of the Winnipeg population. Currently about 90,000 people in Winnipeg do not have enough to eat, are living in sub-standard conditions and are excluded from the benefits of society (see details on the back). While it may look like poverty only affecting a small group of people, reducing poverty affects the entire city and population.

We know that certain municipal policy changes and public resources will make a huge difference in reducing the number of people living in poverty. We know from experience that reducing poverty will take financial resources, political commitment to action, collaboration of numerous community sectors and the input and experience of those living in poverty, and particularly;

- Safe, healthy and affordable housing:
 - Subsidized accommodation, including social and supportive housing
 - By-law and zoning changes to encourage more affordable housing throughout the city
 - Providing support and amenities for people who are homeless.
- Incomes to provide for basic needs and social inclusion:
 - Funds and encouragement for work-entry jobs for youth
 - City jobs that are secure and pay a living wage
 - Procurement policy that supports local business and social enterprise.
- Services and Program supports:
 - Reduced fares for public transportation and fees for community centres
 - Recreational facilities and programming for everyone across the city
 - Funding for emergency supports for those in crisis (shelters, food banks, medical help etc.).

Poverty reduction requires systemic change, funding, political commitment and partnerships between all levels of government, business and community organizations. During the election, we encourage everyone to discuss what can be done to reduce poverty. We want to encourage the next Mayor and Council to do their part to create a Winnipeg that is caring, just and equitable.

We think that the next Mayor and Councillors could establish a Poverty Reduction Committee of City Council to be an active leader and contributor to reducing the poverty in Winnipeg.

The mandate of this Committee, made up of senior elected officials, administrators and community activists/agencies, should be to:

- Develop a poverty reduction strategy and plan for the City of Winnipeg
- Recommend policy, by-law and budget changes that facilitate poverty reduction
- Collaborate with the Provincial Government in implementing poverty reduction action
- Assist community organizations in the coordination of action to reduce poverty, and
- Work with Provincial & Federal agencies to provide appropriate poverty reduction funding.



Winnipeg Poverty Profile

Here is a brief statistical insight into the economic conditions facing about 90,000 Winnipeggers and therefore what SPCW is striving to change.

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
MBM	Winnipeggers living at/below this level	57,000	63,000	78,000	71,000	71,000
	Percentage of City Population	7.8%	8.1%	10.0%	8.8%	9.1%
LIM at	Winnipeggers living at/below this level	88,000	87,000	93,000	95,000	88,000
	Percentage of City Population	12.1%	11.3%	12.0%	11.8%	11.2%

MBM – Market Basket Measure, sets a poverty line based on a basket of available goods and services that should meet what has been defined as ‘basic needs’ to avoid extreme destitution. This is a measure the Province of Manitoba has used.

LIM at - the Low Income Measure, after tax, is a relative measure of poverty where a family is considered to be low income if they have less than 50% of the median family income after taxes. SPCW uses LIM to show how much is needed to help people exit poverty and to have a living standard comparable to other Manitobans.

The Income of those living below the Low Income Measure (as of July 2014)

<i>Receiving Employment and Income Assistance (EIA)</i>		
	<i>EIA</i>	<i>LIM at</i>
Single employable person	\$8,128	\$19,930
Single person with a disability	\$10,725	\$19,930
Single parent with 1 child	\$14,815	\$28,185
Two parents with 2 children	\$22,655	\$39,860

<i>Receiving Wages from employment</i>	
<i>Employable Person</i>	<i>Income</i>
Working full time @ minimum wage (\$10.45/hr)	\$375/week \$20,000/yr
working full time @ average provincial wage	\$800/week \$40,000/yr
retired and getting max. CPP, OAS and GIS	\$400/week \$20,000/yr
Working full time @ living wage (\$14/hr)	\$525/week \$27,300/yr

Select Facts:

- About 54,000 Winnipeggers use one of the city's food banks each month
- Every day, about 2,000 hot meals are provided at soup kitchens throughout the city
- Every day about 350 people use one of the main shelters in the city and another estimated 2,000 people are living on the street, 'couch surfing' or are in unsafe and unhealthy conditions
- About 60% of the people who are homeless are Aboriginal
- Poverty disproportionately affects women, Aboriginal people, recent immigrants and persons with disabilities
- About 70% of single individuals in poverty receive all of their income from employment.

Source: various most recent StatsCanada data – see www.spcw.mb.ca/Issues Poverty Profiles

