

# 2021 2031 WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

Winnipeg

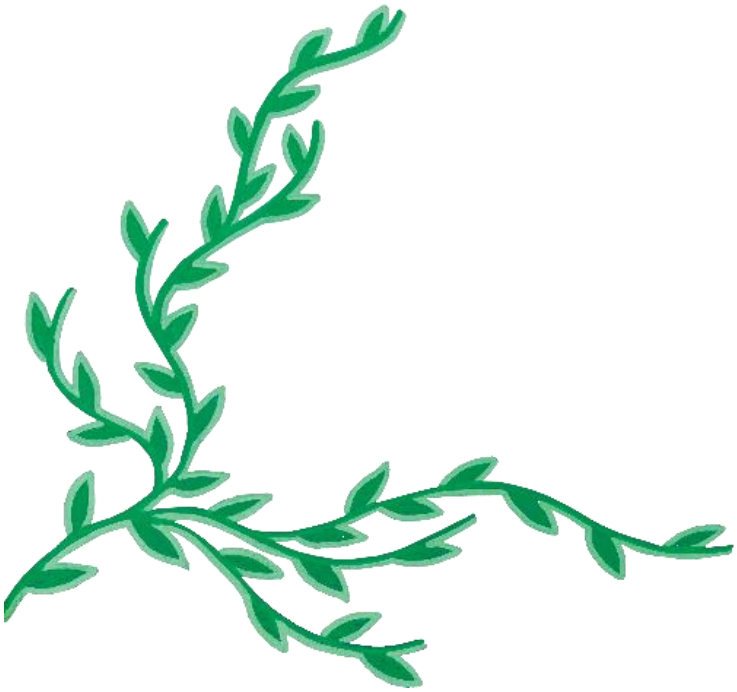
# Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy
## 2021 – 2031

## Foreword

**Forthcoming - By Damon Johnston, President, Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg**

## Land and Water Acknowledgement

*The City of Winnipeg is located in Treaty No. 1 Territory, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe (Ojibwe), Ininew (Cree), Anishininiw (Oji-Cree), Dene and Dakota, and homeland of the Métis Nation. The city's drinking water is sourced from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation in Treaty No. 3 Territory.*



## Table of Contents


Executive Summary ..... 4

Section 1. Introduction and Approach ..... 6

Amik (The Beaver) - Honouring our Shared Wisdom ..... 7

Methodology ..... 8

Co-Creation Model ..... 8

Core Working Team ..... 9

Stakeholder Engagement ..... 9

Indigenous Rightsholder Engagement ..... 10

Section 2. Alignment and Collaboration ..... 12

International Alignment ..... 12

Interjurisdictional Alignment ..... 13

Poverty Reduction Strategies of Other Governments ..... 14

City of Winnipeg Role in Poverty Reduction ..... 17

Municipal Tools to Reduce Poverty ..... 20

Municipal Advocacy, Leadership and Partnerships ..... 21

Section 3. Our Shared Wisdom ..... 22

Poverty in Winnipeg ..... 22

Defining Poverty ..... 24

Types of Poverty ..... 25

Lived Experience Voices ..... 28

Understanding Intersectionality ..... 29

Indigenous Youth Voices ..... 30

Geographic Areas of Higher Poverty ..... 31

Section 4. Poverty Reduction Framework for the City of Winnipeg ..... 33

Vision ..... 33

Mission ..... 33

Overarching Principle ..... 34

Guiding Principles ..... 34

Goals ..... 34

Building the Foundation for Action ..... 34

Goals, Objectives, Actions in the Strategy ..... 36
Life Poles ..... 36
Indigenous Children, Youth and Families Life Pole ..... 37
Affordable Housing Life Pole ..... 38
Section 5. Poverty Reduction Goals and Objectives ..... 41
Goal 1: Equity and a Culture of Caring are Demonstrated through Strategy Implementation and Systems Change ..... 41
10-year Objectives: ..... 42
Goal 2: The City Actively Plans for and Partners in Affordable Housing ..... 43
10-year Objectives: ..... 44
Goal 3: Equity is Embedded in all City Employment and Income Opportunities ..... 45
10-year Objectives: ..... 46
Goal 4: Community Well-Being Supports for those in Greatest Need are Increased ..... 47
10-year Objectives: ..... 48
Goal 5: Transportation System Equity is Enhanced ..... 48
10-year Objectives: ..... 49
Goal 6: All City Services are Equitable, Inclusive and Accessible ..... 50
10-year Objectives: ..... 51
Goal 7: Food Security and Food System Resilience is Expanded ..... 52
10-year Objectives: ..... 53
Goal 8: Equity in Community Safety is Increased through Collaboration ..... 53
10-year Objectives: ..... 54
Section 6. Implementing the Strategy ..... 54
Implementation Plans ..... 54
Evaluation, Reporting and Continuous Improvement ..... 55
Strategy Renewal ..... 57
Acknowledgments ..... 58

# Executive Summary

This report is the first-ever Poverty Reduction Strategy for the City of Winnipeg (the Strategy). A co-creation model was used to design and develop this Strategy, including collaboration with key community partners, residents, and knowledge keepers. This model was used to ensure community voices were represented and integrated at each stage of the Strategy's development. The development of the Strategy also used a joint planning and development structure that included a Core Working Team made up of civic employees and community stakeholders. Community representatives included Make Poverty History Manitoba, the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council, and Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc. as well as members of the Public Service.

In addition to the co-creation model, this Strategy was developed with significant stakeholder engagement. The wisdom and knowledge from the community serves as the foundation of the Strategy and the driving force behind the actions that the City will take to reduce poverty and make lasting positive change in Winnipeg. Using a three-phased approach, the City engaged stakeholders from poverty reduction-related community-based organizations and those with lived experience of poverty and homelessness.

The City's 10-year Poverty Reduction Strategy is focused on long-term, sustainable, and practical solutions that are within the City's jurisdiction, in addition to addressing the immediate and emergent needs of community members. To do so, the Strategy outlines Overarching and Guiding Principles, as well as eight specific Goals with associated Objectives and Actions, to guide the City's work to reduce poverty going forward (See Figure 1 below for a diagram that provides a conceptual overview of the Strategy). The Strategy's Goals are intended to provide a long-term vision of what the City will achieve. The Objectives are the specific, measurable, and time-bound plans the City will employ to achieve those goals, and the Actions are the activities and steps that will be taken to reach each Objective. The eight Goals include:

1. Equity and a Culture of Caring are Demonstrated through Strategy Implementation and Systems Change
2. The City Actively Plans for and Partners in Affordable Housing
3. Equity is Embedded in all City Employment and Income Opportunities
4. Community Well-Being Supports for those in Greatest Need are Increased
5. Transportation System Equity is Enhanced
6. All City Services are Equitable, Inclusive and Accessible
7. Food Security and Food System Resilience is Expanded
8. Equity in Community Safety is Increased through Collaboration




**Figure 1: Poverty Reduction Strategy Concept Overview** (Illustration by Cassy Regier)

In addition to the Goals, the Strategy also includes key focus areas known as Life Poles. Across the eight goals of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, two Life Poles have been identified and prioritized for enhanced support in order to mitigate the impact of the cycle of poverty: *Indigenous Children, Youth and Families* and *Affordable Housing.* As defined in greater detail below, the term "Life Pole" is derived from the teachings of the tipi, where the Life Pole is the final pole raised and is critical to supporting the overall structure.

It is important to note that no single organization or level of government can end poverty on their own, as all levels of government share the costs and impacts of poverty. This Strategy focuses on those actions the City can take to help reduce poverty, and identifies specific areas for partnership and

advocacy. The City also acknowledges that poverty cannot be reduced in our community without important structural and systemic changes to address poverty's root causes. Through this Strategy the City will seek to better define its role in poverty reduction by clearly establishing implementation plans, with regular review and renewal points to ensure that long-term Goals, Objectives, and Actions stay on track.

# Section 1. Introduction and Approach

Poverty is costly, both socially and economically. Research links poverty with poorer health outcomes including an increased need for emergency services; higher chances of involvement with the justice system; higher rates of incarceration; and higher policing costs. For low-income individuals, poverty may worsen health outcomes and decrease life expectancy. Poverty is linked with lower levels of literacy which, in turn, is correlated with lower levels of employment and household income. For governments at all levels, poverty erodes the health and well-being of communities, and generates economic costs and significant social challenges.

When addressing poverty, a range of responses are necessary. This includes emergency supports, programming for pathways out of poverty, and long-term preventative actions. Although the City is already investing in mitigating the impacts of poverty, doing more to address its root causes is a crucial collaborative task for all levels of government. The Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy seeks to address poverty with an upstream, preventative approach, recognizing that addressing the root causes of poverty will not only improve community health and well-being, but also reduce the overall costs associated with poverty.

The challenge of addressing poverty is also critical to the City of Winnipeg's responsibility and commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples This work is necessary to foster equity and inclusion, and create a culture of caring within the City, founded on a human rights-based approach.

The Strategy is focused on long-term, sustainable, and actionable solutions within the City's jurisdiction, in addition to addressing the emergency and immediate needs of community members. It sets out an innovative approach that reimagines and reallocates spending toward reducing poverty upstream. It

**The Cost of Homelessness -** A study by the Canadian Medical Association (Canadian Medical Association Journal Online (CMAJ Open), 2017) indicated that the average **annual cost to support 1 homeless person in Winnipeg is $49,000.** These costs, combined with the low quality of life and increased health problems experienced by homeless people, suggest the need for a comprehensive response to homelessness and reallocation of existing resources. The current costs of supporting homeless residents could be offset through plans that better address their health, housing and social service needs (i.e. a Housing First model), as well as proactive interventions to prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place.

aims to be more equitable, more sustainable, more cost-effective, and ultimately to improve the quality of life for all residents of our community.

## Amik (The Beaver) - Honouring our Shared Wisdom

The teachings from Amik (The Beaver in Ojibwe) - who represents Wisdom in the Seven Sacred Teachings - have guided the creation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy. In the beginning of the journey, the Core Working Team (CWT) established to develop the Strategy discussed approaches to reducing poverty, using the terminology *Game Changers - larger actions that are made of smaller ones: larger actions which are foundational and capable of shifting a lot of moving parts.*



First Nations and Métis members of the CWT who have been gifted with the knowledge of the Seven Sacred Teachings shared their knowledge with the group. They drew the attention of the group to the contributions beavers make to an ecosystem, and the larger impact those contributions have on the whole environment.

They shared that the beaver teaches us how the building of a community is entirely dependent on gifts given to each member by the Creator, and on how these gifts are used. They explained that what we already know about people, the community, and the other living beings and spirits that share the land is the key that can guide the Strategy and create opportunities for people to use their gifts. The knowledge and experiences that individuals, the City and the community have is what will inform the decisions to be made, and guide the Strategy's implementation. The CWT wish to honour the wisdom from stakeholders, rightsholders and those with lived experience who can show us the way forward.

The overarching principle in the Poverty Reduction Strategy is, "*We will Honour our Shared Wisdom, Accept Responsibility and Be Accountable for Implementing the Strategy*". Further context can be read in Section 4 of the report on the Strategy Framework. The principles in this Strategy have been built upon a balanced and respectful relationship amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous approaches.

Indigenous ways of interconnectedness and reciprocity teach that in some way, every person and everything is connected to one another. When one gives, one receives. These teachings lend themselves to what the City can do to reduce poverty. This approach will create a meaningful and effective strategy that enables the achievement of collective goals through intentional action.

For example, when the City provides an employment opportunity to someone experiencing poverty, that not only provides a means to exit the cycle of poverty for that individual, but the City would also gain an employee who could provide new insight for transforming the organization. Providing these opportunities is a way of building trust and a culture of caring. In the Strategy, a 'culture of caring' means being accountable for acting with empathy, accepting responsibility, prioritizing equity, and being both proactive and responsive to the needs of the community.

In all Poverty Reduction efforts, and across the whole range of civic activity, the City of Winnipeg wishes to honour First Nations, the Métis Nation, and Inuit. Indigenous knowledge and worldviews are crucial not only to this initiative, but to all efforts to build a better community together.

For civic policy-making and implementation, this requires continuing work to learn about the impacts of the colonial experience, and to advance decolonization. We must recognize the fundamental importance of the relationships amongst Indigenous peoples, the land, original languages, stories, knowledge, and the Indigenous spiritual and cultural environment.

Implementing the City's Poverty Reduction Strategy effectively requires a new appreciation of all these interconnections and gifts. First Nations and Métis members of the Core Working Team have shared their insight that knowledge and experience, transformed into wisdom, can be our guide, and that we must take responsibility and accountability for reducing poverty in Winnipeg. This is the hope which will guide our journey, as we commit to implementing this new strategy.

# Methodology

## Co-Creation Model

The City of Winnipeg used a co-creation model to design and develop the Poverty Reduction Strategy to ensure that key community voices were strongly represented, considered and integrated at every stage of the Strategy's development process.

A co-creation approach is an iterative process that can be broadly defined as:

> "A model for the development and (re) design of public services in which different types of players participate, not only public players… These players transfer and share their experiences, capacities and resources (knowledge, information, etc.) to jointly improve processes (deliberative and decision-making) and public results (more effective, efficient and quality public services), and also to generate greater social value (integration and social cohesion) … Furthermore, co-creation is also conceived as a model of social transformation and learning in democratic values, since it helps to strengthen the feeling of belonging, involvement and moral commitment to the community or the group in which they participate." (https://www.gsef2018.org/themes/co-creation-of-public-policies/)

## Core Working Team

The co-creation process was organized around a joint planning and development structure that included a Core Working Team, which was established at the outset of the Strategy's development and included both City and community representatives. Community representatives on the Core Working Team included:

- Two members of the Make Poverty History Manitoba Coalition.
- One representative from the United Way Winnipeg's Poverty Reduction Council, of which the City is a member.
- One representative from Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc., an Indigenous community-based organization, as suggested by the Winnipeg Indigenous Executive Circle (WIEC).

City of Winnipeg representatives on the Core Working Team included:

- Three employees from Community Services (these employees served as the internal project team).
- One employee from Planning, Property and Development with expertise in the area of Housing.
- Two employees from the City's Indigenous Relations Division (IRD).
- One employee from the Office of Public Engagement (OPE).

The Core Working Team met bi-weekly from March 2020 to the completion of the strategy. Members of the Team actively collaborated on various aspects of the Strategy including, but not limited to, the mission, objectives, goal areas, strategic principles, stakeholder engagement process, brainstorming potential actions, development of prioritization criteria, and writing and feedback on the Strategy report.

Throughout the development of this Strategy, the City worked to collaborate with key community partners in each aspect of decision-making. This included seeking input and creative ideas to problem-solve and incorporate partner feedback and recommendations into decisions. The perspectives and ideas of Core Working Team members related to the process and development of the Poverty Reduction Strategy were integrated wherever possible.

## Stakeholder Engagement

The wisdom and knowledge from community stakeholders serves as the foundation of the Strategy and the driving force behind the actions that the City will take to reduce poverty and make lasting positive change in Winnipeg. The City engaged stakeholders from poverty reduction-related community-based organizations and those with lived experience of poverty and homelessness. Stakeholder engagement occurred in three phases; a summary report with detailed feedback was prepared for each phase and can be found on the City's website. In total, 20 Stakeholder Engagement Sessions were held with 231 participants attending the meetings.

Efforts were also made to engage with other governments and agencies, in particular the Province of Manitoba and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA). An engagement session was held with representatives from key departments at the Province of Manitoba; written feedback from this session was received and is included in the Phase 1 Stakeholder Engagement Summary report. Representatives from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation attended a stakeholder session on the topic of affordable housing.

An emphasis on hearing from community stakeholders and people with lived experience of poverty, along with other priorities related to the COVID-19 pandemic, limited the ability for sustained engagement with the provincial government, WHRA, and other government partners. A commitment to develop relationships, form partnerships, and maintain ongoing collaboration with other governments is a key part of the Strategy and will be an ongoing priority for the City as it implements the Strategy.

## Indigenous Rightsholder Engagement

In addition to robust Stakeholder Engagement on the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the City is also serious about the need for constructive and respectful engagement with the Métis Nation, First Nations, and Inuit Rightsholders. Rightsholders in this context refers to both Treaty and Aboriginal rights, which were given constitutional recognition in Section 35 (1) of *The Constitution Act, 1982*. Indigenous Rights include a range of cultural, social, political, and economic rights held by Indigenous Peoples (referred to as Rightsholders in the Strategy), including the right to establish treaties; and include the right to land to practice the right to fish, to hunt, and to practice one's own culture.

The efforts of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Core Working Team and the City's Indigenous Relations Division to reach out to Indigenous Rightsholders are in their opening stages. As with other municipalities, government-to-government engagement of this kind is evolving quickly, and we acknowledge there is much to learn, and much work to be done.

As part of the Strategy's development, the City has written to a number of Indigenous Rightsholders to invite them to discuss the City's role in poverty reduction; partnership opportunities; and how they wish to be engaged. In response, several meetings were held with the Manitoba Métis Federation, as discussed below. For other Indigenous Rightsholders, the City's preliminary outreach has not yet led to direct discussions – doubtless due to compressed timeframes and the heavy burden imposed on all governments by pandemic response – however the City is committed to following up and engaging with these Rightsholders as the Strategy is implemented.

The Indigenous Rightsholders identified for engagement regarding the Poverty Reduction Strategy are as follows:

*Manitoba Métis Federation* – The Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) is the democratic Government of the Red River Métis, also known as the Manitoba Métis, which is the heart of the Historic Métis Nation.

The Manitoba Métis negotiated Canada's entry into the North-West and is Canada's Partner in Confederation and the Founder of the Province of Manitoba. The City recognizes that MMF Resolution 8 provides the framework for engagement, consultation and accommodation for federal and provincial governments, industry, municipalities, and others, when making decisions and developing plans and projects that may impact the Métis in Manitoba. In accordance with MMF's Resolution 8, a letter was sent with an invitation to engage the MMF during Phase 2. A written response was received from the MMF that was followed by two separate discussions between representatives of the MMF and the City. The City committed to work with the Manitoba Métis Federation (the MMF), in accordance with the MMF's Resolution Number 8, to develop an on-going process of meaningful engagement and partnership to collaborate on poverty reduction related measures that ensure inclusion of the interests and priorities of the Métis Nation in Manitoba.

*First Nations* – The Strategy Core Working Team and the Indigenous Relations Division identified First Nations governments to approach during Phase 2 of the engagement process to discuss First Nations interests and priorities:

> *Treaty One Nation Government* – Treaty One Development Corporation (T1DC) was registered as a corporation on July 12, 2018. Directors of the Corporation are the Chiefs of the seven First Nations signatory to Treaty One (Brokenhead Ojibway First Nation, Long Plain First Nation, Peguis First Nation, Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation, Sagkeeng First Nation, Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation, and Swan Lake First Nation). The mission of T1DC is to advance the economic and social well-being of the citizens of Treaty One.
>
> *First Nations Government Bodies* – Outreach in Phase 2 also included letters to the Grand Chiefs of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Southern Chiefs' Organization and Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak.

*Inuit* – The Strategy Core Working Team and the Indigenous Relations Division identified two Inuit organizations operating in Winnipeg with whom to discuss Inuit-specific considerations for the Poverty Reduction Strategy:

> *Tunngasugit* – Formed in 2017, Tunngasugit provides support to the Manitoba Inuit community through the provision of culturally sensitive programs and services. The organization offers front-line services to assist Inuit transitioning to life in an urban center.
>
> *Manitoba Inuit Association* – The Manitoba Inuit Association is dedicated to enhancing the lives of Inuit in the province by promoting cultural values and community while providing services to meet evolving needs. Some main goal areas of the organization include: employment and training, education, as well as housing and health.

# Section 2. Alignment and Collaboration

All communities and governments face the challenge of how to support and improve the living conditions and overall welfare of people living in poverty. It is understood that no one government can act alone, or is solely responsible, for poverty reduction. The City of Winnipeg cannot have a meaningful impact on poverty without deliberate and collaborative action, that involves close interdepartmental coordination, and developing close working relationships with people living in poverty, community-based organizations, and government bodies, including Indigenous, federal, and provincial governments and Rightsholders. Only with this kind of coordinated and purposeful effort will cycles of poverty be broken for future generations.

## International Alignment

### United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) – 'Goal 1 - No Poverty'

In 2015, the United Nations adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, endorsed by the Government of Canada. These SDGs constitute a set of internationally-recognized standards for community development; while some of the goals extend beyond the reach of civic governments, civic governments have a role in attaining them. The first SDG is: No Poverty. The intentions and directions from all 17 goals have been integrated into six localized goals in the OurWinnipeg 2045 development plan by-law.

### United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

It is the goal of the City's Indigenous Relations Division (IRD) to formulate a recommendation and framework for the potential implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) to guide and inform future policies, processes, and practices of the City of Winnipeg. Due to competing priorities within IRD, staff continue to develop a baseline report that will identify internal successes and gaps. Once finalized, a communications strategy will be developed to share with stakeholders within the civic system in addressing UNDRIP, as it relates to municipal jurisdiction.

As part of its ongoing Journey of Reconciliation, the City is committed to recognizing Indigenous peoples' spirituality, cultures and identities in a way that respects people's dignity and well-being and accommodates spiritual practices as a human right. Putting this into practice, the City has approved a Smudge and Pipe Ceremonies Administrative Standard and has an IRD-led internal working group to assess and designate spaces that welcome Smudge and Pipe Ceremony requests.

## Interjurisdictional Alignment

### Journey of Reconciliation -Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action

In January 2016, Mayor Brian Bowman declared 2016 as the Year of Reconciliation for the City of Winnipeg. The implementation of five Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Calls to Action relating to municipal government was an integral part of this announcement. These TRC Calls to Action include:

#43 UNDRIP – “We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as the framework for reconciliation.”

#47 Doctrine of Discovery – "We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius*, and to reform those laws, government policies, and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts."

#57 Training – "We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism."

#75 Cemeteries - "We call upon the federal government to work with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, churches, Aboriginal communities, former residential school students, and current landowners to develop and implement strategies and procedures for the ongoing identification, documentation, maintenance, Commemoration, and protection of residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried. This is to include the provision of appropriate memorial ceremonies and commemorative markers to honour the deceased children."

#77 Archives – "We call upon provincial, territorial, municipal, and community archives to work collaboratively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and to provide these to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation."

### National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls



On June 3, 2019, the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) was released. The Final Report asserts that "human rights and Indigenous rights abuses and violations committed and condoned by the Canadian state represent genocide against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people."

On June 3, 2021, the MMIWG National Action Plan Core Working Group released the 2021 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA People National Action Plan: Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA People.

The MMIWG Calls for Justice are now included in Winnipeg's Indigenous Accord (Accord) to demonstrate commitment to and enhance opportunities for partners to further participate in reconciliation and report progress. Including the MMIWG Calls for Justice within the Accord framework will provide an opportunity for additional organizations to become Accord partners.

The City is also developing an MMIWG Implementation Plan, which includes initiatives such as:

- Developing and implementing an employee awareness campaign, and enhancing existing training opportunities;
- Exploring how the Calls for Justice can inform the development of the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy;
- Examining current methods the City of Winnipeg uses for data collection; and,
- Considering how Oshki Annishinabe Nigaaniwak programming or funding structure can be improved to respond to the Final Report.

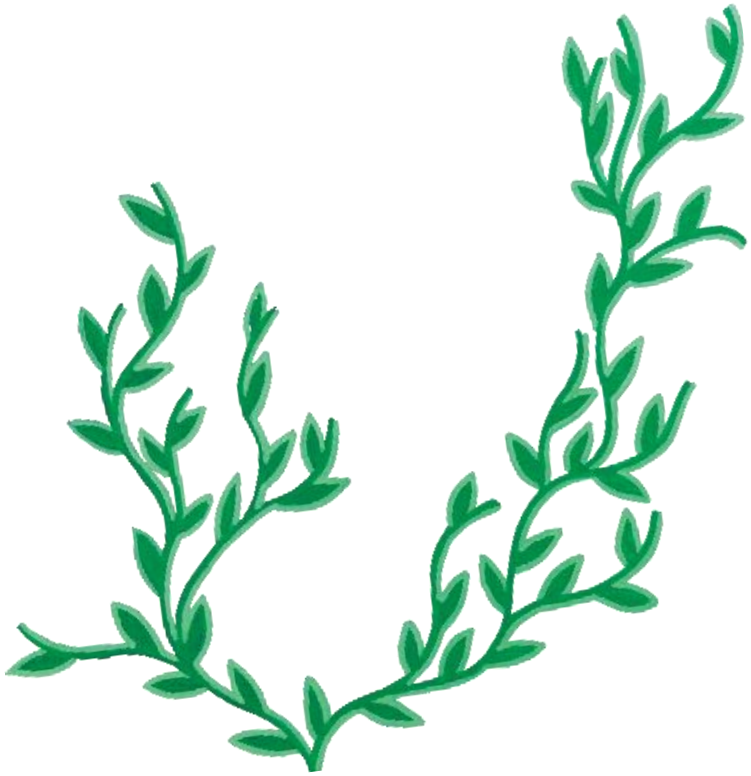
## Poverty Reduction Strategies of Other Governments

While other levels have jurisdiction over key areas of social well-being, including housing, health, education, child-care and income supports, municipalities also have a role to play in reducing poverty. The City of Winnipeg is committed to working with government bodies, including Indigenous, federal, and provincial governments and the community to foster innovative and pro-active approaches to poverty reduction and community well-being.

Given the complex nature of poverty, in order to address this multi-faceted socio-economic challenge, all levels of government, as well as a wide cross-section of other stakeholders in the community, need to be aligned and pulling in the same direction. Together, governments need to listen to those with lived experience of poverty, build on best practices and try new ideas to address poverty for those most affected.

The need for thoughtful, coordinated, intergovernmental and long-term efforts to reduce poverty is both apparent and urgent. Such action should promote clarity of roles and responsibilities for all levels of government, clearly defined commitments for action, integrated systems where possible, but also flexibility and innovation to fill gaps and ensure responsiveness to emerging issues.

Other key partners in reducing poverty include Stakeholders and Rightsholders, community-based organizations, the business community, faith and culturally-based organizations, and individual residents, including those with lived experience of poverty. In partnership, these government bodies and diverse groups are a key source of potential strategies and plans that the City of Winnipeg could support through information-sharing, collaboration, resources, partnerships, and targeted initiatives.



## Provincial and Federal Poverty Reduction Strategies

Over the past few years, both the Province of Manitoba and the Government of Canada released poverty reduction strategies. Figure 2 lists the key focus areas and goals for each strategy, in order to show areas of alignment with the City of Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy.

| **Province of Manitoba**<br>***'Pathways to a Better Future- Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy' (****March 2019)* | **Government of Canada**<br>***'Opportunity for All: Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy'*** *(October 2018)* |
|---|---|
| **Priority Areas:**<br>1. Investing in Manitoba's future prosperity through supports to children and youth.<br>2. Working together to improve health outcomes and standard of living.<br>3. Promoting economic inclusion through employment, education and training.<br>4. Facilitating partnerships and supporting community-based organizations.<br>5. Strengthening client-centered service delivery.<br>6. Making positive change through social innovation.<br><br>**Measurement Framework:**<br>*(indicators in brackets)*<br>▪ **Reduce the child poverty rate by 25% by year 2025** *(Market Basket Measure)*<br>▪ **Support the federal government's goal of reducing poverty by 50% by 2030** *(MBM)*<br>▪ **Investing in Manitoba's future prosperity through supports to children and youth** *(% not in employment/training; childcare space; children in care)*<br>▪ **Working together to improve health outcomes and standard of living** *(premature mortality; poverty entry/exit rate: core housing need)*<br>▪ **Promoting economic inclusion through employment, education and training.** *(employment rate, high school graduation, income inequality (Palma ratio), literacy/numeracy skills)* | **Pillars:**<br><br>▪ **Dignity** (ensuring basic needs are met)<br>▪ **Opportunity and inclusion** (helping people join the middle class)<br>▪ **Resilience and security** (support the middle class by preventing people from falling into poverty, and supporting income security and resilience)<br><br>**Targets:**<br>▪ Reduce poverty by 20% by 2020 and by 50% by 2030 (MBM)<br>▪ Reduce chronic homelessness by 50%<br>▪ End all long-term drinking water advisories on public systems on-reserve by March 2021<br>▪ Housing need reduced or eliminated for 530,000 households |

**Figure 2: Summary of the Province of Manitoba's and Government of Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategies**

### Indigenous Rightsholders

The City of Winnipeg acknowledges Indigenous Peoples and governments as Rightsholders of the rights referenced in *The Constitution Act, 1982*, Section 35 :(1) *The existing treaty and aboriginal rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed;"* (2) *In this Act, the 'aboriginal peoples of Canada' includes the Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada* . The use of the term Indigenous refers to *"Aboriginal Peoples of Canada"* as defined in Section 35(2) of *The Constitution Act, 1982*, which includes the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada.

Duty to Consult is a legal obligation of the Crown through the federal and provincial governments which is owed to Section 35 Rightsholders. The City of Winnipeg, in good faith, is committed to ongoing, meaningful engagement with Indigenous Rightsholders in carrying out its responsibilities as a municipal government. The Indigenous Relations Division at the City will work with Section 35 Rightsholders to identify processes for how to engage going forward.

## City of Winnipeg Role in Poverty Reduction

The City of Winnipeg recognizes that poverty is a complex issue and requires the sustained efforts of many Rightsholders, Stakeholders and Partners. While this Strategy focuses on the municipal role in reducing poverty, it is clear that the City alone cannot end poverty in our communities.

However, the City can play a meaningful role in reducing poverty by using a variety of tools, resources, and strategic partnerships to pro-actively address and reduce barriers, as well as increase access and opportunities for low-income residents. As outlined in each goal area of the strategy, the City has specific roles it can play.

This strategy aims to establish and clarify a foundation for ongoing City action and effective use of roles, tools and resources in areas related to poverty reduction. For example, this includes:

- Governance mechanisms (by-laws and regulations)
- Prioritization tools (plans, strategies, policies, budgets)
- Services (service delivery, programs, initiatives)
- Resources (people, facilities, land, finances and partnerships)

By identifying specific areas where the City can work to reduce poverty, and by clearly identifying actions for change, the City has the potential to improve the lives of residents who face economic insecurity.

### The City of Winnipeg Charter Act

The Charter is the guiding document that describes the City's key mandate and functions. Two core roles of the City identified in the Charter have direct implications for the Poverty Reduction Strategy, specifically sections 5(1)c and 5(1)d:

**5(1) The purposes of the city are**

(a) to provide good government for the city;

(b) to provide services, facilities or other things that council considers to be necessary or desirable for all or part of the city;

(c) **to develop and maintain safe, orderly, viable and sustainable communities; and**

(d) **to promote and maintain the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants.**

*(emphasis added)*

## OurWinnipeg 2045 and Complete Communities 2.0

OurWinnipeg (2011) is the current development plan by-law that articulates the City's goals and aspirations at the highest level, and serves to guide the physical, social, environmental, and economic objectives and sustainable land uses and development of the City. The most recent policy review was initiated in 2016 and the new civic plan, OurWinnipeg 2045, is presently in the midst of the Council and Provincial approval process.

If adopted, OurWinnipeg 2045 will replace OurWinnipeg 2011 and plan implementation will begin. The Complete Communities Direction Strategy (2011) is a companion city-wide secondary plan by-law that guides growth, development, and land use in Winnipeg, and a new, draft Complete Communities 2.0 is also awaiting Council approval.

OurWinnipeg 2045 and Complete Communities 2.0 will serve to align all statutory and strategic City documents, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy. OurWinnipeg 2045 will guide how best to implement the Poverty Reduction Strategy's policy intentions, align with City-wide outcomes and organize priority actions to respond to community needs.

OurWinnipeg 2045's policy context is framed by a community vision expressed through six interconnected human rights and sustainable development goals that include:

- Leadership and Good Governance
- Environmental Resilience
- Economic Prosperity
- Good Health and Well-being
- Social Equity
- City Building

Through its goal narratives, OurWinnipeg 2045 frames poverty reduction in the following ways:

- **Economic Prosperity:** "The City can directly and indirectly influence the long-term prosperity and quality of life for its residents and business community through its roles as: policy creator, land use and development regulator, public asset owner, infrastructure planner and investor, local economic development facilitator, life-long learning enabler, public safety services

provider, procurer of goods and services, and major employer. The City is in the business of public service delivery, with long-term community quality of life as its mission."

- **Health and Well-being:** "A healthy city supports the provision of basic needs, social determinants of health, and human rights through equitable access to food, water, housing, income, employment, transportation, recreation, literacy, and social inclusion. These needs are best addressed through effective cross-sector collaboration, promoting good physical and mental health for all."

- **Social Equity:** "A socially equitable community is one that embraces the following principles:
    - People are treated fairly and municipal resources are distributed based on need rather than social or economic advantage.
    - Systemic barriers are addressed and removed to provide all people with quality of life consisting of equitable access to basic needs, economic and employment opportunity, democratic participation, and sense of belonging.

Policies should be used in combination (not in isolation) as they function as interconnected layers. Members of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Core Working Team participated in the OurWinnipeg 2045 co-creation process, to provide a poverty reduction lens to the policy. In this way the City seeks to maximize the intersectionality and co-benefits of its policies and actions.

The draft OurWinnipeg 2045 references changing organizational culture, processes and systems, building equity, as well as emphasis on systemically disadvantaged groups and areas of highest need, Indigenous rights, poverty reduction, ending homelessness, social determinants of health, and community needs, leadership and benefits. In keeping with these emphases, the intersectional needs of systemically disadvantaged, under-represented, and underserved groups will need to be prioritized so their voices are heard and respected.

## Alignment with Other City of Winnipeg Plans and Policies

There are many City of Winnipeg plans, policies and strategies that are related to the goals and objectives of the Poverty Reduction Strategy. The following list includes those key policies that are most closely connected to the Strategy, and where alignment through implementation and collaboration will be sought:

- Oshki Annishinabe Nigaaniwak -The City of Winnipeg's Indigenous Youth Strategy (2008)
- LiveSAFE Policy Statement and Framework (2008)
- The City of Winnipeg Housing Policy (2013)
- Winnipeg's Indigenous Accord (2017)
- Welcoming Winnipeg: Reconciling Our History (2020)
- Newcomer Welcome & Inclusion Policy and Strategic Framework (2020)
- Recreation Strategy (pending)
- Parks Strategy (pending)

- Community Safety Action Plan (pending)
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (pending)

## Municipal Tools to Reduce Poverty

The City has many resources and tools it can apply to initiatives that will assist those in greatest need in our community, and that can help encourage the development of partnerships with other governments and the community towards the common goal of poverty reduction. These resources include human resources (the Public Service), the City's many physical assets including land and facilities, our programs and services, and our annual and multi-year budget processes. How decisions and priorities are determined related to the use of these resources can make a substantial impact on reducing poverty in Winnipeg.

As shown in Figure 3, the City has many tools and resources available to address poverty in the city. How these tools are used will impact the City's ability to deliver on its various plans, policies and strategies, and ultimately will help determine the extent to which the city attains the future as envisioned in OurWinnipeg. With many competing priorities and limited resources, thoughtful consideration must be given to all decisions at the City, and how they impact our ability to meet our stated goals.

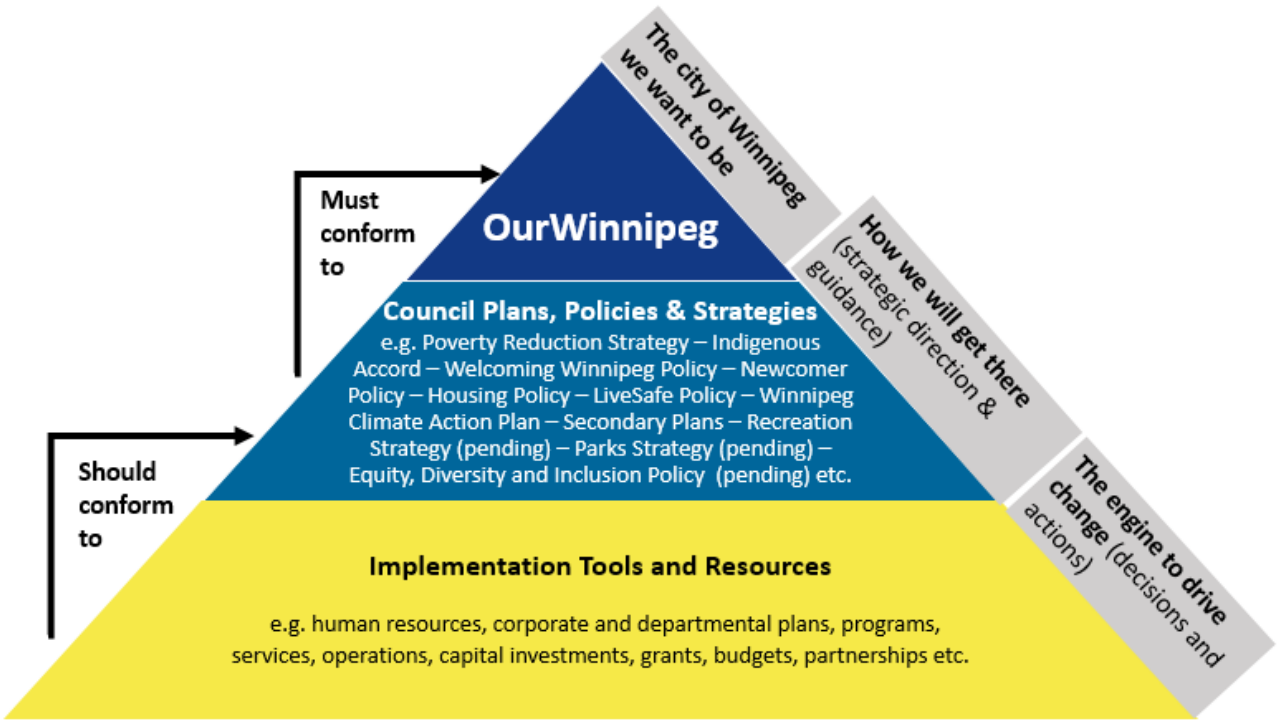



Figure 3 – Interconnection of Municipal Plans, Policies and Tools

## Municipal Advocacy, Leadership and Partnerships

The City of Winnipeg can be a champion for change, by working side-by-side with other governments and other stakeholders to address the many dimensions of poverty through policy change, tackling the root causes of poverty, responding to immediate and emergent needs, supporting at-risk populations and removing systemic barriers.

While the City is not responsible for all contributing factors that lead to poverty, it has an important role to play in advocating to both the provincial and federal governments about issues that impact the welfare of residents. This includes, for example, advocating for investment in and prioritization of: safe and affordable housing, accessible and affordable childcare, livable income and employment supports, an effective and culturally safe child welfare system and inclusion and opportunity for all equity-seeking groups across Winnipeg.

It is vital that the City works across sectors to build meaningful partnerships with community groups, Indigenous and ethno-cultural leaders and others, to ensure that a comprehensive approach to poverty reduction is taken.

During the development of this Strategy, we recognized the value of not only engaging diverse stakeholder voices during our consultations, but also of utilizing a co-creation model to ensure the voices of our frontline partners, who work directly with those living in poverty each day, were front and center.

As Winnipeg continues on its Journey of Reconciliation, we acknowledge that Indigenous partners, including Indigenous people with lived experience of poverty, must be at the center of our work. Therefore, in addition to significant contributions from the Indigenous Relations Division (IRD) at the City of Winnipeg, the project team connected with Indigenous leaders through the Winnipeg Indigenous Executive Circle (WIEC). The project team also reached out to Indigenous Rightsholders and looks forward to having the opportunity to learn from their wisdom as the implementation plans are developed and evolve.

We are committed to working together collaboratively with all the City's partners, to effect the kind of changes necessary to reduce and ultimately end poverty in our City.

**Winnipeg's Indigenous Accord**

Winnipeg's Indigenous Accord is a community partnership in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous Winnipeggers can come together and explore reconciliation. The Accord was unanimously adopted by City Council on March 22, 2017, marking an important step forward in the City of Winnipeg's Journey of Reconciliation.

The City of Winnipeg continues to explore and learn more about reconciliation. One of our key actions in supporting reconciliation was the creation of the Indigenous Accord, so that organizations and individuals can come together while learning and sharing in reconciliation. Winnipeg's Indigenous Accord is a living document to help guide our shared commitment to the Journey of Reconciliation. Our shared commitment is rooted in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action, and the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' Calls for Justice, and it is guided by the commitments and principles stated in the Accord.

The Mayor's Indigenous Advisory Circle, in consultation and collaboration with numerous community leaders and organizations, developed the Indigenous Accord document.

# Section 3. Our Shared Wisdom

## Poverty in Winnipeg

People living in poverty struggle with many challenges, including poorer health outcomes (according to the World Health Organization, poverty is the Number One social determinant of health), fewer life choices, and increased stress on individuals and families. They are also more likely to be negatively and severely impacted by crises, such as pandemics like COVID-19, extreme weather events, natural disasters, reduced air quality, and localized emergencies such as housing fires. Building a resilient community starts with assisting those who are most at-risk, and to do this we need to understand poverty in our city.

In Winnipeg, 13% of the population or 1 in 8 Winnipeggers are living below the poverty line (based on low-income status), with many others living just above it. As shown in Figure 4, certain demographics experience higher likelihoods of living in poverty, including 1 in 4 Indigenous people and 1 in 4 new immigrant residents, who arrived in Canada in the last 5 years. Single parents, in particular those from female-headed households, are also disproportionately impacted by poverty, with 1 in 5 lone parents in Winnipeg living in poverty.

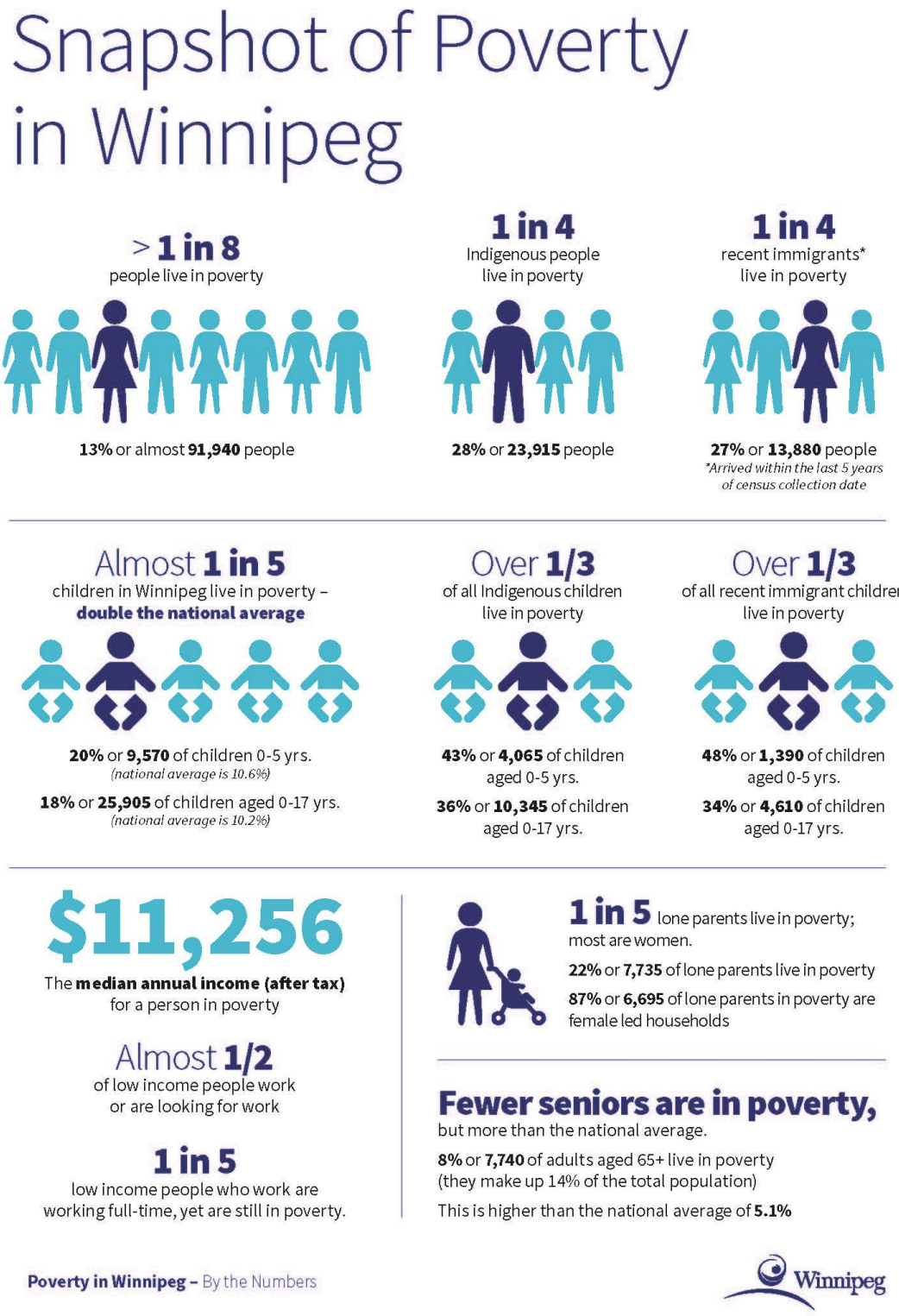



Figure 4 – Poverty Snapshot (see Poverty in Winnipeg - By the Numbers, Census 2016)

When we think of poverty, we often associate it with unemployment. However, it is important to note that in Winnipeg almost half of low-income people work or are looking for work, and 1 in 5 low-income people who work full-time are still in poverty.

As compared to other large Canadian cities, Winnipeg's poverty rate is the fourth highest after Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, and 4% higher than the national average. Meanwhile, in relation to child poverty, Winnipeg's rates are some of the worst in Canada:

- Among large Canadian cities, Winnipeg has the second highest poverty rate for children aged 0-5 years old, and the third highest poverty rate for children aged 0-17 years old.
- Looking at children 0-5 years of age, Winnipeg's poverty rate is 9.8% higher than the national average.
- The number of children 0-17 years in Winnipeg in poverty is 7.9% higher than the national average, with Toronto and Montreal having slightly higher child poverty rates than Winnipeg.
- Winnipeg has the second-largest gap between children in poverty and adults in poverty among the 10 largest cities, and the largest gap between children in poverty and seniors in poverty.
- Looking specifically at Indigenous and new immigrant children, 1 in 3 children in these groups lives in poverty.
  (from Winnipeg Poverty Snapshot, Summary 2016 Census Data)

## Defining Poverty

There are a number of different ways that we can define and understand poverty. For example, it could be categorized in terms of economic, social, cultural or political exclusion or lacking/being denied the needed resources for a good quality of life. Poverty describes the situation when people do not have income adequate for basic human needs such as clean water, nutrition, health care, clothing, and shelter, and therefore lack sufficient resources to participate in the social and economic life of their community (OurWinnipeg, 2011).

The Tamarack Institute's Compendium of Poverty Reduction Strategies and Frameworks discusses a number of different 'conditions' and types of poverty that require different interventions or solutions. Exploring the definition and nature of poverty from these various viewpoints can help us to see different aspects of poverty, and can assist us to look holistically at various approaches to poverty reduction. The following information is drawn from the Tamarack compendium:

### Conditions of Poverty

One way to conceptualize poverty, is by looking at it in terms of different levels of lack or deprivation:

1. Absolute Poverty – Lack of resources to meet basic needs for survival.

2. Relative Poverty – Lack of resources to achieve a standard of living that allows people to play roles and participate in relationships and live a life that is deemed normative by the society to which they belong.
3. Poverty as Dependence – Lack of critical mass of assets needed to meet one's needs on a sustainable basis.
4. Poverty as Exclusion – Processes of deprivation and marginalization that isolate people from the social and economic activities of society.
5. Poverty as Capabilities Deprivation – Lack of resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, economic, political and social rights.

**Types of Poverty**

Another way to conceptualize poverty is in relation to its nature, length and depth. Also, exploring the possible causes of each type of poverty can lend itself to pursuing different strategies or types of interventions to help address each specific type of poverty. The three types include: 1.

1. **Transitional or Temporary Poverty** – Relatively short-term poverty (less than 5 years).

   **Potential Causes:** Due to crisis, disruptive events or specific circumstances (i.e., a house fire, illness, job loss, divorce, domestic abuse, a death in the family, or a mental health crisis).

   **Types of Interventions:** Initiatives such as affordable housing, medical treatment, counseling, education and training, income supports and other important services like transportation and childcare, can assist individuals and families to successfully transition through the crisis, event or circumstance that caused the transitional poverty.

2. **Chronic Poverty** – Persistent, long-term (often more than 5 years), multi-dimensional.

   **Potential Causes:** Addictions, mental health issues, repeated trauma or crisis, cognitive or physical disability, exclusion, interactions with justice system, lack of social capital, family breakdown and experience in child welfare system, etc.

   **Types of Interventions:** Long-term addictions treatment, wrap-around supports, supportive housing, support groups/community, education and training, employment skills, and supported employment can assist people living in chronic poverty to address root causes of poverty and move toward stability, good health and self-sufficiency.

3. **Intergenerational poverty** – Multi-dimensional, cyclical poverty, passed on to individuals, families or communities trapped in the complexity of poverty's causes with little or no access to exit poverty.

   **Cause**: Long-term, systemic barriers and injustices such as colonization and discrimination.

**Types of interventions:** Multi-dimensional approaches including addressing systemic injustices, healing and cultural supports, early childhood development interventions related to health, education, nutrition, recreation, parenting support, mentoring plus foundational supports to meet basic needs (adequate income, decent housing, food, clothing, safety) will begin to support individuals facing intergenerational poverty.

Poverty is a very complex issue, with multiple causes and no single solution. As outlined above, there are many different types of poverty, whether it be short-term and associated with job-loss or significant life changes, or long-term and related to a substance-use disorder, mental health concern, individual or inter-generational trauma, or historic and systemic discrimination. As described in the Tamarack Compendium, there are many interconnected reasons why people experience poverty:

> *"For many people experiencing poverty, practically every family, every problem magnifies the impact of the others and all are so tightly interlocked that one reversal can produce a chain reaction with results far distant from the original cause. If problems are interlocking, then so must be solutions. A job alone is not enough. Medical (coverage) alone is not enough. Good housing alone is not enough. Reliable transportation, careful family budgeting, effective parenting, effective schooling, are not enough when each is achieved in isolation from the rest. There is no single variable that can be altered to help people move away from poverty. If problems are interlocking then solutions must also be interlocking."*[1]

This interconnectedness is why a comprehensive, multi-faceted and multi-stakeholder approach to poverty reduction is necessary. The Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy seeks to build the foundation for this interconnected and collaborative response.

## Indigenous Poverty and Homelessness

When looking at poverty through an Indigenous lens, the issues faced today are rooted deeply in Canada's colonial history. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines oppression as "unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power". Recurring examples of such unjust exercise of power pre-date Canada's inception and the adoption of the *Indian Act* in 1876.

In 1870, Manitoba joined Confederation with the passing of *The Manitoba Act*, which guaranteed the people of the Métis Nation certain concessions, one of them being 1.4 million acres of land along with recognition of land ownership. However, the federal government quickly backtracked and ensured the land claims process was slow with numerous systemic barriers. In 2013, over 140 years later, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the federal government failed to honour its obligations under *The Manitoba Act*, as it related to the land grant provision set out in Section 31.

On a national scale, the First Nations who entered into numbered Treaties with the intent of peaceful alliance and partnership were met with deception and coercion by the Crown and Canadian

[1] See A Compendium of Poverty Reduction Strategies Frameworks, by Garry Loewen, Tamarack Institute pg. 7.

government. The residual effects from broken promises and the systems of oppression that have been implemented for hundreds of years are still visible and part of Indigenous peoples' daily experience.

Forcible displacement from ancestral lands, removal of traditional governance systems, and the effects of physical and cultural genocide continue to shape the environment Winnipeg residents live in today. These harms were willfully inflicted on Indigenous peoples by the federal government as part of a broader agenda to assimilate First Nations, the Métis Nation and Inuit into Canadian society.

The residential school system, funded by the federal government and administered by the Roman Catholic, Anglican, United, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches, operated for over 160 years and was intentionally designed to strip Indigenous children of their culture. When proposing a Bill to mandate residential school attendance, Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs Duncan Campbell Scott wrote: "I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that the country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone…Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department, that is the whole object of this Bill."[2]

It is estimated that over 150,000 First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation children passed through the residential school system over the course of its existence, suffering unthinkable physical, emotional and sexual abuse in the process. As many Canadians are now realizing, thousands of these children never returned home.

The harm caused by these schools did not simply end when the last one closed in 1996. Intergenerational trauma continues to grip Indigenous communities and is a major contributing factor in the disparities that First Nations, Métis Nation and Inuit face in Winnipeg and across the country.

**Indigenous Homelessness Definition** - A report by the Canadian Observatory of Homelessness (Definition of Indigenous Homelessness in Canada, 2017) authored by Jesse A. Thistle defines Indigenous Homelessness as *"a human condition that describes First Nations, Métis and Inuit individuals, families or communities lacking stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means or ability to acquire such housing. Unlike the common colonialist definition of homelessness, Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews. These include: individuals, families and communities isolated from their relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, cultures, languages and identities. Importantly, Indigenous people experiencing these kinds of homelessness cannot culturally, spiritually, emotionally or physically reconnect with their Indigeneity or lost relationships"*

Thistle, J. (2017.) Indigenous Definition of Homelessness in Canada. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press, pg. 6.

The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada highlighted five main areas where we see the lasting legacies of assimilation and residential schools: Child Welfare, Education, Language and Culture, Health, and Justice. Numerous links can be made between these areas and the needs

[2] Source: National Archives of Canada, Record Group 10, volume 6810, file 470-2-3, volume 7, pp. 55 (L-3) and 63 (N-3)

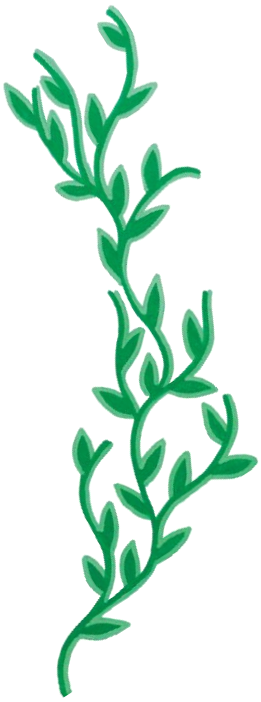
identified within the framework of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, including its *Life Poles* of *Indigenous Children, Youth and Families and Affordable Housing.*

The first steps towards reconciliation involve truth which requires a holistic understanding of the experiences of Indigenous people. Data related to homelessness, such as the 2018 Winnipeg Street Census, shows that a disproportionate number of Indigenous people experience poverty as compared to the non-Indigenous population. Indigenous people also experience homelessness in a particular way.

Through the goals and objectives of the Strategy, the City will look to address inequities as an organization, and provide necessary supports with a holistic understanding of the root causes of Indigenous poverty and homelessness in the community.

## Lived Experience Voices

Throughout the process of creating the Poverty Reduction Strategy, it has been the wisdom of those with lived experience of poverty that has guided the direction of what has been created in the Strategy documents and implementation plan. Their voices and insights will also help guide the future work that will give life and meaning to the important actions the City needs to take to reduce poverty.



A Lived Experience Advisor who has been a key Stakeholder throughout the process of developing the Poverty Reduction Strategy, gave an analogy of why it is so crucial to have lived experience voices informing every step of the process. He shared that when the City is going through the decision-making process, it should be viewed in the same way that sports games have a Main Commentator as well as a Colour Commentator or Expert Commentator. The Colour Commentator is often a former athlete with first-hand experience playing the sport, the term 'colour' refers to levity and insight provided by a secondary announcer. These Colour Commentators provide expert analysis, insights and background information that enhances everyone's understanding of the game being played.

The intention of this analogy is not to trivialize poverty or compare it to a game, but instead to share a vivid first-hand illustration of what is at stake – an illustration that can help bridge understanding between decision-makers and those with lived experience. For the City and other levels of government to make truly informed, effective decisions that will have a positive outcome for all, those most affected must also have a seat at the table.

Preparation of this Strategy has also been guided by the belief that there needs to be equity and fairness when it comes to the decision-making table itself. A two-tiered table, where those seated at the upper tier have all the decision-making power, and the opinions of those seated at the lower tier can be heeded or not, is not based in equity.

Oftentimes, the voices of those with lived experience are only brought in for consultation when it suits those in positions of power. When the voices of those with lived experience provide their input, their words are often listened to but not acted upon. Frequently, their contributions are viewed as optional suggestions, and not given the importance and value that they deserve.

This Poverty Reduction Strategy is founded on the premise that decisions which directly impact those with lived experience of poverty, should be made based on the insights and recommendations provided by those with lived experience. They have the most at stake when decisions that may affect them are being made. They are the most important stakeholders involved, and have a rightful place at an equitable decision-making table on an on-going basis.

## Understanding Intersectionality

Experiences of poverty are shaped by the intersections of identity, such as age, culture, gender, race, ability and other social aspects - so reducing poverty requires the recognition of social categorizations and how they overlap. How an older adult with a disability experiences poverty may look different than how a young Indigenous family with children may experience poverty. These differences in lived experience might be expressed through varying prioritizations around basic needs or what might be helpful in reducing poverty.

This is why it is crucial to ensure there is representation of a variety of intersectional identities being taken into consideration when developing poverty reduction efforts. For example, an older adult might consider the importance of access to healthy, affordable foods and transportation to medical appointments to be of greater value. In contrast, as they are in a different life stage, an Indigenous youth may find more value in recreation opportunities as well as in training for employment and education.

This is not to say that those living in poverty should be made to choose which basic need they value over the other, but a healthy recognition of intersectional identities reinforces that they are all important and vital to creating a safe, equitable community that has opportunities for all to feel included, and that their needs should be met.

Marginalization also has a profoundly intersectional character. Not always, but often, those with lived experience of poverty also have lived experience of the child welfare system, homelessness, addictions, mental health issues or involvement with the justice system. These are complex experiences, and when individuals are also impacted by multiple systems of oppression such as racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, classism, ageism, at the same time it creates challenges that are unique to that particular intersection of marginalization.

Addressing these challenges requires the understanding that identities do not exist in silos, and intersectional identity issues shape the challenges people face. If solutions are developed in a way where people experiencing poverty are seen as a homogenous group, people experiencing multiple forms of oppression will fall through the cracks and the inequalities they experience may be exacerbated. There are no quick and easy solutions to these issues; creating positive change in our communities and the systems which govern them requires a collaborative effort and willingness amongst all involved to listen - and to act, based on the wisdom shared by those with lived experiences. For trust and understanding to prevail, innovative approaches rooted in empathy and a culture of caring should be at the forefront.

Throughout the Poverty Reduction Strategy's engagement process, Lived Experience Advisors consistently cautioned about the hazards of going down the same path that many other strategies have. Historically, many other strategies have offered a variety of detailed recommendations, but managed to implement few of them.

To ensure the success of this Strategy, there needs to be a holistic approach to finding interconnected solutions that address many issues at the same time. Many of those experiencing poverty face challenges that touch on all of the goal areas included in the Strategy. Those who have inadequate housing, also face challenges finding employment and being able to afford healthy food or transportation to appointments to access resources.

Holistic solutions recognize the connection between all these areas, and by providing a wraparound model, people experiencing poverty are enabled to access resources, healthy affordable food, adequate housing and income opportunities. Holistic approaches are the only ones that have the potential to provide long-lasting, sustainable solutions for the community that go beyond band-aid fixes and "managing" poverty.

## Indigenous Youth Voices

Based on the insights provided by those with lived experience, especially youth in the community, there is no question that there is a direct correlation between poverty and the impact of policing in the community. For meaningful poverty reduction to be possible in Winnipeg, a focus needs to be put on community safety and particularly the impacts that the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) has on the community. For example, as the City works to establish trusting relationships around community safety, there needs to be an understanding that those with lived experience of poverty may also have lived experience of harm committed by law enforcement.

Before collaboration to find solutions can even begin, there is a legacy of distrust and lived experience of past harms that must be addressed safely and respectfully. Negative interactions with law enforcement were shared by multiple Lived Experience Stakeholders during conversations throughout the engagement process.

Indigenous youth shared experiences of nearly being arrested for playing sports at the park with their friends, as well as being pursued on foot for crossing the street in a way that seemed suspicious. Representatives of community organizations that work with and advocate for Indigenous youth provided insight into the experiences of community members. They described that in particular, Indigenous people and those experiencing homelessness feel disproportionately surveilled in the community.

Those experiencing homelessness or who frequently panhandle in the community are often criminalized in society for the means by which they try to survive. Sleeping in a bus shelter and panhandling are a means of survival, but instead they are viewed as a nuisance or a public disturbance.

Changes need to be made so that everyone in Winnipeg feels welcome and safe as members of the community. These changes can begin to happen when the City and residents work together to foster a culture of caring, where all residents feel cared for and safe. To do this, ensuring accountability amongst those responsible for safety and law enforcement in Winnipeg is paramount.

Currently, many community members do not feel that that decision-makers and law enforcement take accountability or are held accountable for what they do. To be able to create trust in these relationships, there must be accountability and a responsibility to care for the safety of all members in the community.

## Geographic Areas of Higher Poverty

To better understand community needs, the City has prepared a map of areas of poverty using Census data (see Figure 5 below - Geographic Areas of Higher Poverty). The map uses analysis of low-income (Market Basket Measure) data from the 2016 Census for the City of Winnipeg, including the prevalence (percentage of people), density (people per square km), and total number of people living in low-income circumstances. Additional layered analysis was undertaken for two specific demographic groups most impacted by poverty, Indigenous residents and children (0-14 years).

As shown on the map, three categories were used to help illustrate areas of the City that have a high concentration of residents living with low incomes, who subsequently may have an increased need for City and community-based services, programs, and supports. Winnipeg neighbourhood boundaries and streets are shown on the map; however, data analysis was undertaken primarily at the Dissemination Area (DA) geographic unit of the Census.

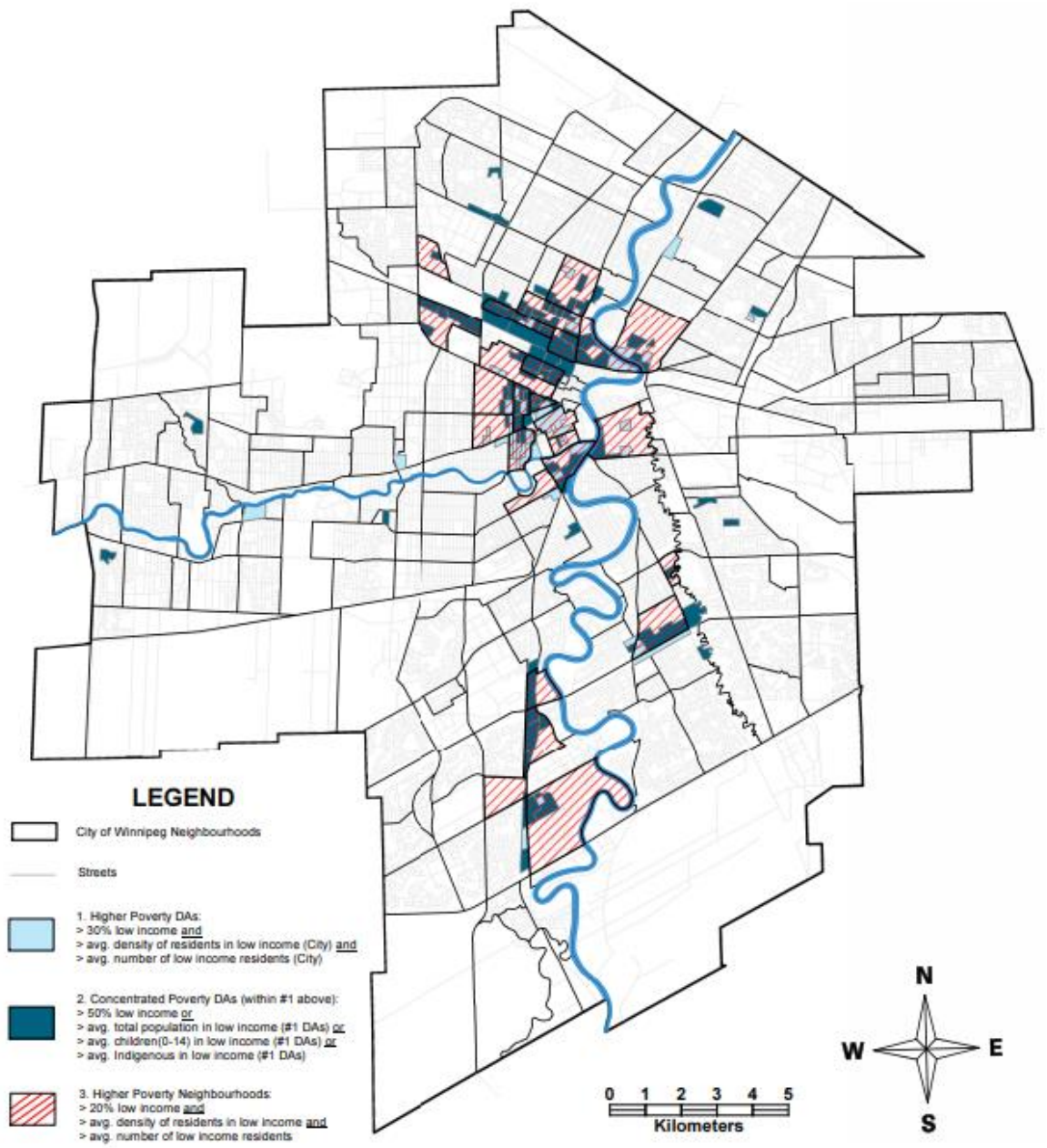



**Figure 5 - Geographic Areas of Higher Poverty, Data Source: Census 2016**

What the map shows is that poverty is found in all areas of the city, and that higher concentrations of people experiencing poverty are found in areas with lower-cost housing options, well-serviced by transit, and in areas with easier access to goods and services. It should be noted that the isolated sites with higher numbers of residents in poverty are typically associated with low income housing developments

Significant findings from this analysis indicate that in the darkest blue areas on the map (*Concentrated Poverty Dissemination Areas*), the residents living in poverty include:

- 44% of all residents
- 61% of children (0-14 yrs.)
- 61% of Indigenous residents (those who self-identified as Indigenous)

These numbers indicate areas of the city where a substantial number of residents face challenges in meeting their basic needs, feeding themselves and their children well, and likely face barriers to accessing goods and services that other residents not living in poverty may take for granted.

In the Poverty Reduction Strategy, and its implementation plans, the Geographic Areas of Higher Poverty are noted as areas for priority focus, where it has been determined that adapted approaches to City programs and services for these areas would have a positive impact on residents living in poverty. It is expected that the Geographic Areas of Higher Poverty analysis will continue to inform City decision-making, and will be used to identify areas for:

- Service review and special program development.
- Enhanced community collaboration to better understand and identify specific needs and opportunities.
- Focused initiatives and investments, in order to improve health and well-being outcomes of residents.

# Section 4. Poverty Reduction Framework for the City of Winnipeg

## Vision

To be a vibrant and healthy city which places its highest priority on quality of life for all residents.

## Mission

By implementing the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the City of Winnipeg will demonstrate leadership by taking a proactive and responsive role in reducing poverty with community partners, including residents, businesses, community-based organizations and with government bodies, including Indigenous, federal, and provincial governments to ensure that the basic needs of all residents are met. City services will be developed and delivered using a poverty reduction lens, and in a manner that fosters an inclusive, equitable, healthy, and vibrant city where everyone is cared for and can flourish.

## Overarching Principle

We will Honour our Shared Wisdom, Accept Responsibility and Be Accountable for Implementing the Strategy.

## Guiding Principles

- **We will Uphold Human Rights.** (Manitoba Human Rights Code; UNDRIP; UN Rights of the Child; Jordan's Principle; Accessibility for Manitobans Act)
- **We will Honour Relationships and Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.** (Treaty #1 and Métis Nation Homeland; TRC Calls to Action; MMIWG Calls for Justice, Winnipeg Indigenous Accord)
- **We will Address Systemic Oppression, Trauma, and Social Inequity.**
- **We will Promote and Maintain the Welfare of all residents.**
- **We will Develop Trust and Meaningful Partnerships to find solutions and drive change.**

## Goals

1. Equity and a Culture of Caring are Demonstrated through Strategy Implementation and Systems Change
2. The City Actively Plans for and Partners in Affordable Housing
3. Equity is Embedded in all City Employment and Income Opportunities
4. Community Well-Being Supports for those in Greatest Need are Increased
5. Transportation System Equity is Enhanced
6. All City Services are Equitable, Inclusive and Accessible
7. Food Security and Food System Resilience is Expanded
8. Equity in Community Safety is Increased through Collaboration

## Building the Foundation for Action

As outlined above, the teachings from Amik (The Beaver), who represents Wisdom in the Seven Sacred Teachings, have guided the creation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy. In the early stages of the Strategy's development, the CWT discussed approaches to reducing poverty. Through these discussions, a connection was drawn between the role of beavers and their impacts on the larger environment.

First Nations and Métis members of the CWT who have been gifted with the knowledge of the Seven Sacred Teachings passed on that knowledge to the other members of the CWT. They shared that the beaver teaches us that the building of a community is entirely dependent on gifts given to each member by the Creator, and how these gifts are used.

The wisdom from the beaver, is the inspiration for the Poverty Reduction Strategy Framework. Beavers know that to build their dams and lodges, they must start with a strong foundation of large logs held in place by mud. As shown in Figure 6, the Strategy's foundation is held together and supported by the Vision and Mission, the City's Role and the Goals and Objectives. This essential phase involves the most effort by the whole colony, and the success of the dam will depend upon it.

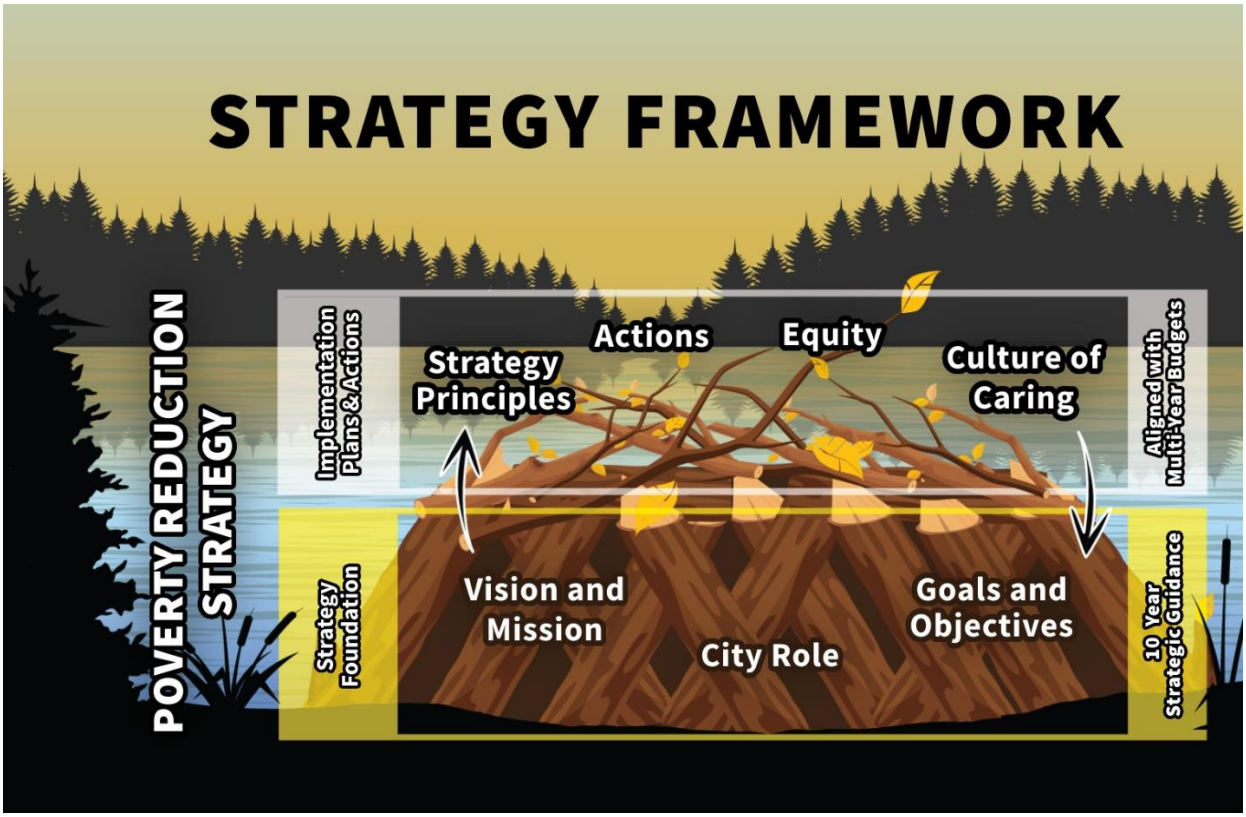



**Figure 6: Poverty Reduction Strategy Framework (**Illustration by Cassy Regier)

Similarly, the success of the Poverty Reduction Strategy is dependent upon the City's dedication to the strategic guidance for the next 10 years. With a strong foundation, beavers add smaller branches and more mud, then sticks and leaves. In this framework, the branches, sticks and leaves represent the Strategy's Principles and Actions included in the implementation plans that will be aligned with the City's multi-year budgets.

Responding to changing water levels and seasons, the colony adds and replaces sticks, mud and leaves, building upon and reinforcing the same foundation. By using this model, it will continue to reinforce that the Strategy is based in equity and a culture of caring. A colony must work together to build their dam. With a strong foundation and collaboration, beaver dams can last hundreds of years, being continuously maintained by generations working together to ensure the sustained well-being of all members of the colony. Through reinforcing the foundation, centering collaboration and responding

to the needs of the community, the Strategy aspires to create long-term, sustained efforts towards reducing poverty and improving the well-being of all residents.

## Goals, Objectives, Actions in the Strategy

The City's 10-year Poverty Reduction Strategy is focused on long-term, sustainable, and collaborative solutions that are within the City's jurisdiction, in addition to addressing the emergent and immediate needs of community members. To do so, the strategy outlines eight specific Goals, each with associated Objectives and Actions. The Goals are intended to provide a long-term vision of what the City will achieve. The Objectives are the specific, measurable, and time-bound plans the City will employ to achieve those goals, and the Actions are the activities and steps that will be taken to reach each objective.

- **Goals –** Where you want to be, what you want to achieve. Long-term and visionary. An outcome to strive towards. 10-year Strategy Goals.
- **Objectives** – Strategies to help attain the Goal. Specific achievements you want to make/what will be different as a result of implementation (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound - SMART) 10-year Strategy Objectives.
- **Actions** – Specific activities/steps to take that will help reach the objective, with assigned leads, timelines, resource needs. The 'how to' steps, that can inform annual work plans (but are not actual work plans) Actions in the Implementation Plan to help the City work towards meeting the Goals and Objectives.

# Life Poles

Across the eight goals of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, two key focus areas or Life Poles have been identified and prioritized by stakeholders for enhanced and focused support to impact the cycle of poverty: *Indigenous Children, Youth and Families* and *Affordable Housing*. The term *Life Pole* is derived from the teachings of the tipi; this pole is the final one to be raised and has the critical role of supporting the canvas and because of that, represents ultimate protection. Achieving the Goals, Objectives and Actions will have broad, intersectional benefits and will require long-term and sustained effort through collaboration with municipal, provincial, federal and Indigenous governments, external agencies and other community partners.




**Figure 7 – Strategy Life Poles (Illustration by Cassy Regier)**

## Indigenous Children, Youth and Families Life Pole

The City of Winnipeg is the Birthplace of the Métis Nation and the Heart of the Métis Nation Homeland. It is located within Treaty No. 1 Territory, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Ininew (Cree), Anishininiw (Oji-Cree), Dene, and Dakota. It remains a key socio-economic hub for many First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities. The city has the largest urban Indigenous population in Canada and this population is growing significantly faster than the non-Indigenous population. Indigenous children and youth represent one of the fastest growing demographic groups.

As reported in the 2016 Census, Winnipeg has a total of 84,305 residents who self-identified as Indigenous, which represents 12.2 per cent of the population[3]. 54 per cent of the Indigenous population in Winnipeg self-identified as Métis, 44 per cent self-identified as First Nations and 2 per cent self-identified as Inuk (Inuit) or other/multiple. A deeper look at the census shows that 28 per cent of residents who self-identify as Indigenous in Winnipeg live in poverty, and 18 per cent of children, or 1 in every 5, experience poverty, which is double the national average[4].

To better understand why this is, we have to first acknowledge the prolonged effects of colonialism, systemic racism and oppression, not only in Winnipeg, but throughout Manitoba and Canada. These numbers begin to tell the story behind the importance of Indigenous children, youth and families being identified as a Life Pole for the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

The City's commitment to acting on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Call to Action, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG+) Calls for Justice all form part of the foundation for the Indigenous children, youth, and families Life Pole that in turn supports the City's efforts to reduce poverty.




The child welfare system, and more specifically, Child and Family Services (CFS), play a significant role when analyzing poverty in Winnipeg. A disproportionate number of Indigenous children and youth continue to flow through the system, many of whom feel unprepared and unsupported when transitioning into adult life. According to the 2018 Winnipeg Street Census, "51.5% of people experiencing homelessness had been in the care of Child and Family Services at one point in their lives. 62.4% of them experienced homelessness within one year of leaving care."[5]

[3] Source: City of Winnipeg Indigenous Peoples Highlights - Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population
[4] Source: 2016 Census of Population, Geographic Areas of Higher Poverty analysis
[5] Source: 2018 Winnipeg Street Census

Key Action Items for the Poverty Reduction Strategy will aim to reduce gaps in services for youth aging out of CFS care, while providing the necessary supports and resources to provide wrap-around transition programming for youth, to address both systemic barriers and access to services. Collaboration and partnership opportunities with community organizations and other levels of government will also be at the forefront of various Action Items that address issues faced by Indigenous children, youth and families.

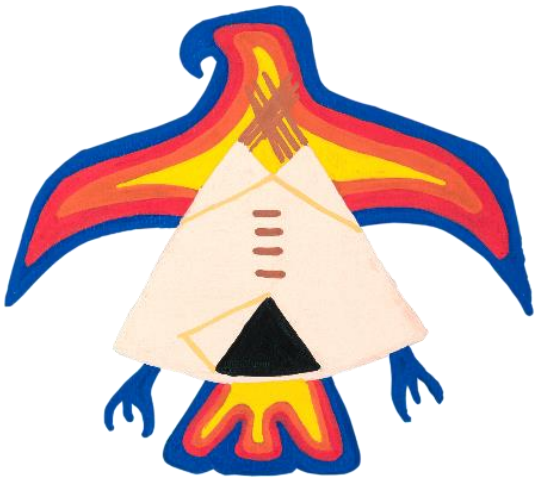
Other Actions for Implementation within the Poverty Reduction Strategy will seek to reduce and dismantle barriers and systemic racism across all eight of its Goals. The intention of the Strategy is to build support and resources, while decreasing inequities, for Indigenous children, youth and families throughout the City of Winnipeg's programs and services.

Key objectives include implementing hiring and training programs that focus on equity, diversity, inclusion, reconciliation with Indigenous people, and poverty reduction. In addition, priority will be placed on increased safety and security of Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQ+ people, and youth. This will be realized through partnerships, joint initiatives, and prioritization in decision-making.

The Strategy will also seek to prioritize projects informed by the 'Housing First' model, and those that provide safe and culturally appropriate housing for these groups as well as others overrepresented in poverty. Emphasis will be placed on coordinating and facilitating ongoing access to affordable housing program funds from other levels of government in local projects, particularly those that will introduce new transitional, supportive, and rent-geared-to-income housing units. These particular actions are focused on the Affordable Housing Life Pole, but are key, as they have elements that cross over between both Life Poles of the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

## Affordable Housing Life Pole

Throughout the Strategy's development process, stakeholders identified Affordable Housing as the most critical factor impacting the well-being of people living in poverty. Stakeholders shared that without a safe, secure and affordable home, it is virtually impossible to adequately address other personal and family needs, such as: taking care of physical and mental health, accessing goods and services, accessing education, and securing and maintaining employment.



Safe and adequate housing is a fundamental building block underlying health and equity for the residents of our city. Measuring the supply of affordable and social housing against needs in the community serves as a reflection of how we are doing in promoting and maintaining the welfare of all residents.

In 2020, the City of Winnipeg's Planning, Property and Development department commissioned a Comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment study. This study, prepared by the Institute of Urban Studies at the University of Winnipeg, provides a significant basis of information for future planning and partnerships in affordable housing. Key findings from the study indicate that over 60,000 households in Winnipeg face affordability challenges (meaning they spend more than 30% of income on housing), with significant need in the city's central neighbourhoods, for renters, and for households led by young people and seniors.

Other findings are that households in 'core housing need' increased by 25% since 2011, to 34,625 households in 2016, meaning they face challenges in terms of housing adequacy, affordability, and suitability. In addition, there are approximately 1,500 residents without any form of secure housing, based on the 2018 Street Census of the homeless population.

Through its engagement with stakeholders, the Comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment study reports that moving up the 'housing continuum' is a common challenge, as there is a limited supply of housing options for people with lower incomes. This shortage creates limited opportunity for others with housing needs to find safe and secure housing, particularly those transitioning out of homelessness.

To meet housing needs in Winnipeg, the Comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment study provided commentary on possible targets which can be summarized as follows (see page 207-208 of the Housing Needs Assessment report):

- Reasonable estimates for the number of households/people in need of housing assistance in Winnipeg include consideration of the number of homeless (approximately 1,500 people) and the number of households in core housing need (34,625 households)
- The federal National Housing Strategy (NHS) includes the targets for reducing chronic homelessness by 50% and core housing need by 50% within ten years. The Province of Manitoba is a partner in trying to achieve these targets as a signatory to the bi-lateral agreement.
- In order to meet the NHS targets locally, the following targets could be established:
    - 75 units of transitional or social housing per year for ten years, aimed at transitioning people out of homelessness, in order to reduce the number of homeless by 50% from 1,500 to 750 people.
    - 1,731 households per year for 10 years, to receive supports addressing their core housing need (adequacy, affordability, suitability). This would be needed to reduce the number of households in core housing need by 50% from 34,625 to 17,312 households.

It is clear that, in order to meet such targets, the collaboration by all levels of government on a combination of programs would be required. As stated in the Comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment report, the City of Winnipeg has an important role to play in supporting affordable housing

objectives, and the City can and should take steps to better utilize the many tools at its disposal that would provide a greater regulatory and facilitative environment for the delivery of affordable housing.

In the development of this Strategy, stakeholders stated loud and clear that what is needed is 'rent geared to income' housing, with rents at not more than 30% of a person's income. Social housing (owned by a government or non-profit) is seen as the type of housing that is most needed to ensure this level of affordability is maintained over time, and should be prioritized.

In response to the national housing crisis facing cities across Canada, the federal government is making significant investments in housing through the National Housing Strategy (NHS). Support from provincial and local governments, as well as non-profit developers and community-based organizations, is required to leverage these funds. For the Province of Manitoba, Manitoba Housing establishes housing policies and programs, and supports the development of affordable housing for those in low income and with specialized needs. They also help to provide emergency shelter services. In all affordable housing delivery, multi-sectoral support, partnerships and collaboration is required. For example, the City of Winnipeg has recently taken bold steps to offer this support by participating in the Federal Rapid Housing Initiative.

Continue bold action is needed over the next decade by all parties, to truly make a difference in the supply of affordable and social housing options in our city. There are many resources and tools the City has at its disposal that can be implemented to support and facilitate affordable housing development. This Strategy aims to launch the next bold steps needed to utilize these tools.

Figure 8, adapted from the Comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment report, illustrates the housing continuum and the municipal role in housing.



*Figure 8 - Municipal Role in Housing - Adapted from the City of Winnipeg Comprehensive Needs Assessment, 2020 (Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg)*

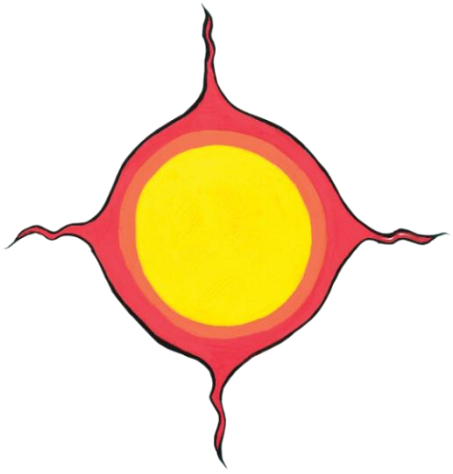
As the City of Winnipeg grows to a population of 1 million residents (the city's population is estimated to reach over 819,000 by 2024), it is critical that the City actively plans and partners for affordable housing. As the land use regulator, tax assessor, and planner for growth, it is imperative that the City of Winnipeg factors in ways to support and protect affordable housing in our city.

Using our shared wisdom and the input of people with lived experience, the Poverty Reduction Strategy identifies Affordable Housing as a Life Pole, meaning it is an area for focused prioritization over the next decade. Without safe, secure and affordable housing, the residents of Winnipeg who are experiencing poverty will have limited ability to improve their lives.

# Section 5. Poverty Reduction Goals and Objectives

The Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy is framed around Goals and Objectives in eight key areas. These areas are described below, beginning with a description of why City of Winnipeg action is important in each area, as well as some 'Shared Wisdom' that was imparted by both internal and external stakeholders.

## Goal 1: Equity and a Culture of Caring are Demonstrated through Strategy Implementation and Systems Change



The City of Winnipeg will demonstrate its commitment to poverty reduction by putting the appropriate structures and tools in place to ensure the successful implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy. This will include a Leadership Circle, recommended to consist of Senior Administration, Community Partners and people with Lived Experience to guide and drive the implementation of the strategy and to monitor progress. The implementation structure will also include identified staff with the authority to coordinate and direct departmental work toward the implementation of the strategy, as well as to coordinate monitoring and reporting activities.

The City will also take its Poverty Reduction Strategy into account when preparing annual and multi-year budgets. This practice will facilitate consideration of the way spending decisions could impact the City's capacity to implement the Strategy and make progress toward achieving its goals.

In addition to implementing the targeted poverty reduction initiatives in the City's Strategy, an Equity Assessment Tool will be developed to help the Public Service, Winnipeg Police Service (WPS), and elected officials increase equity in all City and WPS programs, services, facilities, and budgets. This tool will help ensure all municipal actions are analyzed and evaluated for their ability to meet the needs of diverse groups of people with multiple and intersecting identities, including people experiencing poverty. Fostering use of an Equity Assessment Tool combined with mandatory anti-racism and anti-oppression training for City employees will help embed a culture of caring within the municipal Public Service.

> ***"The City says it values poverty reduction but by not allocating any additional funds or resources is a contradiction."***
> *(Lived experience stakeholder, December 2020)*

***Our Shared Wisdom:***

- The City should be a leader in human rights and caring.
- Improving the lives of the most at-risk residents makes the city better for everyone.
- The 'left-hand' and the 'right-hand' of the City can work together better.

## 10-year Objectives:

**A.** City roles, responsibilities, and resources to implement the strategy are clearly assigned.

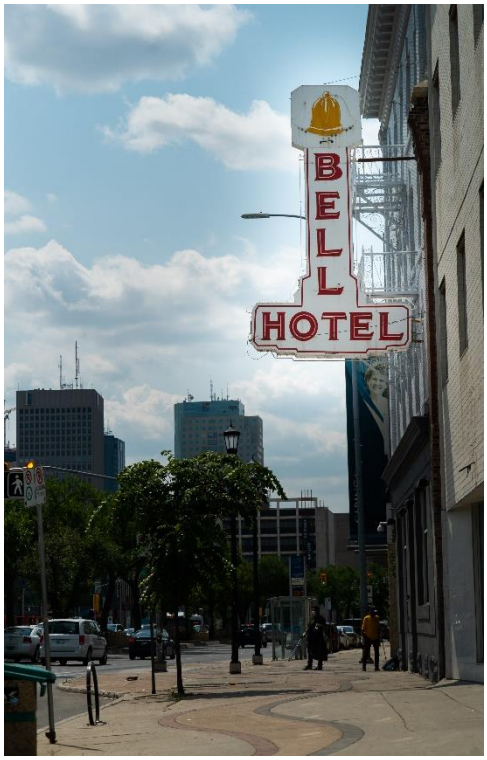
**B.** City decisions and actions are informed by Lived Experience perspectives, trusting relationships are established.

**C.** Equity and a Culture of Caring are factored into all service planning and budget decisions, resulting in City-wide systems change.

**D.** The City advocates for and pursues partnerships to implement the Strategy.

**E.** The Strategy and Implementation Plans are monitored, evaluated and updated on a regular basis to ensure progress is made.

# Goal 2: The City Actively Plans for and Partners in Affordable Housing




Without adequate housing there are few pathways out of poverty. OurWinnipeg 2011, states: "Housing is a cornerstone of healthy communities and of a strong city; it is a basic need and is central to our quality of life." However, a lack of affordable and social housing in Winnipeg means too many residents face struggles to keep a safe and stable roof over their heads.

Many people live in homes that are in poor condition and suffer the health effects of poor quality or crowded housing. Across Winnipeg, almost 30 per cent of all renters are in core housing need, meaning they live in inadequate, unsuitable housing and/or spend more than 30 per cent of their income on housing. Just over eight per cent of Winnipeggers live in homes in need of major repairs; for Indigenous Winnipeggers it is over 50 per cent.

Homelessness in our city is the most unacceptable illustration of housing need. The Winnipeg Street Census 2018 reports that approximately 1,500 people in Winnipeg experience homelessness on any given day. The actual number is likely much higher as this figure doesn't capture the majority of those experiencing hidden homelessness.

Collective efforts to address homelessness, housing insecurity, and poverty will only go so far without an adequate supply of quality affordable and social housing. The City of Winnipeg can help increase supply using planning, regulatory and funding tools. The City can also play a unique role in preserving the existing stock of affordable and social housing.

***"I wish the City would implement policies that ensure the preservation of existing affordable units (rooming houses, triplexes, lower rent blocks, etc.)."***
*(Community Stakeholder, June 2021)*

The City will also call on our provincial and federal partners to invest their resources toward meeting the housing needs of the lowest-income Winnipeggers. The City will partner with them whenever possible to leverage investment and municipal tools to the greatest extent possible. As an example, the federal government announced an historic investment in housing through a National Housing Strategy in 2017.

***Our Shared Wisdom:***

- As the regulator of land development, the City can facilitate and support affordable housing development.
- Partnership opportunities exist and require coordinated effort to pursue.

***"The not-for-profit sector is best set up to provide affordable housing in a sustainable way. However, not-for-profit developers need someone to guide them through the City's development process. A partnership where the City provides free land and tax incentives while the Province provides capital investment should be investigated."***
*(Lived Experience Stakeholder, December 2020*

## 10-year Objectives:

**A.** The City's capacity and commitment to advancing affordable housing initiatives are increased.

**B.** The urgent housing needs of shelterless residents are addressed though proactive, multi-sectoral partnerships.

**C.** Municipal tools, resources and partnerships are developed and used to encourage and facilitate affordable housing development.

**D.** Existing affordable rental housing stock is maintained and improved.

**Affordable Housing Definition** - Refers to housing that falls within the financial means of a household living in either market or non-market dwellings. Housing is generally considered affordable if all costs related to shelter, including rent or mortgage payment (principal, interest and a 10% down payment), taxes, insurance and utilities require 30% or less of gross annual household income. Housing affordability is also influenced by household income (e.g. the concept of housing hardship that considers if a household can afford basic non-housing expenses like food and transportation after paying for housing) as well as housing cost and supply. (OurWinnipeg, 2011)

# Goal 3: Equity is Embedded in all City Employment and Income Opportunities



The connection between employment, income, and poverty is clear. People living in poverty spend much of their time and resources simply securing their basic needs day after day. This leaves little time to take steps toward escaping poverty. All Winnipeggers should have access to an income that enables them to meet all of their basic needs and to participate fully in their community and in the economy.

The vast majority of people access income from wages earned at work; however, minimum-wage work does not pay enough to lift people above the poverty line. Some job-seekers facing multiple barriers cannot access and succeed in training and employment without wrap-around supports; however existing services are not supported enough to meet the need. People who can only work limited hours, or who cannot work at all, often depend on Manitoba's Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) program to access income; however, EIA rates provide annual incomes that are well below the poverty line.

There are limitations to what the City of Winnipeg can do to address some of these issues, as the provincial government is responsible for setting the minimum wage and EIA rates. The City will call on provincial partners to increase the minimum wage and EIA rates to a level that lifts people above the poverty line. The City will do its part to improve employment and income outcomes for low-income Winnipeggers through hiring, training, compensation, and purchasing practices. The City will also enhance the capacity of community-led employment and income programs to better meet the demand for services.

***"There needs to be more employment opportunities for young people."***
*(Lived experience stakeholder, November 18, 2020)*

***Our Shared Wisdom:***

- The City is one of Winnipeg's largest employers, and can leverage hiring and purchasing power to include social and community benefits.
- The City needs to focus not only on diversity in hiring but also how many of those new hires are retained.
- Employee experience needs to be positive and with a sense of belonging in the work place.
- The City needs to review purchases and look for products or services that overlap with what social enterprises offer.

- Social enterprises need help knowing where they could fill gaps and what outcomes they can deliver.

The Strategy gives Indigenous youth positive opportunities in the community and civic system by bridging and providing culturally appropriate programs and supports related to employment, literacy and recreation to increase resiliency, self-sustainability, pride and future opportunities.

***"Organizations often focus on diversity in hiring but do not focus on how many are retained."***
*(Stakeholder, November 30, 2020)*

As the youngest and fastest-growing segment of our city, Indigenous youth lead our collective potential. Investing in Indigenous youth ensures the City of Winnipeg is laying a strong foundation for the future.

## 10-year Objectives:

**A.** Hiring and training programs are implemented that focus on equity, diversity, inclusion, reconciliation with Indigenous people, and poverty reduction.

**B.** Support is provided to community-led income and employment initiatives for low-income people through partnerships, grants, and in-kind use of City assets and facilities.

**C.** City purchasing power is leveraged to achieve social and community benefits.

**D.** The City advocates for improved social and economic programs for low-income individuals and families (i.e. living wage, Basic Income, childcare, social support, youth employment), and leads by example through action, collaboration, and partnerships.

**Oshki Annishinabe Nigaaniwak - The City of Winnipeg's Indigenous Youth Strategy**:

Oshki Annishinabe Nigaaniwak, the City of Winnipeg's Indigenous Youth Strategy, was approved in late 2008 by City Council. Since its inception we have been working with community and City partners to develop and deliver programs for Indigenous youth.

# Goal 4: Community Well-Being Supports for those in Greatest Need are Increased




Significant gaps in health, mental health, and well-being exist in Winnipeg. Communities within the city experience incredibly varied levels of health and well-being. People with lower incomes are more likely to die at an earlier age from preventable causes or face greater risk of poor health than those with higher incomes. In Winnipeg, those within the wealthiest 20 per cent of Winnipeggers have a life expectancy of 8 to 10 years longer than those born in the lowest 20 per cent. Between Winnipeg's lowest and highest income neighbourhoods, a more than 17-year difference in female life expectancy and a 15-year difference in male life expectancy exists.

Life circumstances, including economic and social circumstances, have a direct correlation with physical and mental health. People living in poverty face worse health outcomes because they have less access to supports, opportunities, and resources that support positive health outcomes.

***"Safe injection sites would support harm reduction and sharps containers."*** *(Lived experience stakeholder, November 18, 2020)*

Federal and provincial policy has a significant impact on health. However, municipal governments have many opportunities within their jurisdiction to support positive health and well-being in our communities. This strategy increases community well-being support for those in greatest need, with the intention to fundamentally shift the social determinants of health to reduce health gaps.

The actions that flow from this goal contribute to closing health gaps experienced by people living in poverty, particularly those in greatest need, and improving overall community well-being. This includes the City's role in basic human needs including the provision of water and restrooms, Harm Reduction measures, providing services that include wrap-around well-being supports, and supporting community clean-ups. City employees can be trained and resourced to deliver these programs adequately and appropriately. Put together, the City can play a role as a leader in community health and well-being, crucial to addressing and reducing poverty in Winnipeg.

**Our Shared Wisdom:**

- Residents in extreme poverty are most impacted by environmental crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and related closures and public health requirements, extreme temperatures, etc.
- Many people without shelter are suffering from mental health and substance use challenges.
- Community supports are often preferred by people over police or health care intervention.

## 10-year Objectives:

**A.** The immediate needs of residents experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness are met through collaboration with community partners and other levels of government.

**B.** Front-line City employees have the knowledge, skills and resources to help connect residents to needed supports.

**C.** Strategic partnerships to connect people to needed supports are developed.

**D.** The City adopts a Harm Reduction approach to reduce the harms of substance use for residents.

## Goal 5: Transportation System Equity is Enhanced

People living in poverty often travel daily to various locations to access services that help meet their basic needs like access to phones, computers, showers, laundry and food. Travel offers the means to reach essential opportunities such as jobs, education, shops, and friends, and has a positive effect on our quality of life. Many of us take travel for such essential opportunities for granted.



Where streets are not walkable or bike friendly, or where transit is non-existent or unreliable, travel may be dependent on access to a motorized vehicle. This is often out of reach to those in poverty. For some, the cost of owning and operating a vehicle must be traded off against the cost of other essentials such as housing, food, recreation, and social occasions. Without access to a car, people are dependent on the affordability, availability, and schedules of transit to get to and from their destinations. Low-income people as well as seniors, youth, and persons with disabilities who cannot drive often rely on Winnipeg's public transit system.

***"Public transit becomes a barrier to everything like appointments and job interviews when you are low income."*** *(Lived experience stakeholder, November 18, 2020)*

The City of Winnipeg can continue to enable public transit that is accessible to people with very low and fixed incomes. The City will consider affordability, as well as the frequency, reliability and functional efficiency of transit services. At the same time, we will work to enhance Transit Plus to ensure equitable access to safe, reliable, and quality travel for seniors and people living with physical and intellectual disabilities. These demographics are over-represented in poverty-related data. In addition to focusing on transit services, the City will prioritize making sidewalks and streets more walkable and bicycle-friendly in neighbourhoods with high levels of poverty.

***Our Shared Wisdom:***

- Low-income residents rely on public transportation to get to services and employment, or out of crisis situations.
- A strengthened public transportation system will serve the needs of all residents, help reach climate goals, and will assist low-income riders.

## 10-year Objectives:

**A.** The affordability and accessibility of transportation and transit service is increased.

**B.** Improvements to transportation and transit infrastructure and services prioritize areas of higher poverty, and increased interconnectivity to employment and affordable goods and services.

**C.** Increased collaboration with community partners improves access to safe and secure transportation by all residents.

# Goal 6: All City Services are Equitable, Inclusive and Accessible

The City has an important responsibility to ensure that services are equitable, inclusive, and accessible, particularly for those living in poverty. Many current City services are important for people living in poverty and can be expanded or improved to achieve better outcomes for those who most rely on them. At the same time, other services are not affordable or accessible enough and have not been equitably accessed by Winnipeggers living in poverty.

Due to the intersectional nature of poverty, City services should be as inclusive, equitable, and accessible as possible for Indigenous peoples, racialized communities, women, 2SLGBTQ+ people, people living with disabilities, and people facing marginalization who have been traditionally excluded from accessing City services.




This goal helps to remove cost-related barriers and others in current City services that prevent people from having choice to access opportunities, and fully participating or benefitting from City services.

Within this goal, there is great opportunity to collaborate and partner with community organizations and groups to ensure service planning and delivery is as inclusive as possible.

***'…it would be amazing if the City could reinvigorate its commitment to the provision of public services: public housing, washrooms, water access, transit, community rec centres and green spaces, splash pads, play grounds, after-school programming - rather than offloading this work to nonprofit and community-based organizations. The City has unionized workforce, insurance, vehicles, facilities, capacity.'*** *(Lived Experience Stakeholder, June 2021)*

Recreation services and access to nearby greenspace contribute to enhanced individual and community well-being, social inclusion, and positive health outcomes in the short term, while also providing a long-term investment in a healthy city for the future. Many Winnipeggers cannot afford the registration fees or equipment costs associated with recreation services. While efforts have been made to offer free programs, many do not meet community needs or desires. Neighbourhoods with less greenspace available tend to be lower-income communities.

***Our Shared Wisdom:***

- Barriers to City services can be removed (and avoided) if the Public Service has an increased understanding of systemic racism, root causes of poverty, and the daily challenges faced by those with low income.

## 10-year Objectives:

**A.** Residents have equitable access to City services, in particular demographic groups who experience marginalization.

**B.** Community development models and collaborative approaches are enhanced or initiated for service planning & delivery in areas of higher poverty.

**C.** Use of City's tools and resources are maximized to reduce systemic inequities

***"The City needs to develop policies to maximize use of City facilities and assets for community benefit."*** *(Lived Experience Stakeholder, November 18, 2020)*

# Goal 7: Food Security and Food System Resilience is Expanded




Physical and economic access to adequate and healthy food is a key social determinant of health. Hunger can lead to serious and permanent physical and mental health challenges. It is also associated with poor educational outcomes, which can create barriers to employment and economic security.

While the majority of people in Winnipeg are food secure in a strict economic sense, many lack sufficient resources to regularly eat an adequately nutritious diet. Nearly 64,000 Manitobans accessed food banks in 2017. People who are disproportionately affected by poverty and social exclusion are more likely to experience food insecurity. For example, across Canada the rate of food insecurity among those on social assistance is eleven times higher than the national average. Indigenous households are more than twice as likely than the average Canadian household to experience food insecurity. Recent immigrants experience much higher levels of food insecurity than the average household.

***"Access to food is a big issue for youth living in poverty."*** *(Lived Experience Stakeholder, December 9, 2020)*

Food insecurity is a symptom of poverty. Solutions must go beyond much-needed short-term, charitable approaches that respond to food insecurity. Long-term solutions require investments that address the root causes of poverty and help people acquire enough resources and capacity to become food secure, ultimately eliminating the need for food banks and other charitable approaches.

***Our Shared Wisdom:***

- Many people are unable to easily access or afford healthy food on a regular basis.
- The number of residents experiencing food insecurity has increased significantly with COVID-19.

***"It is not just about access to food, but access to healthy and good-quality foods."*** *(Lived experience stakeholder, December 14, 2020)*

## 10-year Objectives:

**A.** Food security is increased by working with community partners to provide access to sustainable, culturally relevant foods.

**B.** The City's tools and resources are maximized to increase food security for residents in areas of higher poverty, particularly the shelterless population.

# Goal 8: Equity in Community Safety is Increased through Collaboration



There is a connection between high levels of incarceration and poverty. Across Canada approximately 75 per cent of those incarcerated lack a grade twelve education. As many as 80 per cent of incarcerated women are in prison for poverty-related crimes. All levels of governments must work to address the root causes and social preconditions that lead to involvement in the justice system and impact our safety.

Indigenous people, with higher rates of poverty due to systemic and social conditions, are overrepresented in the justice systems. For example, Indigenous people make up 68 per cent of Manitobans in custody and only 17 per cent of the province's total population.[6] Targeted interventions are needed to address poverty, systemic discrimination, and the ongoing colonization of Indigenous people in Winnipeg.

***"Public spaces should be monitored by organizations trusted by the community, like the Bear Clan"***
*(Lived Experience Stakeholder, December 9, 2020)*

The City of Winnipeg will work to shift its focus to 'crime prevention through social development' initiatives. This includes considering how to prioritize resources for innovative initiatives that focus on crime prevention and early intervention in order to improve community safety. It also includes continuing to equip Winnipeg Police Service employees with the training needed to take a preventative approach. Police can make greater use of their discretionary powers to divert people into appropriate community programs including restorative justice programs, as well as to ensure policing responses do not unintentionally exacerbate poverty.

[6] Source: Adult Correctional Statistics in Canada, 2015/2016 – Statistics Canada

***Our Shared Wisdom:***

- Communities and residents must be at the center of community safety initiatives.
- A 'crime prevention through social development' approach should be used.

## 10-year Objectives:

**A.** Community and equity-based approaches to safety are prioritized and resourced, particularly for First Nations, Métis Nation, Inuit, Black, Racialized and Religious Minority groups and in areas of higher poverty.

**B.** There is increased safety and security of Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQ+ people, and youth, as the City pursues partnerships and joint initiatives, and prioritizes safety in its decision-making.

**C.** Systemic racism is addressed and equity is increased in Winnipeg Police Service governance, recruitment, training, retention, policing practices, and community relationship-building.

# Section 6. Implementing the Strategy

The Poverty Reduction Strategy has been developed to guide City actions over the next decade. The first Goal of the Strategy is '*Equity and a Culture of Caring are Demonstrated through Strategy Implementation and Systems Change*'. In order to achieve the vision and fulfill the mission, the City needs to be unified in the acceptance of its role, build capacity and understanding, and incorporate a 'culture of caring' throughout the organization.

It is critical that community discussions continue, collaboration and partnerships with other governments and Rightsholders are pursued, and that people with lived experience of poverty are involved throughout the process. This work takes time. The building-blocks approach to develop the Strategy and the 10-year timeframe, along with Amik – The Beaver, who tells us to use our shared wisdom in order to work together towards meaningful outcomes, mean that we need to take purposeful action while knowing that everything cannot be done at once.

### Implementation Plans

The approach to implementing the strategy is to strike a balance between longer-term system change, which can take time, and taking immediate action on the most urgent needs. To keep focused on this balance, three Implementation Plans are scheduled for the strategy over the coming decade, to guide interdepartmental action and address evolving priorities and opportunities (see Figure 9).

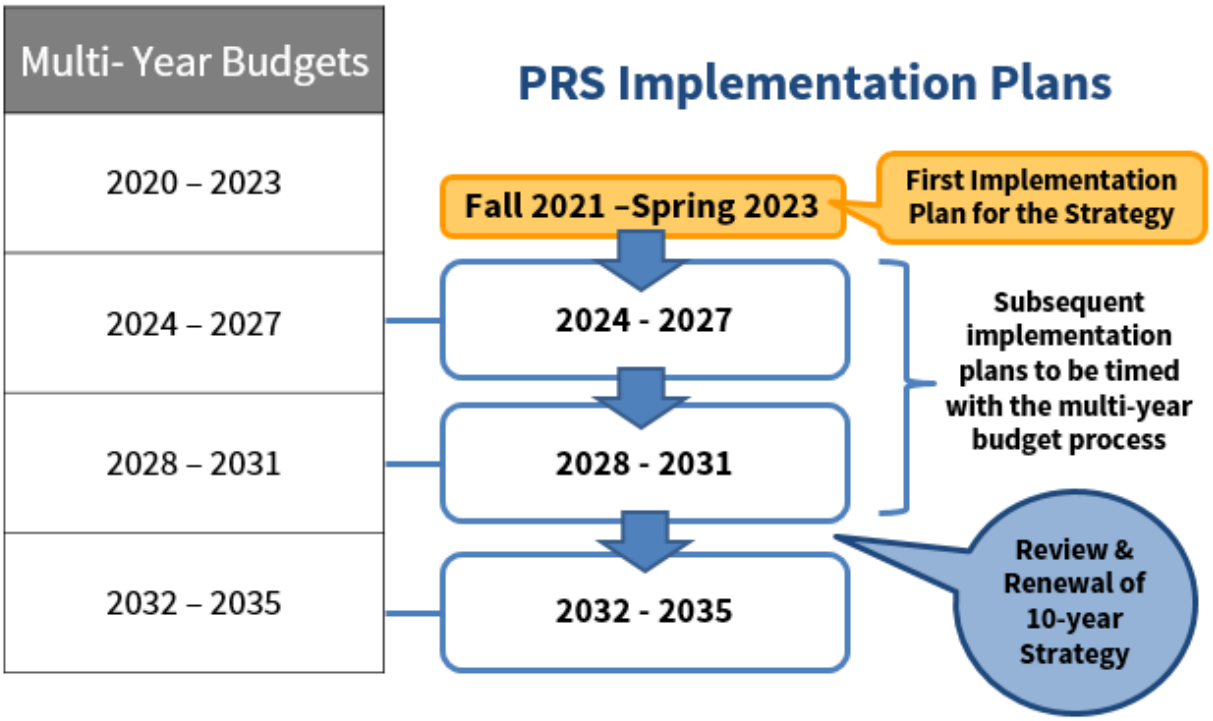



**Figure 9 – Implementation Plan Schedule**

The intention for these three Implementation Plans is to ensure that implementation of the Strategy can align with the City's multi- year budget process. This will ensure that resource needs are considered and addressed in the process of determining overall City and departmental budgets. Figure 9 shows the timing and alignment of the three implementation plans over the 10-year strategy period.

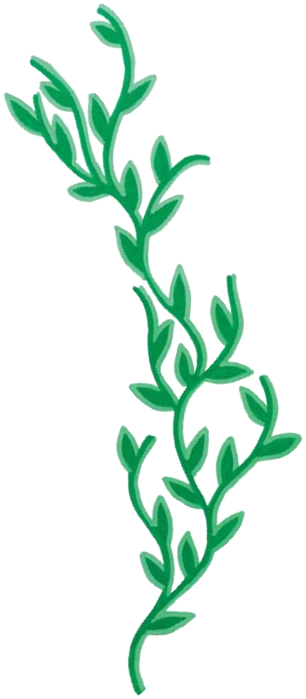
Each Implementation Plan will be developed in collaboration with both internal and external stakeholders, and people with lived experience of poverty. Each action will be developed to meet the relevant objectives, and ultimately to achieve the Strategy Goals, within the established timeframe. Detailed implementation plans will include the following information: A Lead Department, Collaborating Departments, potential partners, resource implications, and the related Strategy Goals and Objectives. Actions that support the Life Poles will also be clearly identified and prioritized. The need for continued resources for implementation is anticipated, thus trade-offs, reprioritization, and budget realignment will likely be needed to ensure successful and meaningful implementation of the Strategy.

## Evaluation, Reporting and Continuous Improvement

One of the objectives of the Strategy is that implementation is monitored, evaluated and updated on a regular basis to ensure progress is made. In the early stages of Strategy implementation, this will

include the identification of key performance indicators and an updating of poverty-related data. These indicators will then be monitored and reported on over the balance of the Strategy timeframe.

## Accountability through Ongoing Collaboration



Key to the success of the implementation plans will be the ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the Strategy by Council, the Public Service and the community. Accountability mechanisms will include the expansion and continuation of the Core Working Team and interdepartmental working group, the establishment of a Poverty Reduction Leadership Circle, which will include Senior Administration, community partners and people with Lived Experience. These structures, supported by the identification of additional, dedicated staff resources, will drive implementation of the Strategy.

Part of the work of the Poverty Reduction Leadership Circle, which will function like a steering committee, will be to ensure clear reporting pathways to Council, identify elected official champions, and advise on regular reporting and engagement methods to the community and Council. It is essential that Lived Experience voices are part of these committees and reports.

Preferred methods for evaluation and reporting will be determined by the Poverty Reduction Leadership Circle and Core Working Team. A leading approach to evaluation will be to use development evaluation techniques. Developmental evaluation is a dynamic, on-going and iterative evaluation method that allows one to learn from experience and explore possible new approaches to a complex problem. Through reflective practice and regular discussion, development evaluation ensures that programs and initiatives keep formulating and adapting informed by ongoing learning and impacting both policy and practice. This method of evaluation will enable the City to capture learnings, and adapt and evolve priorities for Strategy implementation over the 10-year timeframe.

## Monitoring our Progress – Peg Indicators

To ensure alignment with OurWinnipeg, and consistency with community data tracking and reporting, it is envisioned that the Peg Indicators, developed by IISD and United Way Winnipeg will serve as the basis for key performance indicators for the Poverty Reduction Strategy. Peg is a community indicator system that tracks indicators which reflect and measure Winnipeg's well-being, by tracking and sharing data that relates to the economic, environmental, cultural, social, and other issues that matter most to a community. Drawing from Peg, a suite of both qualitative and quantitative indicators and poverty measures will be identified to help capture and report on the impact and success of the Strategy over time.

### Using our Shared Wisdom to Seek Collective Impact

Throughout implementation of the Strategy, the City of Winnipeg will aim to use a collective impact approach. Collective impact will be sought in terms of interdepartmental collaboration to advance the Strategy, and partnerships the City will foster and develop with the community, in particular people with lived experience of poverty, other governments, and Rightsholders. A 'Collective Impact' approach can be understood to mean:

- Having a common agenda;
- Using shared measurement tools;
- Engaging in mutually reinforcing activities;
- Having regular/ongoing communications; and,
- Having a support system (backbone) for advancing poverty reduction work.

As described in the report entitled 'A Guide for Cities Reducing Poverty' (2016) https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/ten-2016 prepared by the Tamarack Institute and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, cities looking to adopt poverty reduction measures can learn from ten 'good ideas' - ideas which can be distilled further into the following advice:

- Focus on poverty reduction versus poverty alleviation.
- Support strong communities and accessible services.
- Leverage partnerships.
- Use a 'Collective Impact' approach.

The Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy embodies this advice, by striking a balance between actions the City can take, key areas for collaboration with the community, and the emphasis on seeking partnerships.

## Strategy Renewal

Beginning in 2030, the full Strategy, including Goals and Objectives, will be reviewed and renewed to better reflect evolving community needs and opportunities. It is envisioned that the updated Poverty Reduction Strategy would be presented for Council consideration in 2031. The updated Strategy, with its implementation plan, will be developed and tabled such that it can align with the 2032 -2035 multi-year budget, to ensure that poverty reduction priorities are given full consideration and prioritization to assist in meeting the long-term goals of Social Equity and Economic Prosperity as outlined in OurWinnipeg2045.

# Acknowledgments

The City of Winnipeg would like to thank the following people for their assistance, input and collaboration with the Public Service in the development of the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy:

***Community members on the Poverty Reduction Strategy Core Working Team:***

- Dana Connolly, *Ka Ni Kanihchik Inc.*
- Kirsten Bernas and Michael Barkman, *Make Poverty History Manitoba*
- Pam Sveinson, Erica Wiebe, Jill Andres, Kahla Pretty, *Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council (United Way Winnipeg)*

***Lived Experience Advisors***

- *Al Wiebe*
- *Rafael Terrain*
- *Luca Gheorghica*

Original artwork, graphic design illustrations, and photography were prepared for the Poverty Reduction Strategy by the following three Indigenous youth.

**Photography: Nathaniel Magbanua**

> *"My name is Nathaniel Jordan Magbanua and I'm a First Nations/Filipino filmmaker born and raised in the North End of Winnipeg. I'm currently a 3rd year student at the University of Winnipeg, studying in the Bachelor of Arts program where I'm pursuing a career in the art of Filmmaking. I have expertise in the fields of Video and Audio Production and on my free time I work as a local freelance cinematographer, video editor, and a photographer with a keen eye for capturing striking imagery through the eye of a lens."*

**Graphic illustrations: Cassy Regier**

> *"I am a graphic designer and web developer based in Winnipeg, Manitoba. I have loved art longer than I can even remember. As soon as my fingers could figure out the grasp of a pencil, I knew I loved to draw. I gathered inspiration from the things around me; animals, people, and daydreams.*
>
> *Since graduating with a diploma in Digital Multi Media, majoring in Web Development, I have been grateful to use and build these skills with top-rated Manitoba-based businesses, including Bison Transport, Cabela's Canada, the City of Winnipeg (Indigenous Relations Division) and most recently, Aboriginal Peoples Television Network."*

**Cover art: Kiana Compton**

> *"My name is Kiana Compton, I am a visual artist and pow wow dancer born in Winnipeg, Manitoba. I am Saulteaux/Cree from Keeseekoose, Saskatchewan and Berens River, Manitoba. I was raised in a family of artists and also attended Art City almost daily as a kid. Now as an adult, I have come full circle and now work at Art City. My work is inspired by my family, culture, and my inner-city community I grew up in."*

**Artist's Statement**

"This piece represents care, love, interconnectedness, and coming together. The beaver represents a mother beaver and baby beaver to represent taking care of each other and loving each other. I included golden hearts on them to show that they have hearts of gold. A lot of folks who live in poverty often have very strong family connections and also take care of the people around them. There is lots of love to give. The Thunderbird wrapping its arms around the tipi represents the Thunderbird house in Winnipeg. A place where there is a lot of poverty but the community does it's best at taking others in and sharing what they have. The Thunderbird is wrapping its arms around the tipi in a caring way. The light blue, dark blue, sun and stars show day and night. We're always in a cycle, the circle of life. The vines represent that we're all connected and also represent rivers which can also be connected to our lifelines. Also, the Red River and the Assiniboine. Everything in this piece comes down to show the Anishinaabe teaching of taking others in and sharing what we have. Taking care of everyone in the community."



**By Kiana Compton**